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THE COMING EMPIRE
OR
TWO THOUSAND MILES IN TEXAS
ON HORSEBACK

BY
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(N.A.T.)

Nunc mihi curto
Ire licet mulo, vel, si libet, usque Tarentum.
—Horace, Sat. Lib. 1

The Coming Empire or Two Thousand Miles in Texas on Horseback
by Nathaniel Alston Taylor

"Foreword"

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Original Edition published 1878

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Published by A.S. Barnes and Company, New York

Revised Edition published 1936

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Published by Turner Company, Dallas

Cover from the 1936 edition.

Phosphene Publishing Company
phosphenepublishing.com

Contents

Foreword	5
Dust Jacket Blurbs	8
Preface (1936 Edition)	9
Introduction (1936 Edition)	12
Division I: From Houston to New Braunfels	15
Division II: New Braunfels to San Antonio	72
Division III: San Antonio to Fredericksburg	89
Division IV: Fredericksburg to Fort Concho	126
Division V: Concho to Pecos	179
Division VI: Pecos to Presidio Del Norte	218
Division VII: Presidio Del Norte to Houston	244
Addenda	
Geology of the Panhandle, and Prof. Boll	271
A Texas Norther—Honesty	273
The Song of the Mocking Bird	276
N.A.T. Tells How North Carolinian Hunts in Texas	278
Prodigious Lemons	280
N.A.T. Compares Saint Louis and Chicago, and also Compares Great Journalists	281
Notes	284
Index	293

FOREWORD

I first read *2000 Miles in Texas on Horseback* in the mid 1980s, fifty years after the revised edition was published and one hundred and ten years after the original edition. I was immediately intrigued since I often traveled Texas, marveling at its diversity of terrain and enjoying the history visibly lurking just below an often thin veneer of civilization. I couldn't help but write about what I saw because Texas is not only prodigious and historical but striking, mysterious, and still a little dangerous. It brings out the urge to write even as it provides the subject matter and imagery.

Nathaniel Alston Taylor certainly wasn't the first writer to be moved to take up pen in the service of Texas—there is a long tradition of Texas-inspired writing that has roots in the first European exploration and settlement of the region. Most of the early observations were made by travelers and settlers who wrote of their immediate experiences, and, of course, there have been scores of writers then and since, like myself, who are relatively haphazard in our paeans to Texas. Like the early settlers, we write about what we come across, but we don't purposefully pursue Texas in its totality. Maybe that's because the state is so large and diverse.

It wasn't until the latter half of the twentieth century that writers and other observers began to travel Texas systematically and record their journeys in comprehensive works. These days, we can name people like newspaper columnist Leon Hale, Ray Miller of *The Eyes of Texas*, or outdoors enthusiasts Mickey Little and Ed Sayers who have traveled Texas top to bottom and east to west and have put their travels down for all to read or see.

Taylor is a notable exception to this progression. A journalist by trade, Taylor did his share of scattershot reporting about the state for various Texas newspapers, but with *2000 Miles*, first published in 1876, he perhaps earned the right to be called the first true trans-Texas writer.

Taylor's journey was financed by the principal investors in the Texas Western Railway, who commissioned Taylor to travel the proposed route all the way from Houston to Presidio and to report on the terrain and the economic viability of the project. Taylor does not name the men who hired him, but *The Handbook of Texas* cites I. S. Roberts, Thomas W. House, Thomas H. Scanlan, and Eugene Pillot among the principal promoters. Perhaps Taylor refrained from naming these individuals because he expends some harsh words later in the book when they reneged on an agreed payment, leaving him stranded at Fort Davis, nearly penniless and without food or transportation.

That could have been taken as a premonition of the future success of the Texas Western Railway, which, despite its ambition to lay track all the way from Houston to Presidio, never made it farther than Cat Springs, twelve miles west of Sealy—a distance Taylor had

covered by page 19 of a 360-page book. So, historically, at least, Taylor has the last laugh. His employers went bankrupt funding a footnote to Texas railway history while he left a document that is remarkable on several levels.

First of all is the account of the journey itself. For those of us who have traveled extensively in Texas and know just how big this state is, it is amazing that Taylor traversed it on horseback—indeed, he wore out his horse in the process. And while Taylor was no complainer, he does write about some of the hardships he faced on the road, such as difficult river crossings, covering rough terrain, weathering a Texas norther, and fending off a band of marauding Indians.

Second is his description of the natural aspects of the terrain he passed through. Taylor held several degrees in the natural sciences, and his training made him an especially adept observer of natural phenomena and the opportunities those presented to future generations. His descriptions of the geology as well as the geography are detailed, and he constantly has utility in mind. He accurately predicted, for example, that Texas would become a major oil-producing region twenty-five years before the Spindletop gusher heralded the age of the modern petroleum industry and marked Texas as one of the world's major petrochemical producers.

Flora and fauna also interested Taylor, and his descriptions include unique forests, grasslands, and other botanical features as well as numerous animals that happened to cross his path. From a contemporary standpoint, his encounters with the more ferocious wild animals, such as jaguars and bears, often was unfortunate since he had a tendency to shoot them even if he wasn't in danger. But on one occasion, the tables were turned when a pair of cougars stalked him through a cedar forest.

The book also is a rich look at the people of Texas—who they were, where they came from, and where and how they lived—from the urban centers to the farmlands to the settlements to the far-flung outposts of West Texas. Although he was a man of his time, with all the preconceptions, prejudices, and naïveté that implies, Taylor depicts the wide diversity of cultural influences on Texas, including the very American disposition of Houston, the dominance of German and Czech peoples in Central Texas, the Hispanic influences in San Antonio, and the gun-toting Wild West atmosphere beyond. His descriptions of the military outposts of West Texas are especially interesting since most of these soon after were abandoned and fell into disrepair, only to be restored into state parks during the last fifty years. In fact, two Buffalo Soldiers accompanied Taylor from Fort Concho to Presidio, and had they not been with him, it is entirely possible that he would have perished at the hands of Indians or bandits.

Most of all, though, what sticks in my mind is Taylor's incredible and unbounded enthusiasm for Texas as a place of both opportunity and wonder. Occasionally, particularly in the beginning, his enthusiasm is so unrestrained that the reader might think that Texas is a sort of nirvana on Earth. By the time he reached the Pecos River, his enthusiasm began to wane—though he still manages to favorably compare the Pecos to the Nile. But that

can only be expected after months of loneliness, hardship, and travail. Also, once west of the Pecos, the physical danger grew a great deal greater and occupied more of his time and thoughts. But though Taylor's enthusiasm did diminish the farther west he traveled, it never came close to vanishing, and his powers of observation remained strong.

In the end, *2000 Miles in Texas on Horseback* is a powerful portrait of Texas during its first flurry of post-Civil War settlement and development. Myths abound of these decades in Texas history, but Taylor was actually there, trying to give a clear and descriptive—and predictive—account, making his observations of the way things and places and people were all the more historically significant. And giving weight to his observations is the fact that a Texan of today can readily see how contemporary Texas has emerged directly from the land that Taylor so lovingly and faithfully describes.

—Christopher Dow

Notes on the text in this book:

The text in this book was transcribed by hand from the 1936 edition. Following transcription, it was given several editorial passes. Undoubtedly errors remain, but I'm pretty sure that they are minimal. If you spot one, please let me know so that I can correct it.

The one note that I wish I could expand on in a more positive way is the exact authorship of *2000 Miles in Texas*. The 1878 edition cites two authors: N. A. Taylor and H. F. McDaniel, saying at the end of the introduction, "This little volume is the joint work of two hands, but we have generally used the single pronoun, as one is less cumbersome than two." This sentence is omitted from the 1936 edition, which cites only Taylor. There are, however, versions floating around out there that cite only McDaniel. I hope to clarify this issue in the future, but for now, as none other than J. Frank Dobie has before me, I'm considering Taylor as the principal author, with unknown contributions by McDaniel.

DUST JACKET BLURBS

The following blurbs appeared on the dust jacket for the 1936 edition.

“A work outstanding among the most valuable works on Texas, because of its variety and wide scope. The original edition was published in 1877 and in recent years, the few copies available have sold for exorbitant prices. The many admirers and friends of the volume and its late author have urged his family to publish another edition of the book until the task was finally undertaken, and is now accomplished.”

“Valuable books of travel within the boundaries of our own country are scarce; hence this volume, redolent of fenceless plains, chaparral, buffaloes and wild mustangs, comes to us as a pleasant surprise. In its freshness, raciness and infectious flow of spirit it grips the reader with an intense interest.”

—*New York Tribune*

“The *Horseback* tour is a masterpiece of permanent value, and imparts to the reader an indescribable enthusiasm through which he feels himself to be present at all places and happenings mentioned by the author.”

—W. S. Simkins, Law Department, Texas University

“The book is delightfully entertaining and broadly informative. I presented a copy to the Library of the *U.S. Battleship Texas*.”

—Adele B. Looscan, President, Texas Historical Society

PREFACE (1936 EDITION)

“Two Thousand Miles in Texas on Horseback,” or “The Coming Empire,” from the facile pen of Colonel Nathaniel Alston Taylor, because of its variety and wide scope, is said to be outstanding among the most valuable works on Texas that have been published.

In recent years copies of the first edition, which had become scarce, sold for exorbitant prices. This volume treats of Texas from the Gulf Coast to the far reaches of the Panhandle, out to Presidio and El Paso, the extreme Western points, across the Rio Grande into Mexico and back again to the Coast. It deals with Texas in the artistic and in the scientific. It is commercial, geological, geographical, topographical, agricultural, botanical, romantic, poetic; it treats also of Texas natural history and people. It imparts to the reader an indescribable enthusiasm which carries him through the story with a feeling that he is present at all places and happenings.

Through many years, admirers and friends of the volume and its late author have urged his family to publish another edition of the book. Finally, the task was undertaken and accomplished, and goes forth as a work of love and appreciation to the author and his friends, from his daughters, sons and granddaughter, and as a gesture of recognition to the Texas Centennial, and in commemoration of the 100th birthday of the author. (Born August 28th, 1835, Wake Forest, N.C.)

The author was always an eager student; when a child and during vacations at home from college, it was his lot to be often in the presence of some of America's greatest men, who gathered in the splendid libraries of his parents and grandparents. He would sit quietly and listen with great interest to their discussions on literature, history, philosophy and the sciences. These men were: Senators Cass of Michigan, Mangum and Badger of North Carolina, Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri, Butler of South Carolina, Berrien of Georgia, Hunter of Virginia; and occasionally Seward of New York, and others from the Southern States. They were the leading statesmen of that day, and something more than statesmen; they were philosophers and scholars. These old-time statesmen were men of extraordinary genius and grandeur of character.

At the age of eleven, Nathaniel A. Taylor (familiarily called “Nat”) entered Wake Forest College, North Carolina. His course of studies included Latin and Greek even at that tender age. Later he attended the Universities of North Carolina and Virginia. While a student at the latter, his first poem appeared in the Southern Literary Messenger, published in Richmond, Va., and received editorial comment on its poetic beauty.

Owing to the fact that his uncle was president of the University of Pennsylvania and also that his father, Dr. Alexander Hamilton Taylor of North Carolina had graduated there, Mr. Taylor and his younger brother entered that university to study medicine; but he soon decided that this was not his gift, and left for New York, where he became a student at

the New York College of Law. His brother, however, the late Dr. Samuel Alston Taylor, remained to graduate at Pennsylvania and become a prominent physician in Georgia.

Upon Nathaniel Taylor during his college life were conferred five degrees—Bachelor of Arts, Master of English Literature, Master of Science, Doctor of Philosophy, and Doctor of Laws. He was admitted to the bar, but preferring literary work, he turned to journalism and served at different times on five of the New York dailies, the Sun, World, Tribune, Herald and Times. There he found outlet for his lofty intellectual powers.

In 1859, at the age of 24, he “felt the call” to Texas, and made the trip on horse-back, accompanied by three young negro man-slaves. This trip probably established he incentive to later trips of exploration in Texas; and the records that he kept of these horse-back adventures show him to be a traveler of the keenest observation; and being educated in the sciences, he was gifted with broad vision of which this volume gives evidence.

Deeply admiring the Southwest, he purchased a farm near Boerne, Texas, and became engaged with the San Antonio newspapers. He served also as Texas Ranger and Indian fighter; his body bore arrow scars from wounds received in conflicts.

In 1861, at the outbreak of the War between the States, he joined the army at San Antonio as a private in Captain Duncan’s Company. With several other companies they met at Dallas and formed a cavalry regiment under Colonel Thomas Hawpt. They went into action ad also into camp at Fort Smith, Arkansas, doing service later in Missouri. By this time, Private Taylor had risen to the position of Captain and was then appointed Adjutant Colonel of Hawpt’s Regiment. Having been too busy to consider a name, this regiment had served for more than two years without a name when they went into Louisiana and with a number of other regiments joined General Polignac’s Brigade. Their horses had been killed or had died from hard service, and for this reason the regiment was named the 31st Texas Dismounted Cavalry. The name caused great indignation in General Hawpt’s Regiment because they were in service from the very beginning of the war, but the number indicated a later origin.

Just before the close of the war, Colonel Taylor was advanced to Adjutant General of Polignac’s Brigade, with title of Colonel. When the war ceased he returned to San Antonio, in 1865, then went to Houston, where he joined the editorial staff of the “Houston Telegraph,” Houston’s earliest newspaper. Later he was with the Houston Age, the Houston Post, Galveston News, Dallas News, Texas Farm & Ranch, and others. He made occasional trips North to take up work again on the New York papers, but Texas was HOME to him. As a “Free Lance,” to the close of his life, he contributed to all leading Texas publications as well as the New York papers. The favorite magazines to which he contributed were the Southern Literary Messenger of Virginia, Forest & Stream of New York, North American Review, and Scribner’s, although his writings appeared in many other publications. Excepting editorials, his writings usually appeared over the nom de plume, “N.A.T.,” his initials. His articles of general interest were frequently translated and appeared in European publications.

In the political field his views were regarded as strongly predictive of the trend of affairs, both state and national. In the fields of agriculture and geology, the reliability of his writings was unsurpassed. And withal, the author was of very modest and retiring manner, dignified and kind.

In 1866, when he declared Texas to be the future's greatest oil producer, there were those who refuted the statement and called him "a dreamer;" but the newspapers remembered, and when oil came in near Corsicana in 1894, and at Sour Lake in 1902, several Texas newspapers contained editorials recalling that "more than 30 years ago, as a result of his geological examinations, N. A. Taylor stated that some day Texas would head the list as an oil and gas producer." It is a subsequent fact that every locality in Texas that Col. Taylor designated as oil bearing has proved itself when, or if, properly given test; but many of the places which he indicated as oil bearing have not yet been punctured.

* * *

The foregoing items of information pertaining to the author were gathered and selected from published material, records, letters and the author's note books.

—Natalie Taylor Carlisle.

INTRODUCTION (1936 EDITION)

One of the most entertaining works, to me, is an account by Montaigne of a horse-back trip over portions of France, Germany, Switzerland and Italy, in the year 1580, by himself and three or four of his select friends. It is a work in which the liveliness of the old Gascon continually sparkles; though some may think that he talks too much of the stone in the bladder with which he was then afflicted. I have often thought that if I should visit Europe, I would have a great deal of pleasure in pursuing the route marked in his journal, and comparing the people and the country along the way with what they were as he saw and described them three centuries ago.¹ It would be, I judge, a most entertaining employment to any one of observing turn of mind: holding continually before him two pictures of the same thing: the one, delineated by a master hand, of what it was three hundred years ago, and the other the Present, with its changed conditions.

Thus the dead centuries move in living forms before him, and he may, as he chooses, pluck a rose from the Present, or put forth his hand and gather a fresh lily from the Past.

And so it may be that even three hundred years hence—long, as we may judge, after the writer of this little volume has gone to explore the mystery of the future, the Texan will ride over the course marked in this journal and feel a peculiar pleasure in what he beholds, as he beholds it like it was years and years and centuries ago; and it may be that some reader will then think of me as kindly as I now think of Montaigne. And then, however simple it be, this little volume may never lose its interest, but remain dear to Texans many, many years.

And what a giant will Texas be three hundred years from now, in 2176. Heavens! The thought recoils under the stupendous contemplation. but this it is safe to say: whatever change and revolution may shake the American continent and disperse its peoples, she will forever stand ONE INDIVISIBLE, the mightiest Empire of them all, with the flood-lights of her conquest and civilization flashing to the west and south-west. Nature and her God have knitted her together for a great destiny, and man cannot pull her asunder.

Think of the strides with which she is now bounding forward. Forty years ago, in 1836 the feeble but struggling dependence of an ignorant power; next, an infant nationality tottering along in shirtless penury; now, the great vigorous Hopeful of the American Union! The next census will place her by the side of Ohio in numbers on the floor of the National Congress; and the next after that will place her far above New York. The Texan youth of today will behold a far grander thing than their father beheld, and it is a pleasant thought for some of us to know that we shall be well represented in that line. Of course, the writer of this cannot be a witness of her full-grown glory; but he will do her all the good he can, and will at least help to twine one little flower with her splendid garland.

I have written mostly of wilderness and rocks. In a few years cities will illuminate those wildernesses, and lovers will tell their sweet tales on the very rocks from which I beheld the plaintive wolf, and saw the ravings of lions of the mountains.

Only let her statesmanship be akin to her great destiny. "Advance!" is her watchword, but I cannot say that it will all be with Peace.

THE COMING EMPIRE
OR
TWO THOUSAND MILES IN TEXAS
ON HORSEBACK

DIVISION I

CHAPTER I

1876

Having lately accomplished a very long ride in the great State of Texas, I have concluded to write out my notes in order that others may see what I saw, and feel somewhat as I felt. And first, as to my motives for the trip.

I had taken a contract to do some work on the

TEXAS WESTERN RAILWAY, 1876

An enterprise but recently projected and then just taking its start. It was planned by some enterprising gentlemen of Houston, who believed it would add to the importance of their city and become a first-class investment. After investigating the prospects for the road, and considering that the line marked out for it will connect the Pacific in California with the waters of the Atlantic, by a route three hundred miles shorter than any other, over a country offering no great difficulties in conformation and none in climate, I became a stockholder, and felt an interest in the road. Therefore, after completing a portion of contract, and having some leisure, I undertook my long ride on horseback, to study with my own eyes the country along the proposed route as far as Mexico. The gauge of the road is three feet—a system upon which I believe most of the railroads of the future will be built. Perhaps in the general railroad system as it is, too much has been sacrificed to speed which had been better given to transportation. We can afford to live slower when by doing so, we live better and cheaper; and what is thus saved will increase the comforts of those from whose toil the cities are made and waters of the oceans are white with rich argosies. He who drives the plow does it all.

HOUSTON, 1876

Houston was my starting point, as it is of the road of which I spoke. She is the next most populous place in Texas, second only to that beautiful "Sea-Cybele," which looks from orange and oleander groves upon the blue waters of the Gulf on the one hand, and the broad, placid bay on the other.² Her population is about twenty-six thousand, an increase of three to one in seven years.³ She is the most interior point to which the tide-waters of the Gulf ascend. Though fifty miles inland, the sea practically rolls within six miles of Houston and can be easily made to roll at her doors. Ocean steamers ride to Clinton, six miles below, and lesser craft penetrate the heart of the city. Thus by railway to Clinton, Houston is within ten minutes of the sea. She is the centre of eight railways, which are daily extending her

commerce and influence, and giving access to every portion of the great domain around her. The sea knocks at her doors, and she has only to heed the summons. It offers her a summer pathway to Mexico, the West Indies, Central America and South America—regions of the “sweet south,” whose trade enriches those who cultivate it. When Houston and Galveston can sell wheat and flour nearly as cheap as St. Louis, their fortune is made, and they step forth at once among the great cities of the land. All that they need to do this, is more farmers upon the fertile bosom of the great State, whose capacity to produce the best wheat in the world is almost without limit. When they become great flour exporting marts, other manufactures will be necessary and will spring up like works of magic, thus making them great exporters of other articles also. To my view nothing can be clearer than the future greatness of these two cities. Their “back country” will be not only the grand domain of Texas, but the whole vast region between the Mississippi and the Rocky Mountains.

MY DEPARTURE

The sun shone brightly on the morning of January 2nd, 1876, and the breath of spring was in the air. I had retired on the night of the first, ready for my journey when the lark shook the dew off his wings. An early breakfast, and my staunch steed stood champing the bit in his eagerness to be on the way. Little recked he of the far journey before him. After the manner of the bold warrior or old, he said, “I do not ask how long it is, but where it is.” My paraphernalia consisted of one extra blouse, a haversack, a pocket map and compass and spy-glass; my arms—a pocket-knife. Thus accoutered, I rode due west along the line of the Texas Western Railway, with no other companion save my eyes and my thoughts. Much of the way there was no road, and my path was much like that of a ship of the trackless sea.

THE “HOUSTON PRAIRIE”

About four miles from Houston the last vestige of human habitation disappears, and I ride upon a prairie which to the westward appears boundless. It is dead of winter, but it smiles with a green luxuriance upon which ten, nay, fifty thousand cattle are feeding, and some are backing in the sunshine, chewing the cud with a lazy air of contentment. To the right and left, ten miles apart, are dark lines forest, which mark the sleepy course of Buffalo Bayou on the one hand, and Bray’s Bayou on the other. This prairie is as smooth as a billiard table, with scarcely perceptible inclination to either bayou. The soil is jet black and evidently very strong and rich. Marl crops out in many places, indicating that this fine fertilizer exists in abundance a few feet below. Numerous farms are seen in the distance along the bayous, but not one intruded upon the prairie. Why should such an expanse of fertile lands be left in nature’s wildness? Why should this rich heiress not be plucked? Simply because the Texan will hug the forest and stream. There he builds his home and tills his field, and this he leaves to his cattle to roam upon at will. He little suspects and little cares for the wealth

of the virgin heiress. Give this Houston Prairie drainage into the bayous and then tickle her bosom with a plow, and see how quickly she will laugh with the choicest products of the earth. The advancing tide of population will soon overflow the valleys and break through the forests, and then the Houston Prairie will blossom like a great garden. With a soil so rich that it will produce almost anything, and a climate so gentle that fresh fruits from the field may be gathered every day of the year, it cannot be otherwise.

But, one will say, what about water and woof for fencing and fuel? As for the first, the clouds will keep the under-ground cisterns always filled with the purest and coolest water; for fencing and building, the vast pineries which begin at Houston and extend hundred of miles eastward, offer illimitable supplies of lumber; and for fuel, the railroad passing through the centre of this prairie, will deliver excellent oak from the great Brazos Bottoms at three dollars per cord or less. I regard this very spot as one of the choicest on earth for the farmer, for besides the favorable conditions of soil and climate, he has in the rapidly growing cities within easy reach of him, a cash purchaser for all he can produce; and they are markets which he need not fear he can overstock. they have abundant outlets to other markets, north, east and west, eager to buy all that they cannot themselves consume.

WHAT I WOULD DO

Suppose I should encamp permanently on this prairie. I should in the first place by two hundred acres of land. This I would immediately enclose with a plank fence; after which I would plant just inside the fence, a hedge of the beautiful pyracanth, which, long before the fence had decayed, would be ready to take its place with a living wall of green foliage and blossoms, and berries and thorns, through whose intricate mazes nothing larger than a rabbit could pass. It will endure through generations. Then I would erect my cottage, with stables and barns, and I would take great care, even with little expenditure of money, that they are beautiful and pleasing to the eye—so that the wayfarer in passing by should say, "There lives one of taste and civilization!" Then I would adorn my ground with flowers and shrubbery, not only to please my eye and the stranger's, but that the little ones who might one day prance about them should laugh and be as happy as fairies, and have their little hearts warmed and expanded, from their first impressions, with the love of the beautiful and good. And what is so well calculated to do this as the opening perfumed flowers, and the birds and gaudy butterflies that sport and sing among them? Then I would plant forty acres to the pear, the peach, the plum and the grape; then I would plant forty acres with young trees gathered from the forests, to be my park and to give a varied beauty to the scene. Then I should buy a dozen excellent milk cows, natives of the prairie. Then I would pitch my crops in season, and garner and glean in season, and accumulate every day. Then if I had not a wife, I should make haste to get one. If things were not yet all beautiful in my house and around it, I would expect them at once to become so, and that the curds, cream and butter, manipulated by female hands, would add no small increase to my income.

Above all, I should expect her to be beautiful and good, and I would make it my duty to see that everything around her was beautiful—as far as I could—in order that she might excel it. I think a man is an infinite villain who puts a woman in a dirty, slouchy home; and what a wrong he does his young daughters! A man who thus lives has never known the beauty and richness of the female heart. He is only distinguished from the brute in that he walks on two legs an they on four. To do all of this, he need not be rich; he need only have a good heart and intelligence, and be industrious. I hold that nearly all women would be beautiful and good, if their husbands were only worthy that they should be.

Would I not be happy thus encamped? He who cultivates the bosom of Mother Earth intelligently and lovingly, cultivates God; and he who cultivates God, cultivates and secures happiness. I believe no one ever cultivated Mother Earth intelligently and lovingly, who did not live happy and die blest. If one would cultivate Art and Letters also, this is the life he should lead; because the fancy and thought are so free in their unrestrained independence. The bird sings all the more sweetly when he knows that his mate and her little ones are all right.

IF I WERE A HUNTER

I thing I would surely pitch my tent right here. As evening fell, the prairie swarmed with wild fowl and was noisy with their clamor. Geese in large flocks were flying hither and thither, emitting their peculiar cry of “conk, conk,” as they flew. Many came so near me that I might have killed them with a pocket pistol. Sand-hill cranes, like armies in grey, marched leisurely over the plain; curlews and plover were at every turn; prairie chickens rose continually on the wing, and black-birds or grackle were literally in myriads.

THE GIANT AND THE PRINCESS

As if grew dusk a long dark line rose up in the west before me, and I knew by this and the increasing mots or islands of timber, that the prairie was about to terminate upon the forests of the Brazos

Bottoms. At dark I rode upon a small habitation on the edge of the forest, where I asked for and obtained food and rest for the night. It was the home of a stock-man, who paid little attention to tillage of the soil. He was bronzed and freckled, booted and bearded, rough-hewn outwardly, but polite, hospitable and intelligent. There was an air of considerable comfort about his small residence, and his wife was s tidy, pleasant little lady. She was so small in comparison with the size of her husband that I thought of a giant married to a little princess, whom he had stolen and borne away to his castle. There was a meekness and resignation about this little lady which increased the delusion. It occurred to me that she would like to see her giant look handsomer in her presence, and not go about in his cow-clothes, with his giant spurs clanking at his heels, and was sick at heart because he would not.

Here was an example of a native gentleman who had been turned wrong-side-out by

association with rough but honest people, who know little and care less for the amenities of civilization. That he was a born gentleman was palpable, but that he was no gentleman now, at least in outward appearance, was also palpable. He had allowed the polish to be worn away from him gradually until hardly a bit was left. It is said that no gentleman can habitually follow a cow's tail without thus sinking, and evidence of this tendency is pointed to in the semi-civilized or barbarous conditions of all races who live by their herds; but in this country it is certainly the fault of the gentlemen themselves that this should be so. I dare say that when this giant courted his princess he did not do so with his cow-clothes on and his spurs, but was adorned and scented like a big lily of the field. Why cannot he thus adorn himself in her presence now, and arrest the tendency to revert to barbarism?⁴

A TALK ABOUT CATTLE RAISING

After supper the giant sat by me on the gallery, and we smoked, I a clay pipe and he a cob one. The night was so bland that I could hardly think of it as winter. While he spake his legs were thrown over the railing of the gallery, and his feet projected a considerable distance above his head. I asked him with what rapidity his cattle increased. His reply was: "That, sir, I can hardly tell you. I keep no books. They say you can calculate on an increase of twenty-five to thirty-three percent a year, and that might be so if none were stolen and none strayed away. About all I know of it is that they increase fast enough to keep me pretty busy, what with branding calves and chasing the runaways back from the ends of creation. It is a business that you must watch closely, else you may start this year with a thousand head and in a few years find yourself with none."

"What will become of them?"

"Other people will brand you calves, while the old ones will die or stray away. After a calf has become a year old without a brand, it is the custom to look upon him as public property. He belongs to the first one who will catch and brand him. I know men who have accumulated large stocks in this way. A man must be up and doing, sir, and if he cannot make up his mind to do this he had better let the cattle business alone. I am so continually in the saddle that I don't feet right elsewhere."

"Do you find ready sale for your beeves?"

"No trouble about that. When I find myself funning short of pocket change, I gather a few head and drive them to Houston, where they will sell readily at fifteen to twenty-five dollars a head. Beeves are like cotton—ready sale on any market in the world."

"You never feed your cattle?"

"Oh, no, but I am thinking of starting a little farm near Houston, where I shall raise corn, and always keep a few corn-fed beeves on hand. Such cattle will bring fancy prices."

He was totally unable to tell me how many cattle he had, but evidently supposed that he had several thousand.

I had ridden nearly forty miles since morning, and slept well.

CHAPTER II

THE BRAZOS AND ITS "BOTTOMS"

The giant refused to take a fee for my board and lodging, and at sunrise I was on my way. I did not feel so comfortable as yesterday. It was my first trip on horseback since several months, and my contact with the saddle had become a great grievance; insomuch that I often found myself thinking of the cushioned arm-chair before my grate.

I was now penetrating the Brazos Bottom, famed for fertility. Its course was marked by a long line of forest rising like a great wall abruptly against the prairie, save where, here and there, the forest showed its tendency to advance beyond the line, by groves and narrow belts of timber thrown out upon the prairie. The level of the bottom is about twenty feet below the prairie, and the descent is nearly as precipitous as a wall. On entering it I found I had passed from a region of light into one of gloom and darkness. The gigantic pecan, cottonwood and magnolia threw a shade upon the tops of their lesser neighbors—the oak, the elm, the ash, the hackberry—and these in turn threw a denser shade upon the ground. From the tops of the lesser to the tops of the most gigantic climbed the wild grape, weaving ladders here and a perfect net-work there, on which it seemed that one could climb and walk at ease from tree to tree. Below them all was the under-brush, dense as an African jungle, over which the wild convolvulus and woodbine and bramble spread a mantle of texture so close that the tomtit could hardly hop through it. Through all of these mantles the sun utterly refused to shine, and the heavy coating of fallen leaves and limbs and logs rotted on the ground in eternal darkness and damp. Even at midday, the silence was unbroken, save by the tapping of the woodpecker, the chattering of the squirrel and the hooting of the owl, who found a perpetual reign of night. Occasionally, I could see the branches of the pecan and cottonwood and magnolia waving to the wind far above; but the voice of the wind was unheard through the thick obstruction of vine and bough and foliage. Trees that are deciduous elsewhere are evergreen here, for in this dark, damp forest Frost never comes to wither the leaves. He may scatter his glittering gems in profusion on the grass of the prairies hard by, but his sparkling beauty and his crisp touch are here all unknown. I have never seen a forest in my life where trees stand so closely together. In many places they rest and lean against each other, and their boughs, except of the most gigantic, are all interlocked. What an immense store of fuel and building wood is here accumulated for the prairies, which stretch away to the east and west like seas!

The gloom is penetrated here and there by wide openings cut by the old-time planters, who derived from the matchless soil princely incomes, which were lavishly expended. After the war these great plantations were abandoned, some entirely and others in part. Even now many of the richest fields lie waste and untilled, for the want of willing hands. The

generous soil yields readily a bale of cotton to the acre, often a gale and a half, a hoghead of sugar, or sixty to a hundred bushels of corn. I saw a field which had been in cultivation over thirty years in succession, without receiving one pound of manuring, except what the birds and animals had cast in flying or wandering over it, and yet its crops were as exuberant as when first opened.

But can a residence in this deep entanglement be healthful? Those who live here say it is so; and so do the Equimaux say their land is the most delightful and salubrious under the canopy. If the alligators should be consulted they would protest that the dark swamps of Louisiana, rich in fogs and vapors, are all that any reasonable being could desire. It is simply impossible that the enormous quantity of carbonic acid gas, evolved from the decaying vegetation around me, should not infect the pure air. I have seen none who did not look well and robust, but I dare say that those who were shaking with chills stayed home by the fire. There is suspicious evidence in the fact that the old planters built their residences on the high grounds of the prairie, and in the further fact which I discovered, that quinine seems to be a favorite drug in the locality. In Houston it is common to see empty beer bottles lying about the streets, and I saw two empty quinine bottles lying by the road side in the Brazos Bottom. I noticed these two bottles closely and I thought they spoke a sermon. If I should make up my mind to settle in the Brazos Bottom, I would certainly follow the example of the old planters, and pitch my tent on the prairie, and I would select a position from which the wind would reach me as rarely as possible from the direction of the Bottom.

The width of the great Bottom varies exceedingly from three miles to twenty and even more. As a rule, it narrows ascending the stream, and broadens descending. A few miles below me it broadens rapidly to the east, while to the west, a few miles still lower, it continues unbroken, though not all covered with forest, until it unites with the valley of the Colorado, forming an area of fertility—composing the counties of Fort Bend and Wharton in part, and Brazoria and Matagorda wholly—certainly unsurpassed, if equalled elsewhere in the world. That great tract has been formed entirely by the sediment of the two rivers and decayed vegetation, and is of a depth which no one has ever yet explored. It is a region which absolutely laughs with rich harvests under the plow, with a climate made salubrious by the almost perpetual breeze from the Gulf; and the jungle there does not exist except on the banks of the rivers. It is unharmed alike by drought or much rain, for the soil is so porous and retentive of moisture, that when the rains come not, it nightly drinks its fill from the dews of heaven; and when the rains come too abundantly, the porous soil swallows it up and conducts it away to unknown depths. And yet with all this fertility and salubrity, that portion of Texas is now one of the most neglected in the State. formerly the seat of wealthy planters it is now to a great extent abandoned to Negroes, who are said to be falling back in a state of semi-barbarism. For this reason the immigrant shuns it as a Golgotha, and its noble acres are begging for purchasers at almost any price. But so noble a country cannot always remain desolate and a beggar. It will grow prosperous and rich again, as surely as merit will one day reap its reward.

THE RIVER

I rode upon the river so suddenly that had it been night, and my horse's eyes no better than my own, I might have tumbled headlong into the flood, and there an end; so completely was it hidden by the dense forest and under-growth on its bank, and so deep was the channel through which it flowed as silently as Lethe.

“Far off from there a slow and silent stream,
Lethe the river of oblivion, rolls
Her watery labyrinth, whereof who drinks,
Forthwith his former state and being forgets,
Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.”

I quote these lines because the sombre imagery which they conjure up conveys a good impression of the Brazos, creeping half stagnant under the dismal shades. then think of its dark water, four hundred feet across, and picture a half rotten log floating here, and another there, scarcely seeming to move, each loaded with a cargo of terrapins, and you have it.

This is the mightiest river in Texas that flows exclusively through Texas soil, being a small measure more bulky in volume than its twin brother, the Colorado. It is between six and seven hundred miles long, marked along its whole course by the same rich valley and timbered bottom, forming a region of fertility capable of producing more wealth probably than any other river in the world, the Mississippi along excepted. On its banks a mighty nation might flourish, independent of the world. The sugar of the tropics and all the products of the temperate regions find here their most genial home, and yield such abundance as scarcely anywhere else. The old Spaniards called this river Brazos de Dios, the “Arms of God,” by which they meant to express its boundless munificence, and a prophecy of the millions who will prosper on its banks. Mighty as it is, it is not navigable except about fifty miles from its mouth, on account of numerous shifting sandbanks that obstruct its course. Silent and sleeping as it now is, it often booms for months like a roaring sea, invading the bottoms almost annually, with just sufficient depth to bestow another gift of fertility. When it spreads over the bottoms it is like a dead lake, the water halting to deposit its rich sediment and forbearing to take any away. Surely this does indeed look like the “Arms of God!”

The extraordinary fertility of the lands bordering the Brazos is easily explained when we consider the remarkable region from which it draws its fertilizing materials. Its main fork flows nearly two hundred miles through a region in which gypsum abounds, charging its waters with sulphur and lime; the Salt Fork, a bold, beautiful stream, with water as clear as that of mid-ocean, descends through salty plains and over beds of salt, mixing its brine with the sulphur and lime;⁵ the South Fork winds slowly through lands filed with soda and magnesia, and the Clear Fork contributes its volume of sweet water from fertile

plain and forest whose soil has been formed of the debris of all of these. Thus the Brazos descends from a giant laboratory in which nature compounds the richest mineral fertilizers, and charges its waters with them to bless the regions below. Add to these the millions and millions of tons of vegetable matter decaying annually in the valleys, and the extraordinary fertility is explained. The Nile has been in cultivation probably fifty-five centuries, with its annual yield undiminished, and this Brazos, I doubt not, can excel that.

THE OLD FERRYMAN

Descending the steep bank to the water thirty feet below, I saw an old ferryman sitting in his boat, with his chin resting upon his left hand, apparently absorbed in meditation. A large white crane, standing like a statue on one leg on the opposite shore, seemed to be trying to rival him in lonesomeness and meditation. The soft earth of the bank gave forth no sound under my horse's feet as I descended, and the old gentleman sat and contemplated until my horse, stepping on the boat, startled him. He rose with a complaisant obeisance and his eyes sparkled with the prospect of earning a few cents. "Sarvant, sir!" said he. He was an aged and venerable Negro, his head almost as white as wool, but his stout, straight form and full face showed that age had dealt kindly with him. There was something about him that seemed to say that the old man was of good society and had seen better days.

As he pulled me across, I said, "Uncle, what do you think of things?"

He turned to me and looked enquiringly, and said, "Of what things, sarvant, sir?"

"Of you crane sitting on the opposite shore, on one leg?"

"I think that he will soon fly away."

"And leave me as other things have left me! There seems to be a mystery about that solemn creature. He looks as if he did not have a friend in the world. He looks like the spirit of one departed, who has visited his former haunts and sits melancholy over what he beholds, with his mind far away in the past. Uncle, may not that be the departed spirit of some one of the rich planters who once dwelt hereabouts now deploring the desolation that has befallen his estates and his children?"

The old man looked at me, and then looked at the crane, and when he turned again I thought I beheld a tear in his eye. "If that is the spirit of my old master," said he, looking at the crane suspiciously, "I know he can't wish any harm to me. Old master always liked old Ned."

"And yet he stands with his head tucked under his wing, as if he loved you not."

"No, sir," said he, shaking his head and eying the crane, "that is not my old master—God rest him!"

The crane pulled his head from under his wing, gave a stately flap, and flew down the dark river, his legs projecting behind him. The old man watched him departing with a sigh of relief.

"Uncle Ned, what do you think of our times!" said I.

“Ah, young master, they’re not what they was in the old timey days. That crane shorely did put me to thinking of the old timey days. There ain’t no sich days now.”

“Uncle Ned, does not the sun shine as brightly; do not the dews descend and the rains fall as regularly; do not the crops grow as well, and do not the birds sing as sweetly as in the old timey days?”

“The same God,” said he, “looks upon us yit, and it rains the same, but crops ain’t what they was, and things ain’t prospering. Look at the falling down houses and the rotting fences. It ’pears to me there’s a blight upon the yeth.”⁶

“Uncle Ned, what do you think of freedom and slavery?”

“Well, sir, to talk right straight, I think it’s about one and t’other. About the only difference I see is that there’s more freedom and less to eat; more privilege and lesser comfort. We are all slaves anyhow to our backs and our bellies. Them’s worsser masters than ever the overseers was. We didn’t have that slavery in slavery times. And I tell you, young mas., when the nigger git sick now, the nigger gwine die. There ain’t no old master and old mistiss now to send for the doctor and come and nuss you. If you send for the doctor now, ten to one he won’t come, ’cepting he knows you mighty well, for he knows you ain’t gwine git his money.”

The boat struck the shore and I gave Uncle Ned a silver half dollar. He was feeling in his pocket for the change. I said, “Never mind, Uncle Ned; you keep that.”

“Sarvant, sir; sarvant, sir,” said he with a low bow; and looking straight ahead at me, he added, “I believe you, sir, is the son of an old timey planter.”

Rising on my horse I bade Uncle Ned adieu, reminding him to keep a sharp eye on the crane. He had probably been the favorite body servant of some rich planter, whose pleasant duty was to attend to small things about the “great-house,” and drive the young ladies to church or to school.

CHAPTER III

SAN FELIPE DE AUSTIN

"AUSTIN'S COLONY"

"Hail holy light! offspring of heaven first born!" Such was my exclamation as I emerged from the dark forest of the Brazos into the open sunlight of the prairie. I might now have turned aside to visit the ancient municipality of San Felipe, but it would have deflected me a few miles from my course, and I chose to stop and rest awhile, as my horse cropped the sweet herbage. The scene before me was one of much beauty. Groves of the post or iron oak stood here and there on the prairie, and a narrow belt of timber ran centrally through a lovely valley to the west. Beyond the valley the land rose in gentle slopes; pretty farms, half concealed under a blue haze, were visible in the distance, and everything indicating the approach to a prosperous and happy community.

San Felipe is chiefly worthy of note for what it has been. In the "old timey" days it was the most notable and important place in Texas. All roads in the State led to San Felipe. It was the seat of Austin's colony, the home of the three hundred American adventurers who first put foot on Texas soil. A restless and uneasy assemblage they were, gathered here and there from every corner of the United States. Accustomed to a drifting, unquiet life, little they cared for the arts and industries of peace. They tilled the field enough to subsist, but built few or no homes that were comfortable. they left no more token of civilization than a band of wandering savages who have encamped a month on a hunting ground. They were chiefly valuable as food for gunpowder; and to such complexion does it come at last when we look back into the character of those who penetrated wild and unknown regions and founded empires. Graceless ne'er-do-wells at home, nature seems to have formed them expressly to sustain the losses and undergo the perils of conquest. Under this regime San Felipe de Austin was a clump of unsightly cabins, in which the tin cup discharged its ardent contents by day and the fiddle sounded by night. These occupations were more agreeable to them than building homes and cultivating housewives and children.

After this, San Felipe became for a while the seat of empire of the struggling young republic of Texas, but its new honors brought no improvement in architecture, and the tin cups rang and the fiddle and dance vexed the ear of the night the same as ever. Here Houston, Rusk and Lamar made their headquarters, harangued the lawmakers, planned their campaigns and laid the foundations of mighty Texas. their council room was the joist of a miserable log cabin, which was the best that Texas could then afford to her statesmen and warriors. They themselves were clad in buckskin, and some of them at least enjoyed to no small degree the tin cup and fiddle.

Anson Jones, than a young man, just from the colleges of Massachusetts, afterwards President of Texas, visited San Felipe about this time, to seek employment under the revolutionary government. He says in his memoirs that he found Houston "dead drunk" in the upper story of a dirty shanty, and the whole population was so rough and boisterous that he was "disgusted," and returned to Brazoria where he had settled.

As Texas grew stronger and built other more populous cities, the restless denizens of San Felipe hastened thither, in search of new fields of excitement and amusement. The village now has probably a hundred inhabitants, and it is said to be a fact that not one of the original settlers or their descendants dwells in it or near it. Nothing could be better proof of the unquietness of those early adventurers.

But feeble and sunken as San Felipe is now, she has that by which she may grow great. Before the revolution, Mexico granted to the municipality four leagues, or nearly seventeen thousand acres of land, situated around her, fronting on both sides of the Brazos. She holds most of these lands yet. They will become of immense value and fill her coffers with gold. With such endowment she might build splendid colleges, atheneums and museums, gather to her the learned and refined, and make herself the most marked place in Texas. Genius was at her birth; it long sauntered about her cabins, and if it has abandoned her, she may recall it and become the Athens of the South-west. It is renown worth gaining. Let her try it. The locality is rich, beautiful and salubrious, enjoying the Gulf breeze that sweeps to her over a hundred miles of prairie, in which there is not a single bog or fen.

CAT SPRINGS

I rode up the valley of Mill Creek in Austin county. This valley is a wide and lovely one, and scarcely less fertile than the Brazos Bottom. Beauty continually increased around me, until as I approached Cat Springs, I thought the country the loveliest I had ever beheld. To the right, beyond the valley, the prairie rolled away in sunny slopes and graceful swells, growing higher as they faded away in the blue distance; to the left it was as level as the bosom of a lake sleeping under a summer eve; all verdant with luxuriant grasses; dotted with farms and pretty cottages, nestling amid evergreen shrubbery; diversified with Druid looking groves of post-oak. Everything bore a look of contentment and good cheer—even the lazy cattle and grunting pigs, which would scarcely deign to look at me as I passed. Piles of cotton bales were seen in every yard, the prosperous farmers no doubt patiently holding back for better prices. At a distance Cat Springs looks like a town; but it is not even a village; it has not even a post-office. As I rode into it I found it only a big assemblage of eighty acre farms, with their cozy cottages and neat barns and stables. The piles of cotton and the rows of stacks of hay and grain served to increase the delusion of town or city which possessed me at a distance. It has only one store, a large and fine one, at which every conceivable variety of articles is offered for sale, from a lady's hair-pin to a barrel of whiskey. I stopped at this store and asked entertainment for the night, which was accorded me. On entering

the settlement I heard only the German tongue and saw German faces. The entire population for miles around, so far as I could judge, is German. See how different and home-loving these Germans are from the adventurers who established San Felipe, and won a place among the nations for Texas! I had traveled only some twenty-two miles during the day, partly on account of the discomfort of my seat in the saddle, and partly my care to observe the matchless country over which I had passed.

Cat Springs derives its name from a bold, beautiful spring of cool, soft water, which bursts up in the community and forms the principal water of Mill Creek; and the spring no doubt derives its name from a colony of wild-cats found established in the trees which shade it. And I dare say those who discovered and thus christened it, were the graceless adventurers who encamped, not settled, at San Felipe, in whose eyes a wild-cat was a highly respectable and delightful creature. No German could thus have christened it. So charming a place and community deserves a prettier name. Why cannot the Germans re-baptize it? Will not the name of their sweet poet do as well—Uhland? And the whole place seems to me to breathe of the spirit of Uhland.⁷

GEOLOGICAL

Here I find the first stone on my journey. It crops out on the banks of Mill Creek and along the edges of the undulating swells of the prairie. All below, the country is stoneless. This is a hard, bluish, compact sandstone, and its appearance marks a new geological era. I had up to this point been traveling over a country newer than the Pliocene. A great bog covered the whole extent from Houston up to this point, with shallow brackish water. Its shores run along the foot of the undulating prairie which reaches down to the valley of Mill Creek, and its bottom was gradually filled up with the sediment of the Brazos and Colorado. Right here then was probably the last stand of the Gulf of Mexico before it retreated to its present position. This stone is clearly of Eocene formation, and the Miocene and Pliocene either did not exist within this area, or have been hidden by the alluvial deposits. The stone makes an excellent and handsome building material, and as it is the nearest stone to Houston, and is in abundance, it will certainly be in great demand when it can be transported on railroad.⁸

A TALK WITH THE MERCHANT

“A noble country is this of yours, sir,” said I.

“We are satisfied with our country,” said he. “Any man who will work, and they all work here, can live well, and lay away something for a rainy day. They have their crops and their cattle, their pigs and poultry, they never need want for a dollar.”

“What do they do with their money?” said I wonderingly.

“They send some to Germany to comfort the old ones at home. Some put it in bank in

Houston, and lend it on real estate at twelve per cent. There's many a fine house in Houston built with our Cat Springs money. Some poke it away in old boxes and stockings, and there it will stay until their children inherit it, and will be surprised at the amount of ready cash they find themselves possessed of. Well-to-do is the rule here with no exceptions."

"I dare say you lose nothing by bad debts in such a community."

"Never," said he. "Most of my neighbors pay as they go. With some I keep accounts, and they give me checks on Houston when pay-day comes, which serve me just as well."

"What a grand community to grow rich in!"

"He smiled, and asked me to join him in a bottle of beer.

CHAPTER IV

OF VARIOUS EXPERIENCES

I did not feel so uncomfortable in my saddle this morning, as usage to it had hardened me. The sun shone brightly, and the song of the lark cheered me as I rode from Cat Springs to the westward. I had taken a step upward, and not only saw that I was ascending, but felt that the country over which I had passed lay far below me. I was entering another clime and other regions. the prairie, no longer monotonously level, rolled in undulations, and rose here and there to immense knolls or mounds. The forests, struggling to obtain foothold and conquer other possessions, had thrown forward in every direction advance couriers which stood in isolated groves, adding greatly to the beauty of the scenery. These groves, by some singular chance, had established themselves on the most conspicuous elevations. They consisted of the iron oak, of unusually large size and handsome form. They will continue to spread, and after a time will possess all of this, save where the axe of the farmer will bar their advance.

Five miles west of Cat Springs, the cozy German farms disappear, and I again ride in a wilderness, but a wilderness of beauty still. What though no one lives upon it?—yet the stately groves adorn the landscape, the graceful undulations continue, the rich, green herbage luxuriates, romantic vales wind hither and thither, and nature has drawn everything with exquisite art. It is rich—positively every foot. It need only the iron horse to make this lovely land pour out wealth, like Fortune from her cornucopia. The solitary settler passes it by because he would be too remote from neighbors and a market, and others pass because none have come before them. And thus it is left alone in unproductive richness and loveliness. How deliciously the breezes sweep over these undulations and mounds! By night or by day they cease not. If I were a miller I would want no better locality than this for motive power. On the top of one of these elevations I would build my structure, and the winds of God would turn the stones. No fear that the stream would diminish from drought. If I were a shepherd, in yonder noble grove would I erect my shelter, from whose eminence I would watch my flocks pasturing in the vales or basking at noon on the banks of the sparkling pools below.⁹

I had ridden over about twenty miles of such country as this, when a beautiful vale allured me to stop, to graze my steed and to bait on the cheese and crackers I had procured at Cat Springs. I stripped my steed and turned him loose, his forefeet manacled with a rawhide “hobble,” and bade him eat his fill. I then proceeded to consume the cheese and crackers, after which I took a draught from the bottle which the kindly merchant had filled for me to take along to bear me company on the way. It was exceedingly soft and innocent to the taste, reminded me as I drank of it the discourse of a good, wise old man who would

entertain you and fill you with wisdom, but would not harm you for the world. After this I was seized with a desire for slumber, increased by contemplation of the profound quietude of the vale. Spreading my saddle-blanket beneath me on the feathery grass, I soon became unconscious of my own existence and that of the world besides. I passed hours in this condition, until I was partially awakened by a sense of uncomfortable chilliness. Deeming that I was in my bed in Houston, I struggled to gather the covering about me, and had covered perhaps a foot or part of my flank with my saddle-blanket, when I again passed into obliviousness. I had not, I suppose, remained so long, however, before the chilliness again disturbed me, increased to such a degree that I imagined that I was gradually being submerged into a bath of ice water. I arose, and was startled to see the shades of night settling around me. What was worse, my horse had disappeared. I stared eagerly around, but he was nowhere in sight. Said I to myself, "Has some heartless tramp stolen upon me in my slumber, and set me afoot to starve in this wild, untenanted region?" A sense of desolation seized me, the most overwhelming I had ever experienced.

I had not long to look, fortunately, when my horrors were dispelled by finding my horse grazing in an umbrageous nook concealed from the point where I had slept. He looked at me as if he was perfectly innocent of the distress he had caused me, and was sorry for it. He was soon saddled, and I was again on my way. I took another draught from the bottle to dispel the chilliness that still possessed me. It was extremely soft and mellifluous to the taste, but I observed in a moment that it sent the warm blood coursing through my veins to a surprising degree for the small quantity I had taken. It was a veritable snake concealed under a nosegay of the charmingest and most sweetly scented flowers. I looked at the bottle and saw that the merchant had written on it "1853." It was a symbol more cabalistic to me than S. T.-1860-X.

A NIGHT'S EXPERIENCE

Just as darkness fell, I came to a forest which seemed perched on higher ground than any I had yet found. As I stood on the edge of the forest and looked back in the darkness, the prairie seemed a great sea dotted with islands and castles, rolling below me. The waving grasses concealed and then disclosed the rising stars on the horizon, as the waves do on the sea. It lacked only the roar of the billows to complete the delusion. Penetrating the forest, I saw that all was the blackness of darkness, save where the opening of the road admitted starlight. My horse labored along over the surface which seemed a foot deep in fine, loose sand, a remarkable and sudden change from the black, tenacious soil of the prairie. His laboring through this material, sinking beneath his feet, became painful to me to witness, and I listened eagerly for the baying of some honest watch-dog and looked for a glimmering light through the forest, indicating some human residence. But the forest only became denser and blacker, the road heavier; and the silence was unbroken save by the sighing wind and the hooting owl. Fully two hours this toilsome march continued, when the

road seemed to grow so obscure that I thought I might have strayed away upon some interminable trail made by a woodman in selecting and hauling timber. Fearing to be lost in such a wilderness, and having compassion for my horse, I resolved to encamp in the woods, though illy provided for such an occasion. I rode away from the path, and finding a small open space on which I might stake my horse, I dismounted and took off his accoutrements. Leaving him with forty feet of rope, I spread my saddle-blanket under a branching iron-oak to shelter me from the night dew. With my saddle for a pillow, and no other covering by my overcoat, I endeavored to address myself to slumber.

I had dozed, I cannot tell how long, with no great degree of discomfort, when I was disturbed by a few long, lonesome howls in the depths of the forest. These were soon answered by other lonesome howls in other directions. I knew from the peculiarly doleful and heart-rending strains that these were wolves, and their sonorousness distinctly declared that they were the bigger sort. After a while the howls were again heard in every direction, growing nearer and nearer, until I became aware that I was surrounded by a cordon of ravenous beasts. At last they all seemed to gather together, joining in a most tumultuous consultation, in which they expressed themselves by a mingled howling, yelping and piteous crying. When this ceased, I heard a rushing noise in the rustling leaves, and my horse suddenly starting, dashed away with full force, snapping the rope as if it were a mere thread. Away he plunged through the forest with the speed of the winds, sending forth a rapid sound from under his heels. The woods then seemed alive with wolves, and they snuffed the air all around me.

A sense of intense desolation would doubtless have seized me here, but the higher instinct of self-preservation was now pressing me. It occurred to me that these wolves might be in a famished condition, and having failed to get my horse, might not scruple to make a supper of myself, if the temptation were allowed to stand in their way. Such things surely have they done before. What was I to do—a lone stranger in a deep forest without other weapon than a pocket-knife and a solitary black bottle for a club? While pondering this question, the wolves put up a most piteous clamor, as if intending to advise me that they were very hungry, and asking me to pardon the deed they were about to do. I looked up the tree under which I had dozed. A large limb stood temptingly near my head. I reached up and grasped it by both hands, and with a bound sprang into the tree. Looking higher I perceived a comfortable fork about ten feet above, and climbing from branch to branch, I was soon ensconced within it. I left below a bit of cheese and crackers and a bottle of whisky of the harvest of 1853, and I kindly said to the wolves, "Come, poor creatures, and feast!" Would I not have been a heartless man to have said less?

They howled and moaned around me for some time, but I could not persuade them to come and partake of my charity. I spoke to them gently and pointed to the cheese and whiskey below, but they responded only with a low moan, as if they meant to say, "Not your cheese and whiskey, but you!" One fellow amused me exceedingly. He sat on his haunches about twenty feet from my tree, intently gazing, now upon the cheese and whis-

key, and now casting a long, lingering look upon me. Now and then he would lift his head in the air, moving it round and round, fling his jaws wide open, and looking straight at me, pour forth a moan the most disconsolate I ever heard in my life. I thought he as trying to sing the old melody:

“Thou art so near and yet so far!”

As they went away one by one, I fell to thinking of the utter ludicrousness of my position; and I felt rather ashamed of myself for a moment when I reflected that had I descended from the tree and said “boo!” to the wolves, they would probably have run away faster than my horse did from them, and that they had stopped merely to satisfy their curiosity as to what sort of creature they had treed. But I reassured myself with the reflection that it is no part of manhood or courage to expose one’s self to needless danger; it is rather the part of fool-hardiness. It is the duty of true courage to preserve itself for danger which cannot be avoided; and it cannot be denied that to all appearances, I was safer in that tree than out of it. I descended, and knowing that it was utterly useless to attempt to follow my horse until morning, soon fell into a profound sleep.

When I awoke, the first rays of the rising sun were glimmering on the tops of the trees and I felt none the worse for my couch in the forest. My first care was my horse. Throwing the bridle over my shoulders and putting the other accoutrements over the limb of a tree, I walked away to hunt him. About a hundred yards from my encampment, a narrow treeless vale or hollow opened in the forest, leading eastward. The grass was very rich in it, and I had little doubt that I would see my horse cropping its luxuriance. I was not disappointed, for presently I was delighted to behold him about half a mile off, grazing very quietly. When within fifty yards of him, I gathered a tempting handful of grass, and holding it out to him as I approached, said, “Come, old fellow; come, good fellow!” He waited until I was ten feet from him, when he tossed his head in the air, kicked up his heels and ran a quarter of a mile, and resumed him grazing. I followed. This time I gathered what I considered the most tempting stock of grass in the prairie, and again endeavored to coax him. He looked at me disdainfully, as if he meant to say, “Do you see anything green in my eye? Do you think I am such a fool as not to know that I can pluck, with my lips and teeth, as good grass on this prairie as you can pluck with your hands?” And away he went, stopping about three hundred yards off.

A STRANGE APPARITION

I was greatly perplexed and know not what to do. I was considering the position, all involved in distress, when I happened to look to my right, and beheld, standing on the edge of the timber, motionless as a statue and gazing intently upon me, a strange object. I went toward it, and it had the form of a man. This man, or likeness of a man was about four and

a half feet high, broad shoulders, bow-legged. A heavy black beard nearly covered his face, and half concealed a great mouth which appeared six inches in width. There was a singular leer in his little grey eyes, which expressed I could not tell whether malice, roguishness, or idiocy. Of brow, he seemed to have none whatsoever. He wore buckskin pants, buckskin jacket, moccasins of buckskin on his feet; and this interesting assemblage was crowned with a coon-skin cap, the tail of the coon falling full length down his back. A heavy draagoon pistol was buckled around his waist, and the same belt held a knife which seemed to have been fashioned from a slab of iron. At his side hung a buckskin sack, fastened to his neck by a buckskin thong. His pants and jacket were begrimed and greasy, looking as if the singular creature who wore them had long dwelt in a smokehouse, among bacon and fat-casks.

He remained motionless, and did not even deign a wink of the eye until I addressed him. I said, "Will you be so kind, sir, as to help me catch my horse?"

"Oh yes, oh yes," said he. "And I think you need help, I have seen you trying to catch him a long time," he added in a coarse, gruff voice, which seemed better suited to the lungs of a giant than a dwarf.

"Do you think, sir, you can catch him?"

"Oh yes, oh yes. Come along and see how quickly I will do it."

He led the way and I walked by his side, wondering what he would do. When within fifty yards of my horse he asked me to stand still, while he drew from his sack an ear of corn, which advancing he held out to him, saying, "cubby! cubby!" The horse raised his head, looked at him a moment, and then walked straight up to him. He seized him, and the next moment I had my bridle upon him. I offered the dwarf reward, but he scornfully refused it, saying he was "no so hard up as to come down to that sort o' meanness yet."

"Well, sir," said I, "with my saddle I left some very fine spirits. May I not ask the honor of a morning dram with you?"

"Oh yes, oh yes!" And his eyes sparkled. I rode on the horse's bare back and the dwarf walked by my side. I kept my eye upon him, because in truth I was a little suspicious of this unaccountable fellow. Reaching my encampment, I handed him the bottle and a cup, saying, "drink largely." He obeyed the injunction; he took a deep potion, raising his head and smiling at the woods as he did so. "Look here stranger," said he, "this is liquor what's liquor. It cheers me up all the way down." And he smacked his lips with joy. Knowing its latent power I touched it with caution.

It made him voluble and hospitable. Hitherto as reserved and unsocial as an owl, he now glowed with vivacity. Never did iceberg melt half so rapidly under a tropical sun. "I know you are hungry," said he. "Come with me to my den and have a good breakfast with me!"

I did not like that word "den." It rang with suspicion. Was I in fact in company with a Robin Hood of the forest, or some skulking criminal who had hidden in these deep recesses? I looked at him more guardedly than ever. How did I know that he might not be

seeking some favorable opportunity to pierce me with a bullet from that heavy pistol? I thanked him, and declined his invitation politely, on the ground that it would probably detain me too long from my journey, and asked him to join me in another smile. "With all my heart, sir; with all my heart;" and another heavy draught gurgled down his throat. Then resting against a tree with both hands in his pocket, he said, "Well, stranger, you don't know what to think of me nohows. Don't you think I am Governor Dicky Coke? Ah, Dicky Coke—he is the greatest man in the world. Hurrah for Dicky Coke! When he gits into the Senate, though, won't he make them fellows stand around? Well, stranger, I am a stockraiser by profession—that is, I flourishes by the industry of my sows and boars; that is, I, sir, and a pig-raiser. I can blow my horn and all these sows and shoats, and the squealing of my pigs, sir. Sir, I am a man of income. Greatest country in the world for boars and sows. these acorns feeds them. I give 'em just corn enough to gintle 'em, and when killing time comes, just enough to harden their fat. If you would be a man of income, stranger, stop here and raise hogs!"

"I thank thee," said I, "for the advice, and it is not impossible I may one day be a pig-raiser, and they neighbor too. But how about the wolves?"

"Ah, the wolves won't phase your stock at all. You see when the wolves comes, the hogs form in a ring with the pigs in the middle. No wolves darsn't charge that ring; never, sir; no wolves darsn't charge that ring. They catch your calves, but never your pigs, Be a pig-raiser, stranger, be a pig raiser!"

"The sun is mounting high in the heavens, and it is time for another smile. Join me, sir: join me in another!"

"To be sure, sir; to be sure," said he.

I poured the cup for him nearly full. He drank it and slid downward against the tree, and sat at its foot leaning against the trunk. "Glory!" said he. "Stranger, why don't you send a bottle of this to Governor Coke?"

I invited him to take another. He accepted. I gave him the last drop in the bottle. He drank it and fell over on his side; then stretched himself out on his back full length, and passed away into profound slumber. I placed his coon-skin cap over his eyes, the Cat Springs bottle by his side, and left him alone in his glory. I mounted my horse and silently stole away. How long he slept I know not.

CHAPTER V

LaGRANGE, THE COLORADO

As I rode on, the forest continued, but the soil grew rich: a sandy loam, the delight of the agriculturist, black with the decayed leaves and trunks of the forest. The wild grape, of several varieties, grew rampant on this mellow soil, awaiting only the hands of the skilled vintager to make the country flow with purple wine.¹⁰

Noble mulberry trees, the largest I ever saw, were scattered here and there through the forest, and became more numerous as I rode along. These were free gifts from the hands of nature, and their noble stature and luxuriance of bough indicate unerringly to these people that they may weave as rich a silk as ever sparkled on a Chinese mandarin. The oaks seemed literally to droop under their crop of acorns, and the pigs grunted extreme satisfaction as they stirred the fallen leaves with their noses. I thought of my prostrate friend the pig-raiser, and could not wonder at his eulogy of the pig-business, where nature showers tenderloins and rich sausages. I was tempted to gather and eat a handful of these acorns, and they were nearly as sweet as chestnuts. Of all the oaks of the forest perhaps the post or iron-oak yields the richest and most abundant nuts.

An hour's ride suddenly disclosed to me, hidden in a nook formed by surrounding forest and wooded hills, nearly concealed under a wealth of mulberry and evergreens, the pretty little town of LaGrange, which struck me at once as a seat of rural opulence. And sooth, so it is. It does not contain, I judge, more than fifteen hundred people, and there are not imposing structures, but there is that about it which declares at once the true gentleman: enough to be at ease, pleasing engagement and aspirations, a happy conscience and a beaming future. We occasionally meet a man who though a stranger to us, bears this history written all over him; and so it is with this village that rests in the nook, where one may hear in the busiest part of the day the blue Colorado murmuring over its pebbly bottom. Churches and numerous schools bespeak Christian civilization; the pretty, neatly dressed girls, who almost forbear to steal a glance at you as you pass, bespeak refinement, and all that is around bespeaks easy well-to-do.

It is the capital of Fayette County, one of the richest and most populous regions of Texas. Last year this county produced forty-five thousand bales of cotton, nearly all of which was bought and sold again by the merchants of LaGrange. This turned loose about two hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars of gold on her streets. Now add to this the hides, wool, grain, and bacon and lard, yielding another sum as large, annually increasing, and it is not strange that an air of opulence should rest upon this village in the nook; I should mention, too, beer, for they brew here as delightful lager as ever warmed the portly stomach of Gambrinus. The people seem to be about half American and half German,

and I judge that they are made up of the best that is German and the best that is American. I observe that there is a great preponderance of blonde beauties, by which I judge that the German and the American stream are gradually fading away into each other and becoming inextricably blended. It is a meeting and mingling at last of two streams that have separated and flowed from the same parent source, each to be reinvigorated probably by the remingling.

And yet this community, so rich and populous, has no other means of transferring its products to market but the wagon and team. So anxious are they for a railroad that they say: "Build the Texas Western to Cat Springs or Belleville, and we will grade and tie thence to LaGrange. We will not stop by the wayside to build towns and speculate lots. We will do the work as quickly as money and muscle can do it." When they get this road this community and the region around will become to Houston and Galveston what Sicily was to Rome—its granary and larder. Rich as it is now, the mine but barely touched, it will become a hundred-fold richer. It is a good region to migrate to.¹¹

My horse and myself having breakfasted on the viands that were best for us both, and having enjoyed two full hours of rest, I rode away—my face still to the westward—in all respects the same as when I rode away yesterday morning, save that I was minus the Cat Springs bottle. That bottle, innocent as it was, had brought me the long slumber on the prairie, the night melodious with wolves, the perplexing pursuit of my horse, the pig-raiser prostrate under the iron-oak; and as LaGrange was a superior place, I thought I had better not substitute it with a LaGrange bottle, lest that bottle should prove more fantastic, and call up more wonders than Aladdin's Lamp.

I stood upon the bank of the Colorado, and it seemed a glorious poem moving before me; so beautiful was it in itself and so beautiful in the reminiscences it recalled. If one, when he was a beardless boy, ever loved a bright little fairy who played on the banks of the Colorado, or any other surpassingly lovely stream and spoke the first whisper of love amid the murmur of its waters, he can partly comprehend my feelings as I stood and contemplated. The same sparkling water—a collection it seemed of all the brightest drops of dews of Heaven—laughed and sang over cascades here, and eddied in deep blue pools there; the same bubble danced along, and every ripple seemed to give me a glimpse of her image. As we grow older we can smile as we choose at the little follies of the first dawn of love, but it is the one spot of our lives that is the sweetest of all, and when we think of it our thoughts involuntarily become a posey and a music. If this is not Heaven or a taste of it, I cannot judge what is. I believe there is but one love, and that is first love; that which comes afterward is the rose when its perfume is gone, and when its youth is withered. Better let your love go with the perfume of the rose. When I stepped upon the ferry boat I stooped and kissed the sparkling Colorado; for it seemed the very drop which she had just kissed before me, or at least had kissed it in the old timey days.¹²

This river is called the twin-brother of the Brazos, but there is no likeness whatever between them. Indeed it is remarkable that there should be such variance in two rivers

which for six hundred miles flow alongside of each other. The Brazos creeps along silently, dark and forbidding, while the Colorado cheers one with a merry voice and with waters as bright as any that sparkle under the heavens; clear as the light of a diamond where it leaps over cascades or glances down rapids, and of the deep blue of the skies where they are most ethereal, when it glides quietly through pools. The Brazos makes us think of toads spitting vapors from their mouths, while Pleasure and Youthful Jollity seem to hover incessantly over the Colorado.

To one who looks upon these beautiful waters the name "red-colored," seems a misnomer and wickedness; but a few moments of observation will teach us how careful and apt were the old Spaniards in their selection of names for natural objects. We behold its wide valleys and all its detritus of a rich chocolate-brown, strongly inclining to red; and this peculiarity marks the river from its source to its mouth. During periods of swells the river is always inflamed, and when these come from its main channel, far above, it has put on war-paint, indeed. I am not sure from what peculiar sediment this color is derived. I have traced the river far above the mouth of the Concho, and saw nothing from which it may have been derived. Above that river is inflamed more than ever, showing that its war-paint is gathered from the vast uninhabited region beyond, from a soil derived probably from the decomposition of porphyritic rocks. Be it what it may, the deposit of red material is enormous, for it has colored the earth of the valley along its whole course to unknown depths.¹³

And a good fertilizer is this mysterious sediment, which it almost annually spreads over the valley, renewing the richness which the crops have extracted. The valley is not regarded as quite so rich as the Brazos Bottoms, but it is still rich enough, in all conscience. The same crops that flourish on the Brazos flourish quite as well here, and for grains it is better, producing more weight and substance to the bushel. The valleys are not so wide, nor so heavily timbered, but the wood is more compact and durable, and there is not a purer and healthier clime in the world. The river along its whole course is noted for its beautiful and often exquisite scenery. Perhaps no river can furnish more charming pictures for the pencil of the artist.¹⁴

Crossing the river and clearing the forests of the valley, I see before me mountains, so-called, rock-ribbed and venerable. They are by far the tallest elevations yet seen on my journey, and seem to mark the approach of a new geological era. They are flanked with sandstone at their bases, excellent for building, and higher up with limestone, good for quicklime. From base to pinnacle they are heavily covered with sombre forests of cedar, furnishing the neighboring farms with everlasting fencing material. This durable timber abounds in this region, frequently spreading over the lowlands in forests, and is of great size. When accessible to railroads it will be of great value for ties.

CHAPTER VI

THE DEVIL AND STRAP BUCKNER

A mile above the ferry, I entered a charming valley leading from the west. It was a succession of farms. The song of the plowman was merry in the air, and there was an odor of newly-turned soil, which showed just a tint of the coloring matter of the Colorado, proving that the mighty river had invaded the valley with its back-water. Gentle slopes and eminences and detached groves of oak looked upon this pleasant valley from either side. Through the middle of it flowed a small stream known as Buckner's Creek. The invariable cotton bale was piled in every yard, awaiting the pleasure of the farmer to be converted into gold.

I had ridden a few miles up this attractive valley when a young horseman cantered up by my side, traveling the same direction. He was dressed in faultless neatness, but there was something in his Byron collar and the little blue ribbon about his neck, as well as his large, bright, black eyes, which seemed to say that the sunny hill-sides, the shady forests, the murmuring river and the blue distances were to him a delight and love. A soft felt hat sat jauntily on his head, but did not conceal his broad, pale brow. I said involuntarily as he checked his prancing steed beside me and bowed politely, "A young gentleman and a scholar!" His steed, handsomely caparisoned, glossy with kind handling and abundant provender, gay with exuberant spirit, seemed meet companion for his rider, and proud of the burden he bore.

After an interchange of courtesies and some pleasant conversation, I asked him why the sparkling brook was called Buckner's Creek, and why it had not been named for some water-nymph, who, in the mythological days, must have chosen it for her haunt; or for some Indian princess with a musical name who had lived and loved on its banks?

"Ah," said he, turning upon me with his beaming eyes, which grew larger and brighter, "and thereby hangs a tale—a tale of the olden time. And as I perceive that you are one who loves knowledge and light, whose delight is to know, I will tell you if you have the patience to hear me."

I thanked him and begged him to proceed.

He continued: You must know then, that this vale in which you are riding, is one that has witnessed a strange company and remarkable events. There is not one foot of this soil beneath your feet, which, had it a tongue to speak, could not a tale unfold that would harrow up your young heart. Even the zephyrs, as I fancy, occasionally lisp it with their airy tongues. In the olden time there came to Texas with Austin, who you are aware, brought "the first three hundred" Americans who founded this great commonwealth, a youth whose name was Strap Buckner. Where he was born, whence his lineage, or why he bore the name

of Strap the records do not tell; whether he was so christened at the front, or because he was a stalwart, strapping youth. Certain it is, he was of giant stature, and of the strength of ten lions, and he used it as ten lions. His hair was of the redness of flame, as robust as the mane of a charger, and his face, it was freckled. He was of a kindly nature, as most men of giant strength are, but he had a pride in his strength which grew ungovernable. With no provocation whatever, he knocked men down with the kindest intention and no purpose to harm them. He would enter a circle of gentlemen with a smiling visage, and knock them all down; and when any received bruised or broken limbs, he nursed them with more than the tenderness of a mother, and with a degree of enthusiasm as if his whole heart was bent on restoring them to health as soon as practicable, in order that he might enjoy the pleasure of knocking them down again. Indeed, he nursed them with the enthusiasm of true genius which fires itself onward to the fulfillment of some great aspiration; and his genius was to knock men down. He knocked down Austin's whole colony at least three times over, including the great and good Austin himself.

He could plant a blow with his fist so strongly that it was merry pastime with him to knock a yearling bull stark dead; and even the frontlet of a full grown animal could not withstand him. In those days a huge black bull appeared mysteriously in Austin's colony, who by his ferocity became a terror to the settlement, and was known by the dread name of Noche. Strap challenged this bull to single combat, and invited the colony to witness the encounter. When the day came the entire colony looked from their doors and windows, being afraid to go out; every one, probably, praying that both Strap and the bull would be slain. He threw a red blanket over his shoulder, and walked on the prairie with the air of a hero who goes forth to meet a mighty foeman. He bore no weapon what-ever. When the bull perceived Strap, he tossed his tail aloft and switched it hither and thither, pawed the earth, and emitted a roar of thunder. Strap imitated him, and pawed and roared also; which perceiving, the bull came toward him like a thunderbolt clothed in tempest and terror. Strap received him with a blow on his frontlet from his bare fist, which sent him staggering back upon his haunches, and the blood flowed from his smoking nostrils. Recovering from his surprise, Noche, to the astonishment of all, turned tail and fled away, bellowing. He was never more seen in those parts.

Strap's fame greatly arose, insomuch that men looked upon his with awe, and maidens and strong women pined in secret admiration. He became a great hunter, using no weapon but his fist and an iron pestle or mace, which he threw with the accuracy of rifle aim when the prey refused him encounter in close quarters. The wildcat and the bear emigrated, and the buffalo bade a lasting farewell to the lowlands.

About this time also Strap became addicted to strong drink and grew boisterous, to such a degree that people shunned him in spite of his kindly nature. No man would meet him alone; but when he was seen approaching, men would shut themselves up in their houses, or collect in knots, all with guns and pistols cocked. Strap now reasoned with himself and determined he would seek other fields of glory. Said he to himself reflectively, "It

is ever thus. When a man of genius appears in the world he may be recognized by this infallible sign: That all the dunces are immediately in confederacy against him." So, early on a bright spring morning he arose, and throwing his bundle of raiment over his left shoulder, and bearing his iron pestle in his right hand, he turned his back upon the unappreciative community. The people stood at their doors and windows—the men and the women, the boys and the girls—and watched him departing and with one voice exclaimed, "Fare thee well, Strap Buckner, and joy go with thee and with thy house!" Strap turned, and in the kindness of his heart exclaimed, "Fare thee well, San Felipe! Sweet be thy cradled slumbers! I go to meet Noche, who has sent me a challenge through the air. Sleep in security, San Felipe; for Strap Buckner watches over thy slumbers." And in the kindness of his heart he brushes a tear from his eye, and strode rapidly away.

He travelled west over the great plains. It would be long to tell you his many strange adventures by the way. After days of wonders, Strap reached the site where Lagrange now is, and to his surprise found a solitary trading house, where Bob Turket and Bill Smotherall exchanged beads and liquor with the Indians for furs and skins, and for horses they might steal. He liked the country greatly, and whiskey being accessible, he determined to abide in these quarters. On the first day of his arrival, he knocked down both Bob Turket and Bill Smotherall, but he did it so handsomely and with such an air of unspeakable kindness, that they could conceive no offense. Before a week had elapsed he had knocked down every Indian brave who dwelt within ten miles around; and finally he knocked down the great king himself, Tuleahcahoma, in the presence of the queen, Muchalatota, and the fair princess, Tulipita. He gained such renown among the Indians that they called him Kokulblothetopoff; that is to say: the Red Son of Blue Thunder. The great king held him in such reverence that he presented him with a grey horse with a bob-tail, which though ugly and lank to look at, was famed as the swiftest horse known to all the Indians; and he offered him the fair Princess Tulipita in marriage. The Princess he rejected, because he prized his strength above all things, and forbore to waste any of it for woman, though a fair princess. Tulipita sobbed in silence, and let concealment, like the worm in the bud, feed on her copper cheeks.

Now, this great king and his powerful tribe dwelt in this fair valley in which you ride. Strap saw it, and he loved the beautiful land. He resolved to settle within it, being persuaded thereto partly, no doubt, by the sight of the swarming population whom he might pound, and observing that should he become thirsty, his swift grey nag would quickly bear him where he might imbibe his fill. He chose yon lovely site, and there built his residence of cedar posts. He procured a jug of whiskey and set up housekeeping, an object of great reverence to his neighbors. Daily he went forth and knocked down many Indian with great grace. At last they conceived that they did not like this, and they determined to abandon the vale. On a dark night they silently stole away, and next morning Strap found himself desolate and alone. When he beheld the deserted valley, but yesterday teeming with braves and fair maidens, he wept in the kindness of his heart. "Other friends," said he, "have left

me before. Such is the common penalty of greatness. The great mountains stand in isolation; their heads are clothed in clouds and thunder; their brows are encircled with glittering coronets of ice. They never shake hands, and know no sweet familiarities. They live in cold, solitary grandeur. Thus whom the gods make great they make miserable, in that their greatness lifts them into solitude. Men and women shun me for my greatness, and the bolts of heaven most frequently pierce the sides of the greatest mountains. It is their greatness that invites the shafts." And he wept salt tears in the fullness of his great heart.

Two days he pondered on his greatness and his misery, and the struggle between his genius and his better spirit was terrible! You know, sir, that of all the forces that exist, genius is the most subtle, the most unquiet and the most powerful. He who hath it, hath a heaving ocean or a volcano in his breast. It is nursed and strengthened by opposition, as the eagle scorns the mountain tops which have said to him, "Hither shalt thou soar, but no higher!" Pinching penury and gaunt sickness cannot prevail against it; nay, not even a mother-in-law hath force to quench it. It is like unto measles and small-pox, for when once implanted in a man, it will break forth and have its course. He that hath a genius must needs let it work; else it will prove his ruin. You can conceive then, sir, how terrible was the struggle between Strap and his genius which was to knock men down. His bosom heaved and his eyes rolled. His cabin shook in the agony of the conflict, as his genius got the upper hand. "Ah," thundered his genius, "who would not prefer greatness in misery to happiness in littleness? Who will say that the little tomtit that catches flies under the leaves of the honey-suckle, is not happier than the proud eagle that bathes its wings in lightning and converses with the thunder? And yet, what eagle would exchange with the poor tomtit? Who so poor in spirit? The wretchedness that greatness brings is its badge of honor and the glorious plume of superiority, in which the great spirit should rejoice. Wear thy plumes and be proud of them! Do the polar storms that beat upon the icebergs melt them? No! They enlarge them; they strengthen them; and by them are more appallingly beautiful under the dancing aurora. The great iceberg decays under the stupid airs of the tropics, that bear butterflies and bugs. Shame upon your coward thought!"

Strap's countenance grew strangely flushed, and a dark light gleamed in his impatient eyes. It was his genius startled and indignant. He arose with a proud air, admiringly gazed upon his enormous fist, and groaned deeply for the presence of someone whom he might knock down. A sweet gentleness stole into and beamed from his eyes as he placed himself in the attitude of one who would strike. His genius possessed him.

And now his better spirit spoke in a soft voice: "Ah, Strap, hast thou not glory enough? Is not thy brow already rich with laurels? Hast thou not knocked down many times nearly every man in Texas—even the great Austin and the mighty king, Tuleahcahoma? Shall the great man never see rest? It is the voice of the betrayer that would lure you away from the repose you have nobly won. Under thine own vine and fig tree, live with gentle Peace, and she shall bathe thy brow with kisses. Men shall honor thee as they pass, and maidens shall wreath garlands and sing songs for thee. Heed not the voice of the betrayer. Thou

hast glory enough. Seek gentle Peace, who shall encircle her pleasant arms about thee and bathe thy brow with kisses.”

Strap fell on his back and said imploringly, “Come gentle Peace, encircle thy pleasant arms about me and bathe my brow with kisses. My laurels are sufficient and the great man shall have repose. With thee, gentle Peace, will I live and love!” He rose and walked across his room, his face beaming with a gentleness and meekness and benignity which were extremely beautiful to behold; like the countenance of the Angel of Light beaming forth from behind the retreating clouds. Said he, “I have fought the great fight, and the victory is won! Future ages will applaud Strap Buckner for the greatness he forbore to pluck, even more than for that which he plucked. I retire from arms in the midst of glorious triumph. Come, gentle Peace; encircle me in thy pleasant arms, and bathe my brow in kisses! Ah!” And he again fell back upon his back. It is said that his eyes looked liquorish.

What a pity it is that there is a devil that always follows the tracks of the Angel of Light, and sows thorns and snakes where that one has sown blessings!

He felt a thirst, and he reached forth his hand for his jug, but he found it empty. “Ah!” said he, “this will not do. I must pour a libation to gentle Peace.” He called his swift grey nag, the gift of the mighty King Tuleahcahoma, and holding his jug in one hand and the rein in the other, hied away; his long red hair streaming like a meteor behind him. When he rose upon the east bank of the Colorado, as fate would have it, he saw twenty-two Indian braves, who having exchanged their skins for whiskey and trinkets, were having a gay dance under the boughs of an oak. In their elastic motions their fat bellies and broad breasts were exposed, and glittered in the sun; the sight of which caused light to beam on Strap’s countenance, as if all the kindness in the world had suddenly taken possession of his heart. He smiled a sweet smile, like an ardent lover contemplating his darling, or the old grey goose smiling on the gander. He dismounted, and stepping lightly into the circle of braves, knocked them all down. He then turned to each one and bowed with exquisite grace, and the gentleness of his countenance was sweet. You see how treacherous genius is, and how feeble are the best efforts to withstand it! He that hath a genius must needs let it work. Lightly he stepped into the trading-house, smiling as the dawn, carrying his clenched fists before him. He met Bob Turket at the door, and instantly knocked him down. His eyes sparkled, his genius was aglow. Bill Smotherall, beholding the light of his countenance, essayed to escape, but a powerful blow overtook him between the shoulders and felled him face downward on the floor. A clock, in the form of a fat knight with walling eyes and portly belly, ticked on the counter. His genius was in eruption. He let fly at the portly knight, and the clock flew into a hundred pieces. He jumped upon the counter and flapped his elbows against his flanks, and crowed a crow which rang among the hills and forests of the Colorado. His genius for the first time had overcome and pushed aside his kindness of heart; for never before, in all his achievements, had he uttered a note of triumph. I fear me it was a mark of the decadence of his noble spirit.

HE COMETH!

But all of this perhaps had not been so bad had he not now resorted to that treacherous fluid which men put into their mouths to steal away their brains. Perchance in his next moments of seclusion and meditation his better spirit would have revisited him, and with the tender voice of reproof and monition led him by the right way. but the sad, one false step! It seemed Fate had ordained it otherwise. Calling for his jug, he ordered it filled with the fatal fluid, and seizing a quart measure, he drank at one draught all it would hold. Instantly, as might be supposed, his genius broke all bounds; it raged. Filling the quart measure with water, he made with its contents a wet ring on the floor, in the centre of which he leaped like a savage beast. He smote the air with his fists and exclaimed in a loud voice, "Behold in me, Bob Turket, Bill Smotherall, and ye red men of the forest and prairie—behold in me the champion of the world! I defy all that live. I waver my swift grey nag, the gift of the mighty King Tuleahcahoma. Who will take the wager? Yea, I defy the veritable old Devil himself—him of the cloven hoof and tawny hide. Black imp of hell, thou Satanas, I defy thee!"

Scarcely had he uttered these words when a singular murmuring sound issued from the forests of the Colorado, which, growing louder and louder, at last seemed to quiver under the whole heavens. Bob Turket and Bill Smotherall looked at one another, speechless and pale. The braves gathered about the door stricken with terror, gazing with startling eyeballs not into the forests of the Colorado, now at Bob Turket and Bill Smotherall, and now upon the champion of the world. Said the great Medicine Man, sounding his big bongbooree, "It is—it is—it is he! The Great Father of the Red Son of Blue Thunder has descended from the clouds. He cometh to aid his great son, Kokulblothetopoff, who raiseth his might fists to the skies, and bringeth them down again. Red sons of the forest and prairie, the Wahconda calls ye away!" The great Medicine Man hung his big bongbooree over his back, and sped away like a turkey that is afraid. He leapt rocks and fallen logs in his flight. Twenty-one Indian braves, all in a row, sped behind him like twenty-one turkeys that are afraid. And they leapt rocks and fallen logs as they fled. Evaserunt or re, abierunt or re!

Out spake Bob Turket: "Mighty champion of the world, norate to us what is that!"

The champion of the world, still occupying the center of the ring, responded, "It is not the Great Father of the Red Son of Blue Thunder; it is not the Wahconda calling he red sons of the forest and prairie to hie hence. I know that familiar voice: it is Noche—the dread Noche! He sent me a challenge through the air, and behold, he comes! I conquered him once before, and I will conquer him again. Black, dread Noche, I defy thee! I fling thy challenge back upon they grizzly frontlet!"

The singular murmuring sound again issued from the deep forest of the Colorado, growing louder and louder, till the everlasting hills trembled with the reverberation, and the great oaks bowed their heads. It articulated distinctly, according to the true report of Bob Turket: "Ah, Strap,—ah, Strap! Remember, Strap, remember!"

Bob Turket and Bill Smotherall fell upon their faces, exclaiming, "Mighty champion of the world, depart hence! And thy memorialists will ever pray!"

The champion seized his jug by the handle, and pouring out a quart measure of the treacherous liquid, imbibed it at a single draught. He then mounted his swift grey nag and sped away with the fury of a whirlwind. Bob Turket and Bill Smotherall watched him as he passed out of view, and then listened to the rapid clatter of hoofs till they died away in the distance, but durst not venture out of their doors. They relate, in their true report, that as the champion rode away, a strange creature in the dread form of a red monkey leapt up behind him and rode away with him. They relate further, that this strange creature turned full upon them, and placing his thumb upon his nose, made at them the sign of derision. Be all this as it may, when Strap reached his cabin and stripped his nag, he observed abundant scratches and blood upon the haunches, as if they had been stricken with the claws of a wild beast. He entered his cabin.

LA NOCHE TRISTE

Night was rapidly falling, and rolling clouds involved the heaven in pitchy blackness. Sulphurous vapors scudded below the clouds whose black bosoms were riven with bolts of lightning, and fearful thunder resounded through the deserted vale. A storm and rain burst upon the cabin with terrible fury, and the champion was compelled to bar his door to stay the invasion. Then in the midst of the wild tumult of the elements he proceeded to cook his supper of hoe-cake and bacon. The bacon sizzled deliciously, and the hoe-cake grew to a rich brown. When all was ready, he spread his table, and was invoking an earnest blessing on him who invented fried bacon and hoe-cake, when suddenly an impetuous blast of the tempest blew open one of his windows with violence. Strap raised his eyes and saw two fiery balls, about four inches apart, staring at him through the open window. They were motionless, but stared with an intense and sinister expression, as if they meant mischief, and never doubted their power to inflict it. "Ah," said Strap, "Ocelot—wild-cat—hast thou come to interview me? or wouldst thou forget thy sorrows in a sip from my jolly jug? or wouldst thou take a little fried bacon and hoe-cake? or is the tempest too much for thy glossy skin, and thou comest to implore refuge with me under my roof? Truly, I might accord thee all of these and feel myself blessed to do it, but thy glaring, infernal eyes betray thee, and say that thou wouldst return villainy for these mercies. Take thee to my warm couch and sleep with thee—to find my throat cut in the morning, and the warm blood sucked from my veins? Ocelot, seek the hospitality of fools! Speed thee away! What! Starest still? and redoublest the fury in thine eyes? Wouldst fight? Then take this!"

He plucked a stone from his hearth and threw it with all his might at the glaring balls, but it missed its mark and they did not move.

"Ah, thou art brave," said he, "and my hand is unsteady. Wouldst beard me in my den? Then let me try thee with my pestle!" With that he seized his iron mace and strode with

it uplifted to the window. He drew back to plant the blow of a giant between the glaring balls. The blow fell, but it struck only against the window-sill, with such force that it sank half through the heart of oak. The balls evaded it and disappeared in the outer darkness. Strap then barred the window more firmly than before, and sat down to sup.

He was chewing a lengthy piece of bacon, whose ends protruded from each corner of his mouth, when a blinding flash of lightning fell, accompanied with a burst of thunder so close and violent that it seemed the ancient hills were riven from their foundations and were tottering to their fall. For a moment Strap felt himself stunned with the flame and concussion. "Bless me," said he, "now has he Father given us enough of lightning and dire thunder! But what, ye gods, is this?"

He beheld, dancing on the floor before him, a remarkable black figure, with insolent eyes of fiery redness. It was the shape of a man, but was not three feet high, had two red horns on its head; and its feet, which were large, were cloven like the hoofs of a bull. Its nose was prominent and hooked like the beak of an eagle, and its face was gaunt and thin. Though so small of stature, its visage was hard and wrinkled, and showed age and infinite villiany. As it danced before him, it placed the thumb of the right hand against its nose and made at Strap the insulting sign of derision; but it spake not.

Strap was amazed, but he was not overcome. He let the long piece of bacon drop from his mouth. "Is this a creation of the heat-oppressed brain?" said he; "a pencilling on my mind of the jolly artist who dwells in yon jug? Whilst thou dancest, let me ponder. I wake, I know; I have my faculties, I know. May the mind under control such fantastic forms create?" His soliloquy was cut short by the singular object ceasing to dance, and stepping by Strap's side, taking a seat unbid in a chair upon the hearth. As it did so, its stature commenced growing, and did not stop till it had grown to twice its original proportions. It drew from between its legs a long tail, with a hard pronged point, which Strap had not observed before, and twirled it over so that the point fell over on Strap's knee. This disgusted Strap. He hastily pushed his chair away to the opposite corner of the hearth, and observed, "Keep thy prolongation to thyself, strange visitor!"

"Skin for skin," said the figure, resting his elbow on his knee and his chin between his thumb and index finger on the right hand, and regarding Strap with keen interest. At the same time he twirled his tail over again with such force and accurate aim that the sharp point of it struck deeply into the mantelpiece, and there it hung fixed.

"What might thy name be?" said Strap, "who visitest me at this unseemly hour? Speak! thy name and thy business!"

"Skin for skin," said the object.

"Skin for skin! Hast thou no other name on the night's Plutonian shore?"

"Sir," said the object, rising from the chair and extracting his tail from the mantelpiece, advancing a step toward Strap, "men call me by many names. Thou hast called me black imp of hell, thou Satanas! So be it. Skin for skin! Thou hast challenged me to duel, and has wagered upon the results thy swift grey nag, the gift of the mighty King Tuleahca-

homa. Thrice has thou challenged, and thrice have I accepted. I come to meet thee now, or to fling thy challenge into thy teeth; to pull thy ruddy beard.”

He seized his tail in his right hand, and held it like a javelin about to thrust. Strap gazed upon this singular instrument, and meditatively spake: “Good Sir Devil, take a seat. Wouldst thou attack a gentleman in his cups? None but a thief and coward would do that. Put thy prolongation away, I prithee. Leave me to my sleep and restoration, and I will meet thee man to man. To-morrow morning at nine o’clock will I meet thee.”

The Devil advanced again saying, “Give us thy hand, Strap Buckner; skin for skin: to-morrow morn at nine o’clock under yon oaks that overlook thy dwelling from the south.” They clasped hands and shook them heartily. “Now,” said he, “will I leave thee to sleep and restoration. Truly, he hath neither courage nor honor who would attack a gentleman in his cups.”

Strap then sang:

“Then wilt thou be gone, love;
Wilt thou be gone, love—
Be gone, love, from me?”

And the Devil sang:

“Nita—
Juanita!”

The Devil then stepped toward the door. Strap moved forward to unbar it to let him out, but the Devil made a bound for the keyhole, and passed through, tail and all, in the twinkling of an eye. As he did so he filled the room with a strong odor of brimstone, in-somuch that the champion was compelled to hold his nose. “No wonder,” said he, “since he was squeezed so tight. Pull me through a keyhole and I dare say I would not leave a less odorous report.” He then for a moment, threw open the window to the tempest, and burned a few cotton rags to deodorize the room; which, having done, he sat quietly by his table and ate a hearty repast of hoe-cake and bacon.

One would think that, placed in such a remarkable circumstance—the most remarkable that man was ever placed in—he would have given loose rein to his fancy, and indulged in gloomy soliloquies. But he did not. He knew that these things consume oxygen and wear away the tissues of the flesh, producing languor and prostration. Said he, “I have nothing to do but husband my strength and meet the inevitable.” After supping he walked his cabin an hour to promote digestion, and by exercise to force out through the pores of the skin the treacherous fluid which he had drunken at the trading-house. He then sank upon his couch and slept as soundly as an infant. I know not how true it is, but it is said that smiles played around his lips all night. The more I think of him, the more I am carried away in admiration of his sublime character. Truly, the world has seen few such extraordinary men. Had he lived in antiquity he would have been a god, and temples would have been erected in his honor. I know not which is the more unfortunate, he that comes too soon, or he that comes too late into the world. Suffice it to say that either must pass through the world

misunderstood and misrepresented—alone, and quite friendless. He who lives in advance of his time has few companions. Fortune grant that such be not my fate! Laurels that come after one is under the sod and flourish over his grave, are well enough, but five me a few while I live; and thoughts of those may not come at all are intolerable.

THE DAY OF EVENTS

Day had dawned, but its light struggled almost in vain with the storm which still held carnival in the valley. Strap rose refreshed and vigorous, and the blood ran rosily and merrily through his manly form. The light of battle illuminated his countenance. Rather would I have taken him for some conquering knight of old, who after resting from his great exploits, was about to receive the smiles and kisses of his lady-love, than one who puts on his armor for combat—the most dreadful that mortal ever engaged in. First, he took a shower-bath in the slanting storm of rain, whose myriads of big drops fell upon him like rattling musketry. During ten minutes he turned his broad, naked back to it, till the skin glittered like rosy velvet under the pelting; ten minutes he received it on his manly front, standing like a statue with both arms extended; the lightning flashing, and the bolts of thunder bursting around him; then he turned his right flank, then his left. Forty minutes were thus passed in the shower-bath furnished by the warring elements, charged with ammonia and subtle electricity. He entered the cabin and forty more minutes were spent in rubbing the glowing flesh with a mat woven from the shaggy moss of the forest. Which having done, he stood in the centre of the room, the most glorious picture of perfect manhood ever seen in the world. As he surveyed himself, his bosom swelled with exultation. Said he, “Is not this a picture for the Queen of the Amazons to look upon? Would not the magnificent Aphrodite give half her immortality to encircle this manly form one moment with her glowing locks?” Ah me, it distresses me to think that such noble manhood should pass from this earth without increase! Ah, Strap, it was thy greatest fault to have denied the world and love what was their due!

He breakfasted on the remnants of the hoe-cake and bacon left from the night’s repast, first warming them in a pan. The merry jug stood near, inviting him to taste its amber fluid, but he turned away from it with a look of reproach. “I will embrace thee when I return,” said he, “if so be it fortune favor. Thou art good for him who putteth off his armor, but ill luck to him who girdeth it on.” Donning his garment of buckskin, he said, “The hour arrives!”

Taking his iron limb in his right hand, the only aid he asked from art, this matchless hero stepped out into the storm, and made fast the door behind him. The tempest smote upon his noble brow; the clouds saluted him with a salvo of thunder, and the lightning garlanded his locks. He called his swift nag, the gift of the great Tuleahcahoma, who came, and he fixed his saddle upon him, whereupon he mounted and rode away to war.

He had advanced but a few paces when the Infernal Fiend, in the form of a skinny,

ugly dwarf appeared before him, dancing a jig, but he did not make the insulting sign of derision. He bowed politely and said, "Hail to thee, Strap Buckner! I see that thou art as good as thy word, and a man of honor. Receive my obeisance to a man of courage! I will lead and thou wilt follow."

"I dare follow where the Foul Fiend leadeth," said Strap. And both moved onward through the storm, the Fiend in advance. A white flame of lightning illuminated the valley, and when Strap looked again the Fiend had disappeared, but in place of him a long, black cat hopped along by his side and looked in his face and mewed. "Ah, Ocelot," said he, "dost thou encounter the tempest yet? Better betake he to thy hollow tree, lest thy furs be rubbed the wrong way." Again the blinding lightning came, and the thunder rent the air and reverberated through the vale. When Strap looked again the mewing cat had disappeared, but in place of it a spry Skye terrier tripped along by his side, and looked into his face with a frisky, silly look. "Ah," said Strap, "Skye terrier, dost thou like the tempest? Better haste thee to the trading house and catch rats under the smelting skins, lest the tempest pick thee up and blow thee away." Again the thunder detonated and the lightning lit the vale. Strap looked and the Skye terrier had gone, but a huge black bear was walking by his side, turning to look at him with a grin. "Ah," said Strap, "this is the history and the panorama of nature; the lesser forms and the lower develop into the bigger forms and the higher. Shall I see, then, in a few minutes what it has taken Old Time myriads of ages to evolve? What philosopher has ever been so blest? Dost thou like the flood, Bruin? Better take thee to thy cave in the rocks and eat acorns. Who knows but thy spouse may play thee false whilst thou art absent in the tempest—she believing or professing thee lost and dead?"

Again the blinding lightning came, and the thunder shook the vale. When Strap looked again the bear had gone, but an enormous bull, black as night, strode before him, his tail tossed over his back, and the valley trembled as he strode. "Ah," said Strap, "this is Noche, I perceive; my old friend Noche, who knows that I am his innocent friend. How is thy frontlet, Noche? Hast thou had the screw-worms picked out of thy wounds, and hast thy nose ceased bleeding? Better betake thee to a pretty, protected nook, and eat cowslips and make calves for an honest milk-maid. Pretty work for thee, Noche; and thou exposest thyself to the tempest, and from choice? I dare say the milk-maid has broken a joint of thy tail that thou carriest it on thy back, and thy females have kicked thee out, an unprofitable drone, to starve from unkindness." Again the blinding lightning came with such sudden vehemence that it smote sorely on Strap's eyes and the thunder shook the vale to the solid granite below. "Bless me," said Strap, "another such as this, I fear me, will burst the balls." When he had recovered his sight, Noche had departed, but in his stead the Fiend in stately form marched before him—stately, all save his tail, which he transported behind him, curved up round like a fish-hook. He looked back, and placing his index finger on his nose, licked out his tongue and laughed. "Ha!" said Strap, "laughest thou! He laughest best who laughest last." His heart swelled with the affront, and it was with great ado that he could help seizing the Fiend's tail by the apex of the hook and crushing it off with one blow of his pestle.

They had now reached the foot of the upland that looks into the vale. Silently they ascended to a cluster of noble oaks, venerable with mossy beard. The green sward was rich around them, and the plateau was level and smooth. Rather seemed it a place for fairies to dance under the moonlight than for Fiend and hero to meet in the struggle of death. As they looked around, both spake: "Now is the hour and here the place." Strap dismounted and turning his grey nag loose, with the bridle slipped over his head, said to him, "Charge thyself with grass, whilst I charge myself with the Devil. Prosper my work like thine!" The grey nag wagged his bobtail, and said, "I charge." Without a tremor of nerve, without an air of fear or air of boast, this matchless hero confronted the Fiend. As he did so, this latter meanly commenced to grow, and ceased not to grow till he had achieved such stature that his head was a hundred and ninety feet in the air, and he was eighty feet in girth. His tail grew in correspondence, till, seizing it, he gave it a twirl, and the point struck the bosom of a black cloud with such force that it penetrated it and stuck there. As he had a right to do, Strap complained of this injustice. Said he: "Foul Fiend, thou art no fair man to ask me to fight with thee on unequal terms. If thou chooseth such terms, I brand thee villainous coward."

The Fiend looked down from his lofty stature, and with a voice that confused all living things within a vast circumference, said, "Put aside thy iron limb, thy mace, thy pestle, and I will accommodate me to thy size. Skin for skin!" Strap tossed his pestle aside, whereat the Fiend commenced shrinking, and ceased not to shrink till he had shrunken to Strap's size—all save his tail, which still remained hitched to the bosom of the cloud. He now took position before Strap in the attitude of a boxer, and Strap took position before him in the same attitude. He kept his eye on Strap, and Strap kept his eye on him, either guarding against any advantage of a cheat by the other. The Fiend now drew back for a pass at Strap, but just at that moment the black cloud in which his tail was hitched was rapidly passing beyond its length, and it drew the Devil backwards and upwards with great force, causing him exceeding great pain at the point of its juncture with the body. The air suddenly became impregnated with a fearful odor of brimstone. Now had he but used the advantage which offered itself to him, what infinite fame would be his! Ah, me, it pains my heart to think of the weaknesses and fatal mistakes that good men commit under a false sense of honor. As the cloud was dragging the Fiend backward and upward, nearly paralyzed with pain, how easily Strap could have taken a stone and crushed him withal, or his pestle and split his brains withal! Instead of this, under a false sense of honor, and in the kindness of his heart he proffered the Fiend assistance to unhitch his tail! Ah, me! I nearly faint with despair while relating it. The Devil leaped up in the air and rolled himself up in the coils of his tail till he had reached the cloud, and there, with the help of claws and hoofs and horns, succeeded at last in unhitching it. Immediately, back he sprang, and stood before Strap in the attitude of a boxer. My heart sinks within me to relate it. Honor with the Devil. What a wanton weakness!

I might give thee now the many rounds as they occurred, had I the heart—after Strap's

exhibition of folly—to do so. Suffice it to say that the battle raged with varying fortunes all day, till the Devil, having less honor and more wiles, grew again to monstrous size, and at last wore Strap out on the unequal terms, till the mighty champion sought quarter, crest-fallen and utterly overcome. the country for a great circuit round rang with the hideous noise of battle, and Bob Turket and Bill Smotherall and forty Indian braves stood on the bank of the river and hearkened to it, amazed. As night fell they saw a great grey horse riding through the air down the valley, with the dread form of a red monkey astride his back in front, and the form of an overpowered man dangling across him behind. The horse and riders lit on the top of yon cedar-covered mountain that looks down on Lagrange from the north and then all disappeared in the umbrageous forest. When morning came Bob Turket and Bill Smotherall and a thousand Indian braves crossed over the river and marched to Strap's house, which they found as he had left it, deserted and closed. Looking about, they at last came to the spot where the dread encounter had occurred. The earth had been torn away to the bare rock, and on the rock were deep impressions of cloven hoofs and Strap's feet. No earth has ever accumulated, and no green grass or tree has ever grown on that accursed spot since; but it remains, and will forever remain, in bleak deformity. A pile of gory hair and beard was found near, which they recognized as Strap's. A broken cloven hoof they also found, which had a strange unearthly smell, and near it was Strap's iron limb. This they religiously preserved, and bore it back on poles in solemn silence, and deposited it in his cabin through a crack. And they all wept aloud and shed salt tears, and the great Medicine Man sounded his big bongbooree.

HE RETURNS

Three months passed, and one morn as Bob Turket and Bill Smotherall were counting their skins, they were stricken with amazement to see Strap Buckner ride up before them on his swift grey nag, the gift of the mighty King Tuleahcahoma. He dismounted and stood before them, and they were the more amazed. And he looked distant and sad and solemn, as if he were contemplating things afar off. He spake to them not; but they fell on their faces before him, and said, "Mighty champion of the world, depart hence!" He said simply, "Skin for skin!"

"Mighty champion of the world," replied they, "take all of our skins and depart hence!" He replied simply, "Skin for skin!" and mounting his grey nag, he crossed over the river and sadly and slowly rode away. Bob Turket and Bill Smotherall watched his departing, and counted no more skins that day.

Three months he dwelt in his cabin, and thrice weekly he visited the trading-house, where he walked about like one contemplating the dead, with a sad and distant air. He volunteered to speak to none, and the only response to every question was—"Skin for skin." He was a changed man. He would drink no whiskey, and would knock no man down. Yet Bob Turket and Bill Smotherall and the Indian braves shrank from him with

awe and dread, and the great Medicine Man, whenever he saw him, stopped and sounded his big bongbooree. Finally, one night, a great blue flame rose far above the valley, and cast a pale, deathly light over the land. Bob Turket and Bill Smotherall and ninety Indian braves watched it all night. On the top of the blue flame they beheld a great grey nag, and astride him sat the dread form of a red monkey, and behind the red monkey sat the form of a gigantic man waving a gigantic iron pestle, whereat the dread form of the red monkey seemed to cower. When morning arose, Bob Turket and Bill Smotherall and eleven hundred Indian braves crossed over the river and marched to Strap's house. They found it in ashes and cinders. They stood around it in solemn silence, and with one accord wept aloud and spilt salt tears. The great Medicine Man sounded his big bongbooree.

Evasit, abiit! Since that mysterious and perhaps fatal night, he has never been seen in his proper person as in the olden time.

But still the enthusiast bards relate,
 In memory of his gallant past,
 That of the is seen in gloom of state,
 To ride his steed on the whirlwind blast.

He rises lowering on the view,
 His red hair streaming from on high,
 Clad in a garb of sulphurous blue,
 Which casts a shade o'er his frenzied eye.

As he whirls like a god on his clouded path,
 And shakes his locks and his iron limb,
 He looks on none in the might of his wrath,
 And he speaks to none though they speak to him.

Let no one scorn the friendly tale,
 Or doubt unkind its shadowed truth,
 For still the Buckner boys bewail
 Their noble but mysterious youth.

He stands a talisman whose spell
 Shall ne'er forget its generous sway;
 And with his folk his name shall dwell—
 A name not made to pass away.

"Yes, sir," continued he, "often at night, when the tempest howls and the thunders roar, his form, or shadow or image, or whatever it be, is seen to stride this valley in which

we ride, on his swift bob-tail nag, the gift of the mighty King Tuleahcahoma. I myself saw him distinctly, in our last great equinoctial storm, shoot down the valley with a sulphurous whirl and glare, and light on yonder cedar-covered mountain, whence he disappeared in the umbrageous forest. When a Buckner Creek baby cries, whether from pure perverseness or colic pains in the bowels, only say to him 'Strap Buckner' once, and he will forthwith scrooch up in his cradle, and you will hear no more from that baby for hours. Behold in Strap the tutelar divinity to whom all the cowboys lift up their emulation and prayers."

"I perceive, sir," said I, "that thou art a true poet, and I thank thee."

"And I perceive, sir," said he, "that thou art a true epilogue, and I thank thee. This is the road which bids me depart from thee. Should I meet thee again under favorable circumstances, and thine ear still thirsteth for knowledge, I will impart thee more. And now farewell."

He turned his horse and departed away from me, as other friends have done before.

CHAPTER VII

SNAKE PRAIRIE

Emerging from the legendary vale, I rode upon a prairie whose name is Snake. It is an immense table, rising above all the region round; treeless, except an occasional mot of oak, and level, save that here and there is a slight depression with dark tussocks of coarse, wiry grass. Elsewhere the soil is thin, often exposing the rough backbone of the rock. The fertilizing ingredients, as fast as they collect, are driven into the depressions, or beaten off into the subjacent lowlands by wind and rain, thus devoting it to hopeless sterility. As I ride over it a sense of loneliness depresses me. My eyes wander in vain to discover some sign of human habitation. No herd feeds on its stubby grass; no bird warbles in the air; no grasshopper; not even a lizard on the rock. The wind which here blows perpetually, passes over it in silence, as if with averted face.

No snake would live here unless a stark fool, who preferred misery to happiness, and I cannot conceive why the name was given to this abandoned prairie, unless out of man's spite toward the crawling creature who "brought death into the world and all our woe." Of all creatures that fly or swim or crawl or walk, the snake is the most hideous to man's sight. We cannot see him or think of him without feelings of total depravity, and our only instinct is to seize a stone and crush his head, or turn heel and fly from his detested presence. It makes no difference how prettily marked or how innocuous he may be, we see in his beauty and ugliness alike, nothing but disgust and infernal stratagems and spoils. His thoughts toward us are likewise total depravity. No sooner does he see us than he commences to lick out his tongue, and to devote us to the infernal gods. Our poets, our orators, our historians, our harpists, our prima-donnas, our beautiful damsels, are to him a disgust and hate, the sight of whom fills him with the desire to murder. We are natural enemies, between whom peace has never existed and never will exist. It is a warfare which the millennium will not terminate. It seems to me that this singular nomenclature was given to the prairie as a satire both upon the snake and the prairie. When the true facts of the case shall be elicited, I dare say it will be discovered that the Devil and Strap Buckner fought all over it before their warfare was over, and hence its forbidding aspect to this day.¹⁵

An yet I should be false to every fair consideration if I should speak only of the evil points of this remarkable prairie, and leave its good ones unheralded. In one aspect it is remarkably good—a very angel of beneficence. Standing above the surrounding region, it disperses over the vales and plains below, with every rain that falls, nearly all the fertility it derives from decomposing rocks and vegetation, from bird or animal, or receives from the atmosphere. The quantity which it thus casts annually upon its neighbors is great, keeping them always rich, though in doing so it condemns itself to everlasting poverty. It dis-

tills, collects, disperses, and concentrates fertility, and the world is the better off for it. It is therefore like unto a great soul that labors incessantly and lovingly with the single thought to confer blessings upon others, contenting itself with the sublime reward which the consciousness of such good bestows. When I think of it in this aspect, I can scarcely repress my admiration of the lonesome, abandoned prairie, and it almost repents me to have spoken of it as I have. It would, too, make a noble sheep-walk unto the shepherd that dwells in the vales below. Its short, stubby grasses would be the delight of these nibblers, who prefer dainty little morsels to the ranker food of the rich valleys.

THE VALE OF SECLUSIVE

Ten miles over this lonely dispenser of fertility, which worketh only for the good of others, scorning its own, I descended abruptly into another vale where the whole prospect pleases. It was like stepping out of a desert into an oasis of roses and fairies. This is called "Live Oak Creek," and it is so much like Buckner's Creek valley that each seems either. It is only less in width, but not so in fertility and varied beauty of scenery. Its level bosom is occupied by the same prosperous-looking farms—the cotton bale piled high or tumbled around loosely in every yard. The noble live-oak, with his Druid beard, appears here for the first time on my journey, and is the principal shade tree around the dwellings of the farmers. This valley is so remote from the busy scenes of life that I involuntarily named it Seclusive. Away from railroads, away from town and village, it rests in sweet, sleepy security.

"A pleasing land of drowsy-head it is—
Of forms that move before the half shut eye:"

So gentle, so placid, so remote is it. If one wishes to get away from lawyers, and doctors, and duns, I can recommend to him no better locality.

I stopped at a comfortable farm house by the road-side and a fair young girl fed me on buttermilk, eggs, honey and a leg of mutton. I asked her if she did not often wish that she had the wings of a dove, so she might fly away from this seclusion and return at will? She said she had often heard of the sensation of loneliness, but had never had the opportunity to feel it. She tossed back a wealth of locks as if more completely to reveal a face that would be called pretty anywhere, and I have little doubt that she mentally said to me: "There, do you think with so much beauty I could be lonely?" She said there were "plenty of girls in the valley," and as for that, young men, too," and they very often had their meetings and rides. "And their love scrapes too," said I. "Of course," said she with a laugh. She told me that her father and brothers had "gone to the railroad with the wagons," loaded with cotton and hides no doubt, and that their return would be an event in the family, as "all would then get a present and something new." I asked how often these trips to the railroad were made? "About twice a year," she said. And all the rest of their lives wee passed on the qui-

et farm. It would seem impossible that such a people could be otherwise than sober, virtuous and good.

POST OAK BELTS

Leaving the vale of Seclusive, I rode again into one of those remarkable belts of iron-oak, which occur frequently in Texas. It was of the same character with them all, save that the peculiar features were probably better developed than usual: a soil more sandy, the forest denser, and the solitude more profound. The trees were of large size and excellent timber. The hog seems to be sole master of this solitude, and through it he roams and fattens at will, on no other food than that which spontaneous nature provides him. Many of them are in a state ferocious, the rightful prey of any who may secure them. Occasionally I surprised some of these as I ride noiselessly through the forest. They bound away with immense speed, as if they thought all fury was in pursuit of them, and the woods roar behind them.

These great forests seem to me a perplexing and yet interesting geological problem which, to my knowledge, has not been solved. They are usually in belts, many miles wide, extending great distances. Their usual or probably invariable direction is north-east and south-west. Two of these belts, known as the Cross Timbers, extend nearly the entire distance of the State! and all of them, whether great or small, sit on eminences above the contiguous territory. But the most striking feature that distinguishes them from the country through which they pass, is their soil. The soil of the prairies and even the timbered districts which lie against them, is dark and tenacious, while that of these belts is precisely the opposite, sand being the predominant feature. Indeed, some of them are so sandy that they are unfit for cultivation. Whence comes this remarkable difference in soils that lie, sometimes for hundreds of miles, immediately alongside each other? It is plain that they have been derived from totally different materials, as two things so utterly variant could not come from the same source. It is a fact, too, that the rocks which lie under the prairies are usually some variety of limestone, while those of these hills, according to my observation, are invariably sandstone; and yet they are of the same geological age as the limestone of the contiguous prairie, and sometimes even of a later date. This latter is the case in this present forest, where all the stone that I see exposed is evidently newer than the out-cropping stone of the contiguous prairie; and yet there can hardly be a reasonable doubt that these post-oak ridges rose above the ancient waters prior to the prairie.¹⁶

While thinking of these strange features of these belts, I remembered the bars, or long narrow banks of sand that are common in the bays and off the coast of Texas, and they seemed to me to disclose the whole mystery of their formation. At all events, there is a wonderful likeness between them. These sand-bars are raised upon a bottom of hard, marly clay, precisely similar to the formation a few feet under the prairies. Such is the nature of the bottom all about them. Their tendency is to grow continually, and they would in time,

if not combatted by the art of man, erect impossible barriers to navigation. Such are the two annoying bars in Galveston Bay, and such the two, still more annoying, off Galveston Island, upon which hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent. Other similar banks have been discovered far out in the Gulf of Mexico, all having the same direction of north-east and south-west. The great "Telegraphic Plateau," running across the Atlantic from Newfoundland to Ireland, is probably another example on a larger scale, and for all that we know the ocean may contain thousands of other instances. Whence they derive their sands, and by what peculiar attraction or forces they are thus agglomerated and heaped up, are questions not here within my line; but we behold the results. If these bars or long banks of sand were left exposed above the surface, the soil which would form upon them would be precisely that of the remarkable post-oak belts of Texas—sand mixed with the carbonaceous matter and other elements of decayed vegetable and animal matter. I believe then, in the absence of a better theory, that these great hills, so strangely different from all the country about them, are but the bars and banks which formed in the seas of the ancient world, and that many of them rose above the surface while the prairies were still under water. I am not able to perceive any other hypothesis that will explain the phenomena, and I give it with considerable confidence that the Texas geologists will find it correct. The bars and banks now forming in the bays and off the coast of Texas, differ from the bottom about them precisely as these belts differ from the contiguous lands, and the conclusion seems irresistible that the same results had similar causes.

Thus ages and ages ago, when the vast area of Texas, and perhaps the whole world, lay dormant under the dark ocean, we behold the great Architect so disposing his mysterious forces as to work out the greatest benefits for the dense populations whom He knew would one day swarm over this land. These great forest-belts, though often sterile in soil, are great natural benefits, without which the land would not be half so blessed. They have their uses in the inexhaustible supply of fuel and timber for the prairies, their abundant mast, and their equable influence on the seasons. Truly the Great Architect "doeth all things well."

PLUM CREEK

I rode ten miles through the forest, when the monotony was relieved by a heavy swell in the ground, running north and south a number of miles. It looks as if it might have been a fortification erected by the embattled giants in the days of old, so regular is it in its outlines. The oaks grow all over it. The sandstones that bulge out along its flanks are infiltrated thoroughly with iron, and masses of ore like loose on the surface. The outward indications give promise that this ridge holds unlimited store of iron locked in its bowels, and if this be so it will one day be very valuable, though now doubtless much despised. Descending its long western slope I entered the valley of Plum Creek, famous in Texas history as the vale in which two hundred Texas boys fought all day had to hand with a thousand Comanche warriors, and gave them a sound drubbing. Those Texas boys of old were certainly a terri-

ble set of fighters, the like of whom in that line probably the world has never seen. They had a true gift of genius for fight, and their descendants are amply gifted with it to this day. When they went in they went in all over, with the full determination to conquer or die in their tracks. This stream is insignificant in itself, sometimes stealing along, a mere rill, sometimes standing in dark, deep pools, hidden everywhere under a dense growth of wild peach; but its valley is as great as that of a great river, and of fertility that seems unmatched save in Texas. The Texans have a saying: "Where the wild peach grows, buy and grow rich;" and I cannot doubt that it is sound advice and true prophecy, from what this valley discloses. The wild peach here is the principal growth, the great iron-oak belt having terminated suddenly at the foot of the ridge. This tree is a beautiful evergreen, closely resembling the orange, but with the smell of the peach, and yields a mast which hogs and fowls delight in. The wild turkey thinks it the choicest offering of the woods, and groweth so fat upon it that when he is shot in a tree, his breast bursteth as he falls, from the excessive fat. Farms are numerous in the valley, but I judge that hardly one in ten of its noble acres has yet felt the plowshare in its bosom. What a glorious wealth unplucked! There is this to be said of these Texas valleys: every successive one the wanderer enters seems to him the richest, the most beautiful, and best. A traveler soon becomes confused where to choose. Perhaps as good a plan as any is to shut the eye and go it blind. Should he perchance stumble and top on Plum Creek, it is impossible he should ever regret it, if to till deep and inexhaustibly rich acres, in a land that is a garden of health and serene beauty, be his choice. If the people who dwell here can wish for anything that they have not in their lands and climate, their bump of longing must be more unappeasable than that of the horse-leech's daughter. In short, theirs must be a true genius to be discontented. This valley with its windings is hardly less than a hundred miles in length; it is so broad in many places that it does not look much like a valley, and the same amazing fertility marks it from its source to its confluence with the San Marcos. I deliberately write it down as one of the gem spots of earth. Its people are nearly all Americans from the older Southern States, and seem unusually intelligent and attractive in their manners.

MESQUITE CHAPARRAL

And what is this that springs up so suddenly before me? It is something that I have not seen before on my journey. It starts up unawares as an iron-oak belt, and is like a great army that moves with closed ranks. It is a mesquite chapparral, a dense thicket of brushes, and distinctly tells me that I have now entered the great region of West Texas, to which it is peculiar. Bless me, how thick it is! A horseman thirty feet away would be completely buried out of sight. The grass on the shaded ground looks like a rich Turkish carpet, so velvety, clean and luxuriant that one feels inclined to dismount from his steed and roll on it like a boy. That grass is the "curly mesquite," the sweetest and most nutritious of all the rich grasses that Texas so abundantly provides for the millions of animals that feed upon her bosom. It

is the invariable accompaniment of the mesquite chaparral, though the mesquite chaparral does not always accompany it.

Each brush of this chaparral or thicket has a number of long branches armed with thorns. They shoot from a common centre at the ground, and every branch produces numerous smaller branches likewise armed. The foliage is light and feathery, pinnate, and drooping in long racemes. Such is its character here and in all the chaparrals; but when the mesquite grows alone, or scattered widely apart, it becomes a tree, about the ordinary size of the peach; and at a distance, when stripped of its leaves in winter, greatly resembles that tree. In the chaparral, the mesquite is almost an evergreen, for its long-reaching, multitudinous boughs protect it from the cold northers and seem to maintain a perpetual spring. It is a legume, probably of the sub-order of mimosas, and herein is one of its most notable properties. It yields annually an abundant crop of beans, the pods from five inches to a foot in length, hanging in clusters from the boughs. These pods are very similar in appearance to those of the corn-field pea, but owing to a rich saccharine pulp, they never become shelly or dry. They cannot advance to a higher state of desiccation than the sugar-corn. The beans are small and flattened, separated from each other by a considerable space of pulp in the pod, and when chewed in the mouth are sweet to the taste and sticky to the teeth. When ripe, horses and cattle devour them with great relish, and they will not touch them when not ripe, because they are then bitter and acrid. It can hardly be doubted that in nutritive matter they excel any edible pod in existence, and milk-maids say they produce a greater and richer flow of milk than any food they know. I have never known them to be eaten by man as a food, but I dare say if boiled as a "snapshort" when tender, they would furnish a very palatable dish.

And here comes a singular and interesting point. When the rains have been abundant and the grasses unusually luxuriant, the mesquite yields but a slim crop of beans; when the rains have been moderate, and the grasses are of moderate luxuriance, the crop is greatly increased; but when the drought has been severe and the grass is poor, the mesquite is literally burdened with its clusters of rich pods. I admit that this seems singular, but it is a fact which every old Western Texan will confirm. I do not think I ever observed, in all the works of beneficent nature, a more beautiful indication of design, or stronger proof of the infinite goodness and careful provision of the Creator, whose eye nothing escapes. During the winter following a severe drought, myriads of innocent creatures on the plains would suffer, and man would be injured in his property and lessened in his comfort, were it not for the timely offering from the thorny branches of the mesquite, of a food as rich as it is abundant. It reminds me of the mysterious quails and manna in the desert.¹⁷

But in one point the chaparral is deceptive. To him who approaches it, it presents the appearance of an impenetrable entanglement; but, on entering, he finds each mesquite separated some feet apart, and though the branches interlap and form numerous arches above, there are open spaces and winding labyrinths, in which the horse and ox find no inconvenience to feed and roam; and the skilled horseman, clad in buckskin and heavy gloves to

protect against the thorns, can even dash through them at a sharp pace. Everywhere they are illuminated with patches of sunlight on the grass, and they are pretty places to wander in afoot; there being nothing of gloom about them, if we may bar the suspicion that a highway-man may be lurking within them, watching an opportunity to spring upon his prey—something that not unfrequently happens in the chaparral along the Rio Grande. Perhaps I shall have more to say of the chaparral after awhile.

HOG-WALLOW PRAIRIE

The prairie which has been seized upon by this chaparral, has also a peculiarity new to me on this journey. It is filled with saucer-like depressions, from the size of a wash-bowl to many feet in diameter. These are thought to resemble the wallows made by hogs in muddy places, and hence this peculiar style of prairie is called "hog-wallow prairie." The depressions are so numerous that it looks as if the earth had suffered from a severe case of small-pox, but the pits rarely if ever run into each other. The soil upon this, as upon all other hog-wallow prairies, is of the glossy blackness of tar, and when wet, is nearly of the consistency and quite as sticky as tar. When rubbed in the hand it is of a sleek and unctuous feel, and has not a trace of sand. It is the very *crème de la crème* of fertility. It has the capacity for resisting drought beyond that of all other lands. When the crops on adjoining lands are withering under the scorching sun, they still laugh with merriment on the hog-wallow prairie. These lands are difficult to reduce to cultivation; but once subdued, they remain subdued. No soil is then more tractable or handsomely behaved, provided it is not meddled with when wet.

How shall we account for these small-pox depressions and the enormous fertility of the hog-wallow prairie? I believe that they were once marshes, in which the warm sun and the constantly increasing fertility stimulated great rankness of vegetation. They were alive with reptiles and aquatic fowls. Marshes are always in depressions, and never in a position not favorable to this theory. When they are drained, the exposed surface is always found covered with swellings and depressions, resulting from currents, and the accumulation of vegetable matter in heaps, and from other causes. In the process of drying, under the hot sun, the earth shrinks and cracks, and the irregularities are multiplied by the soil washing into and filling up these openings. They therefore for a long time present precisely the same uneven appearance as the hog-wallow prairie. The soil is also rich and black with decayed vegetation, free from sand and unctuous to the feel; and if the drained marsh happens to be in a country having the same mineral ingredients as Western Texas, the soil would be in all respects precisely that of the hog-wallow prairie. In course of time the marshes were gradually filled up by the accumulated rotted matter of their own vegetation and the drift from the hills, and the hog-wallow prairie was the result. If this is not the true theory of their formation, I am at a loss to know what is.

Here, then, we have the explanation of this enormous fertility, extending many feet below the surface—perhaps fifties and hundreds. Its glossy blackness is nothing but rotted

weeds, immense palmate leaves, and myriads of other aquatic plants, with their thick network of roots, comminuted into an impalpable powder, retaining all the elements of which the plants were composed. This of itself is the very rankness of fertility, but the neighboring hills and uplands have increased it by discharging into it, with every heavy shower, their finest particles, with a great store of carbonate of lime from their decomposing rocks. Indeed, the soil of these prairies is so thoroughly infiltrated with lime that it is a marl—a humo-calcerous marl, or the richest marl that possibly can exist. Its remarkable capacity for withstanding drought is the result of the absorbent and retentive nature of the materials of which it is composed; for both humus and lime attract moisture from the atmosphere and retain it; they bring copious showers to themselves which come sparingly elsewhere. With deep plowing and faithful stirring of the surface, so as to prevent the formation of a crust, it is not probable that crops on these prairies could be seriously injured by the most prolonged drought likely to be seen in Western Texas.

I have said that the hog-wallow is of a sticky nature. It sticketh together closer than a brother. Let one attempt to walk across a plowed field after a shower. It accumulates upon his shoes until they have become of such prodigious weight that he can hardly drag one foot after another; and it continueth to accumulate and stick, until at last the wearied wayfarer is relieved by its falling off by its own weight—only to see the huge following renewed after a few steps. It is the same with vehicles traveling a road over a hog-wallow prairie in wet weather; only more so, as there is greater space for the huge heap to accumulate upon. Even in dry weather, it is extremely disagreeable, traveling over these prairies in a carriage, there being a continual bound and jolt, as the wheels sink into and rise out of the depressions.

Just at dark I rode into Lockhart, the capital of Caldwell County, and passed the night.

CHAPTER VIII

LOCKHART

When the first rays of the sun were sparkling in the dewdrops on the live-oak leaves, I arose and stepped abroad for a morning walk in Lockhart. It is an engaging little cluster of residences and country stores, churches and academies, cosily built, and an air of gentility pervades it. Its population is less than a thousand, nearly all Americans, doubtless from the older agricultural districts of the South. Its situation is picturesque: with broad, open prairie, here and there waving with green chaparral; with stately forest, and sloping hill crowned with forest, around it or in the background. The yards and gardens show taste and cultivation, and it at once struck me as the capital community of polite people. I know not how it is, but it marked a vary pretty little place in my memory, and I often recall it and think of it with pleasant thoughts. It has written upon me the impression that it is a sweet, placid, quiet little community, where every one loves his neighbors, and is by them beloved; where the summer nights are melodious with the mocking-bird, and peace reigns; where boys cannot grow up rowdies, and where girls blossom into sweet and perfect womanhood, to make some fellow's home happy. I can hardly account for it, for my stay was not long and my acquaintance limited, and yet such are the lines that Lockhart wrote on my mind and memory. Sweet be its cradled slumbers!¹⁸

Her peculiar physical features are the magnificent groves of live-oak in which she sits embowered, and the remarkable outburst of springs at her feet. the live-oaks are among the most stately of the race, spreading their horizontal, thickly-foliaged boughs over a wide area, and having a strange appearance of veneration from the long grey moss that hangs from every limb, like the beard of a patriarch. They are so numerous that they conceal the village until one has entered it. They make a glorious shade, and I judge that Lockhart must be a sweet retreat in summer, owing to its shady walks. The springs are a dozen or more, all bold and strong, of the purest water, bursting out within a small space in a noble grove. they quickly unite their waters and send a dashing, singing brook away, down a green and shaded dell. They gurgle up from deep fountains in the sandstone, and their deliciously cool water supplies the whole community.

I chatted with the gentlemen of Lockhart several hours, because I liked the climate and other things, obtaining whatever information I could of their noble country in an unobtrusive way. They seemed to take much interest in me from the fact that I liked the country, and pressed me with courtesies to stop some days, and ride with them over parts I had not seen and would not see on my route. It makes me pleased with myself to have received such voluntary courtesies from a people whom I highly respect. I was sorry I could not stay, but they told me that in their country are several sulphur and chalybeate springs, and

one of alum, all in charming localities and needing only capital to make them popular resorts. They spoke of a deep vale in which pure soda accumulates in great quantity. As for iron they thought their "Iron Hill," had enough to furnish all the railways of Texas. They spoke of their neighboring town of Prairie Lea as a charming little community, situated in a country unexcelled for beauty and fertility. Indeed I do not hesitate to say that Caldwell County is one of the best regions of Texas, in land, beauty and people. The people in their character seem to partake of the gentleness and amenity of the scenery in which they live.

WEALTH UNDEVELOPED—WEST TEXAS SCENERY

It was ten o'clock on the morning of the 6th of January, when I resumed my journey, riding nearly southward. I rode over a hog-wallow prairie five or six miles, dotted with numerous farms. All of this was the great valley of Plum creek, which I now crossed, and the scene instantly changed. Full twenty miles I rode over a great prairie, consisting of an accumulation of swells and undulations of the most graceful outlines. The mesquite brush grew upon them in thin and scattering clusters, inevitably predicting the day when the chaparral shall possess them all. They are the messengers of all the great army that is advancing. Occasional ravines wind among them in torturous courses, containing no stream but many deep pools of the clearest and sweetest water, being principally rainwater caught from the hills. The rich curly mesquite grass was in complete possession, with its beautiful, smooth carpet of pea-green. Thousands of cattle and horses were visible everywhere, and an occasional flock of sheep covered the hills. For ten miles there was a gradual but steady ascent, until I felt myself lifted far toward the clouds. Then I stood upon an eminence from which I beheld the vast country for many miles to the west, east and south. It was a prospect of singular beauty: the graceful swells and rolling undulations all about and below me; the winding ravines and flashing pools, and long lines of dark, distant forest in every direction except the north, whither the swells and undulations grew higher and higher until lost in the distance. Then followed ten miles of easy, almost imperceptible descent. It was a great backbone or ridge separating two great systems of drainage, and the eminence upon which I halted was the apex.

Not a human dwelling in all this twenty miles: nothing but strolling herds and an occasional traveler to enjoy all this glorious beauty! And why should this be? This country is all positively rich, except rare occasion where the rock pushes itself too near the surface. The soil is of that rich calcerous sort which produces the best development of wheat, and the climate is exactly that in which it ripens best. In addition to their lime, the rocks contain a considerable percentage of magnesia—a condition all the more favorable. In the dry atmosphere, no danger from rust here. No danger from drought here, because the crop will mature and be gathered in May, a month or more before the summer drought sets in.

No timber, says one, for fences or houses! That is a fact, and until there is easy access to the great forest belts and the pineries of the east, this magnificent country is destined to re-

main fruitless, except as the feeding ground of thousands, perhaps millions of animals. And yet there is abundant stone to be quarried from the hillsides, a material beautiful and durable for both house and fence. It is a costly and slow process, says one. I admit it, and yet if I should dwell in this country, I would have my fences and houses only of stone.

Water supply uncertain: suppose the pools in the ravines should dry up? says another. That is a contingency easily provided against, by building a stout dam across any of the ravines. Perpetual lakes may thus be formed from which irrigation may be practiced, and they may be stocked with trout and other fish. I am sure the day will come when all of this will be done, and this region, now considered almost valueless, will be filled with prosperous farmers, shipping rich argosies of wheat and many other products to other lands. The Almighty never intended so beautiful and interesting a country for the sole occupancy of dumb brutes. As for health, it seems quite impossible for one in such an atmosphere as this, to be sick. Such spaces as these, equally beautiful and equally fertile, are a common occurrence all over Western Texas.¹⁹

THE JACKASS RABBIT

While passing over this great unoccupied space, I saw frequently singular creatures which seemed a cross between a jackass and a common hare; yet I must confess that the resemblance is remote except in the exceedingly elongated ears, wherein it is very striking. For this reason they are called the mule-eared, or more commonly, the jackass rabbit. In other points they are precisely the same as the common hare, except that they are twice as long, more than twice as high. The white of the belly extends upward and covers a large part of their flanks. Their ears are also tipped with white, and while sitting still they keep them moving up and down, as the butterfly does his wings when sitting on a flower. They are graceful as a doe, quite as nimble and fleet, and pretty to look upon as they bound over the prairie. They are so swift and strong that no dog but a greyhound can overtake them, and it puts even his speed to the severest test. An old gentleman, moving from Tennessee, tells a tale on his dog, which, he said, had never been known to fail to pick up a common hare that once got in sight of him. One day, while encamped with his wagons, a jackass rabbit jumped up within ten feet of his dog's nose. That worthy, with a yelp of joy, claimed him as his own, and bounded after him over a smooth and beautiful prairie, on which was nothing to obstruct the sight. He followed bravely about two hundred yards, then suddenly stopped and gazed strangely at the retreating hare. Then he dropped his tail, hung his head and returned with an abashed air to camp, evidently acknowledging that he was for once magnificently vanquished. Ever after that, when a jackass rabbit appeared in sight, Towser looked at him and whined, but could not be induced to pursue. It is said that no dog except the greyhound, after becoming acquainted with the jackass rabbit, will bother his head at all about them. They inhabit exclusively where the curly mesquite grows, and are seldom or never seen where it is not. They are usually fat, for rabbits, and when well

cooked make a decidedly savory morsel. They are undoubtedly the top-sawyer of all the rabbit race.

THE SAN MARCOS

Having descended the slope of ten miles, I found that the dark line of forest, which had so long attracted my eye, was the timber of the San Marcos. Where my road reached the river it did not cross it, but so much was I taken with its exquisite beauty, that like a truant school boy, I idled some time on its banks. It is more limpid and crystal than even the blue Colorado, and I could see the lazy catfish lolling about, the gaudy perch, motionless but fanning his sides with his fins, and the trout darting like silver arrows hither and thither. Now it rolls swiftly, leaping and foaming over rocks and pebbles, filling the forest with the murmur of falls, and now it steals along with a scarcely perceptible current, in pools of profound depth, whose silence is only disturbed by the leaping of the sporting fishes above the surface. So beautiful was it, that, dead of winter as it was, I felt an almost irresistible impulse to plunge and bathe in its sparkling water. A dense forest of pecans, elms, wild-peach, and a hundred other varieties of timber shaded it, frequently so locking their boughs above as to leave scarcely an opening for the sunlight; and squirrels chattered, and birds of brilliant plumage twittered or sang in the boughs. It seemed to me the sweetest and purest stream I had ever beheld—the very semblance of innocence with pleasure; the sparklingest, the gayest, the laughingest!

As singularity of this beautiful river is that it bursts up suddenly from the earth, in one gigantic, glorious fountain, and starts forth a full-fledged river from its birth. No drought affects it. When neighboring streams sicken and pine and die under the withering sun, it glides merrily, or steals through its silent pools, with the same volume—rendered all the more chaste and beautiful from the fact that no sediment from the hills is mingled with its water. This great fountain, with its dancing and bursting mounds and pyramids of water, is probably the largest and most beautiful in the world.

The length of the river in direct course, is less than a hundred miles, and the fall in that distance is quite a thousand feet. Were it not for its sinuosities, it would fly over the inclined plane with swiftness rivalling the flight of the arrow; but even with these, once can scarcely ride a mile along its banks without discovering a magnificent water power, all unutilized, except at long intervals by the simplest grist-mill. What an enormous power is here waiting on man's good time! The valley is usually two to three miles in width, with soil as rich as that of any of the grand rivers of Texas. It is a black loam, charged with vegetable matter, and exceedingly mellow under the plow. The river continually shifts sides as it passes along—now sweeping against the butting cliffs on one side, and now hurrying across the valley to sweep against the butting cliffs on the other. This offers a great facility to irrigation; and though not a single irrigation ditch exists in all the valley, there is not one foot of it that might not be irrigated at trifling cost. I am bound to think, in view of

the intelligent people who inhabit the vale, that they do not irrigate because it is not necessary; and yet I know that, let their crops be ever so well without it, they would be ever so much better with it. The noble soil, being fed with all the moisture it wants, would repay the kind treatment with crops of such luxuriance that the owner and the passer-by would be filled with astonishment and admiration. A mere rough dam of stone here and there would do the job.

This river reminds me, in its vale and the lofty, rolling country that looks upon it, very much of the Mohawk in the State of New York; a river that rolls through the mightiest community in America; yet the San Marcos far surpasses it in width and fertility of valley, as well as the sparkling beauty of its waters. Suppose the seasons of the Mohawk were as capricious as the seasons of the San Marcos are, or have been reputed to be; myriads of irrigation ditches would checker its valley, and its current would be checked every half hour with dams. The Mohawk would bloom infinitely beyond what it blooms now; but bloom it ever so richly, it would be as nothing to the bloom of the San Marcos with the same treatment. That river now supports thousands of factories and hundreds of beautiful cities. The San Marcos could beat it ten to one, and five it half-dozen to one in the game. If I could look forward and see one hundred years hence, I would see the San Marcos far greater than the Mohawk now is. Perhaps this may be much sooner than a hundred years. If spirits may revisit the glimpses of the moon, this is one spot I surely shall revisit.

I rode eight or ten miles up the eastern bank, the more admiring, as I advanced, the numerous pretty farms by the wayside as well as the river and the natural scenery. At last I forded to the west side and approached a thick settlement of farms when the sun was low. I stopped in front of the most spacious dwelling, and asked for lodging for the night. The old gentleman, I shirt-sleeves, was adjusting his roses and vines in the yard. He did not reply instantly, and I repeated my request. He looked at me and said, "Nix fuste!" I then pointed to the red, low sun, then to his spacious white house, and tapping my horse on the neck, pointed also to his spacious stables and barns. He shook his head, and again said, "Nix fuste." A fair-haired German lassie now came to my rescue from the house, and acted as my interpreter. The old gentleman, I could perceive, did not want me to tarry; but I could also perceive that the fair-haired lassie was pleading for me. The old gentleman relented, after surveying me closely, and the lassie invited me to dismount and go in. My horse was pleasantly stored away, and so was I. The lassie was the only one of the family who could talk English, and we "ran on" greatly before the old folks till a late hour. They had not long been in the country. I asked her how she liked the San Marcos as compared with the Faderland? "Oh, beautiful!" said she; "the Rhine is good, but San Marcos is better." I asked her how she liked American boys as compared with the boys of the Faderland? "Oh they are as good," said she, "and I do love the American ladies." And so do I. In fact, I love all ladies. I slept.

CHAPTER IX

SOME REFLECTIONS

I paid the old gentleman his fee of two dollars, and bade him and his fair-haired lassie good-bye before he sun had yet looked into the valley, though touching the hills and tips of the forest with his kisses. I mention the old gentleman's fee only because it points to a difference in the general German character and the general American character in Texas. The traveler, if he look and behave like a gentleman, who stops with an American by the way-side at night, will usually be sent on his way the next morning rejoicing, without exacting of fee, unless he happens to stop with one who makes a practice of entertaining strangers; then he will be charged lightly, and sometimes heavily enough. I presume this comes less from hospitality than pride, and the dread of being looked upon as a tavern-keeper. The German, on the other hand, does not bother his head in the least about pride or tavern-keepers; his chief consideration is thrift, and the addition of a few cents to his treasury in an honest way. He has nothing to give away, of his abundance or little. What he eats and what he sleeps on cost him labor and money, and he will share none of these with strangers without an equivalent, with good, profitable interest besides. Therefore he is always prosperous and on gaining ground. He is right, and I applaud him for it. The American does not watch so closely the chances to collect, and despises driblets; therefore, he, as a class, is not so prosperous. I think my entertainment at the old gentleman's house was worth two dollars to me, though probably I did not cost him ten cents; and I like him rather the better because he charged it. He will leave his children well to do; and if they have brains, and I am sure the fair-haired lassie has, they will have a chance to employ and enjoy them, to their own and their neighbors' profit. A condition which compels us to be always looking out for first necessities, is destructive to intellect and civilization; and many a bright flower has blushed and died unseen from this hard necessity.

And yet the American is generally thrifty enough to charge a wayfarer who does not look like a gentleman, if he will take him at all; because he does not care whether such a fellow thinks him a tavern-keeper or not, and is willing to take all he has. And the American ladies, when their husbands are not about, will invariably stick it on heavily, and sometimes cruelly. While traveling through the country, I avoid the women as much as possible when it comes to settling bills; for though I like to pay my way, I detest being gouged. I think if the husbands would give their ladies more pocket change, they would not act I this shameful way. It is carrying good sense to a shameful extreme.

SPECULATIONS ABOUT MESQUITE GRASS

As I ride along, the country is very similar to that east of the San Marcos, save that the prairie is not so elevated, the undulations are more gentle, and there are extensive table-lands as level as a parlor floor, and more gaudily dressed in natural carpeting. There are also many beautiful, isolated groves of live-oak, and many of the mesquites are trees. Farms and ranches are very sparse—just enough to give the country the appearance of not being totally uninhabited. At noon I halted on a table-land which overlooks a wide circuit, tempted thereto by the charming prospect and the exceedingly abundant grass, on which I turned my horse loose with his hobbles; I, meantime, reclining on a noble couch, of just that degree of compactness with softness that is most luxurious. I fancy it was on some such couch as this that Sire Adam and Madam Eve passed the nights, though I dare say she did decorate it with “pansies, daffodils and violets blue.”

The grass here and all over this extensive prairie is the curly mesquite. There are several varieties of mesquite grass in Texas, inhabiting various localities best suited to their various natures. They are all rich and sweet, but the curly mesquite, as I have said before, excels them all. So excellent is it that horses will keep as sleek as moles on it, without any other food whatever, and sheep will literally turn to animated suet-balls. One may ride a thousand miles and maintain his horse in superb order without visiting a corn-crib, simply by giving him two hours at noon and the night to feed in. It grows in tufts, so thickly spread over the ground as to form a perfect carpeting of delicate tender blades, often a foot or more in length, usually much less, but so curled up as to give it the appearance of only a couple of inches. In the spring and summer when it is green, nothing can be richer or prettier than this carpeting. It has the singular property of “curing” itself where it grows, and in the dead of winter, when apparently quite dead, it is richest and sweetest. It is then that animals like it best and seek it most eagerly. Cattle do not like it so much as do horses and sheep; they, from the structure of their mouths, prefer the tall, coarser grasses, which they can twist their tongues around and jerk off. Its native habitat is the elevated prairie, and it seldom or never invades the forest or timbered bottoms. It gets its name from the fact that it almost invariably accompanies the mesquite tree or chaparral. They seem to be inseparable companions. Where it possesses, it expels all other grasses.

This grass is gradually spreading all over Western Texas. Where the taller and ranker grasses are tramped out and destroyed by the innumerable herds of cattle, the curly mesquite immediately appears and permanently usurps the place. Whole counties, which a few years ago had little or none of it, are now blessed with it on every hill and prairie. It is tending eastward as well as all over the West, and the time will doubtless come when even the Houston Prairie will be adorned and further enriched by it. The tendency of the tall and rank grasses to die out and be superseded by the curly mesquite, when the country becomes comparatively populous, causes me to think that the great cattle-growing districts must gradually tend westward into the region beyond San Antonio. Indeed, this tendency

is not at work, for herds of cattle are continually driven, even from this section, into that wild region. Sheep, horses and farms will occupy the ranges from which the cattle have been driven; and wealth and civilization will be increased. But I do not mean to say that even then this part of Texas will not be a better cattle region than any other part of the United States outside of Texas; for the bottoms of the woodlands will still furnish ample provision for hundreds of thousands of cattle, and even if these fail, there is no end to the capacity of this country to produce corn and the cereal grasses to keep them fat.

THE GUADALUPE

I had ridden but a short distance from my couch on the table-land, when another glorious scene burst upon me. It was a great valley, sleeping in the hazy distance, and reaching out of sight north and south. To the westward it seemed to have no limit, but rolled away like a great ocean. A dark line of forest followed its course, but occupied only the centre of the valley. At distant intervals, through openings in the forest, I could see a river flashing in the sunlight. The green of the valley was often relieved by black fields of newly plowed earth, and clusters of buildings were numerous. It was not long before I rode into the valley and stood upon the banks of the Guadalupe.

I was quite into raptures over the San Marcos, and I should go into much greater raptures here, for the Guadalupe is simply an unabridged edition of the San Marcos, carrying about three or four times its bulk of water. It is in all respects the same: the same limpidity, the same deep and silent pools, and the same sparkling rapids. The valley is wider, and of the same fertility. This river is three or four hundred miles long, and from its source to its mouth sweeps through a terrestrial paradise—a country that has not its match, except in Texas, for beauty and sweet amenity of scenery. Half its course is among mountains, then rolling uplands, and then the level plains upon the Gulf of Mexico, and everywhere, except in the latter, its wide valleys are projected far below the general surface.

On a ferry I crossed the river, and rode for two hours along the bank; at no time, I think, out of sight of plantations and farms. Cedar abounds in the locality, for very many of the fences are constructed wholly of it.

DIVISION II

CHAPTER I

NEW BRAUNFELS

I arrived at this place in the night, and slept soundly—not the heavy sleep of fatigue, but the refreshing slumber that follows a day of pleasant activity, in which the faculties of mind and body alike have been engaged.

I arose before the sun and walked on a tour of observation. I seemed to have been transported over seas in my sleep, and to have awakened in a strange land. All the faces I saw were foreign, and I heard nothing but a foreign language. The signs over the stores were foreign, and the farmers that thronged the streets with their wagons were all foreign, and spoke to their teams in a foreign tongue. Here is a city of six or seven thousand people, so nearly all German that the exceptions are rare and singular. It was founded by a romantic German nobleman, the Count de Braunfels, in 1842, who here established a colony of his friends, which grew and grew, until the present prosperous city and community are the result. When Texas became a part of the Great Republic, he returned to Germany, but his followers remained, smitten with the love of the beautiful and attractive land. The romantic castle in which he dwelt, apart from his followers, still looks from an eminence upon the city—the castle, itself hardly changed, but how changed the place upon which it looks! Then a straggling cluster of gardens and farms—now a bustling mart for a populous region around it, filled with rich merchants and manufacturers, editors, scientists and poets!²⁰

It is not probable that the romantic Braunfels thought or dreamed to what the seed that he had planted would expand. Perhaps it was eccentricity and the love of adventure and novelty that drew him hither; and so these were gratified, he thought little beyond. But I regard this as having greater possibilities and probabilities than any place in Texas, except Houston and Galveston. The future is pregnant of her. Nature seems to have shaped the locality with the design that it should be no humble spot; for she has poured out her favors from a too abundant horn. If Houston and Galveston may be the Liverpool and London of Texas, here she had intended to erect her Manchester, with industries less gigantic, but infinitely more varied. Here is a river with water absolutely as clear and brilliant as a diamond, falling forty-two feet in its three mile sweep about the town, with volume a hundred feet in breadth. Here is power more than enough for all the wheels of Manchester, and may by art be indefinitely increased. The manufacturer may look, from the upper stories of his mills, upon fields snow-white with cotton in its season, which the planter will deliver to him without freight and the burdens of the middle-man. He may look upon field after field golden with shafts of the ripened wheat, the best in the world for transportation in flour over the southern seas. From the same window he may behold, in the distance, herds of sheep covering the hills or cropping the sweet herbage of the valleys, offering fleeces as

fine as those from Saxony or Spain. He may behold cattle on a thousand hills; and sweeping away into the blue distance, he sees forests on every hand, rich in timber for manufacture and fuel. Thus, the manufacturer of cotton and woolen goods, he who fills argosies of flour for foreign lands, and he who works in leather and wood—all have before them here, stores of raw material which are inexhaustible, and an empire around them eager to absorb the products of their skill. In addition to all of these, is a climate so pure and healthful that it is positively delicious: airs that have gone forth with all of Nature's blessings, not only to preserve but to bestow health; a climate rarely cold and never sultry. The city sits on an elevation above all the region south, and the splendid Gulf breezes strike her full in the face. The artisans may labor summer and winter with open door and window, and drink health while they work. With all of this and these, and especially the great, clamorous empire around her, how can the colony of the romantic Braunfels refuse to be great, and thus cross Nature? How can she decline to be the Manchester of Texas?²¹

In planting the thrifty and ingenious German here, Fortune played lieutenant to Nature, in assisting her plans. Braunfels is backed by the great people at home for upon it she can draw for capital, labor and skill *ad libitum*.

Already she treads the path of her destiny. Here is a woolen mill whose cassimers and blankets are sold all over the west, and recently they have invaded Broadway with success. Uncle Sam buys them for his Boys in Blue. Here are flouring mills, with capacity above the local demands, and the Braunfels saddles have grown famous. The vaquero who rides like a Comanche, is not happy without a Braunfels "tree." And this is but the beginning.

The city is built of limestone and cedar, and to add that it is neat and comely would be unnecessary after mentioning its German people. The Germans have established many noble communities in Texas, but this is the crown of them all. It grows apace, but when it has a railroad, it will step forth with the tread of a giant. Want of cheap and rapid communication with other communities is all that retards it.

WESTWARD AND POESY

After breakfast—at which native wine, in place of coffee, was offered me, if I preferred it, by the host from the Rhine—I called to see the livery-man and charged him to stuff my horse well until I should return; and then leaping into an open carriage, drove into the west.

What a beautiful, picturesque country is this about Braunfels! And I cannot help admiring the exquisite taste of the romantic German nobleman, who preferred it above all other in its native beauty! To the north the Cretaceous hills lift their solid front, like a great rampart, trending to the west; and on a spur of this great formation Braunfels sits and looks over all the region except the frowning rampart. To the east lie the forests of the great Guadalupe valley eight or ten miles across;²² to the south and west the prairie rolls in undulations and swells of the smoothest outlines, adorned here and there with evergreen groves

of live-oak. It is all rich—a black, oily soil, on which the fruits of the temperates, and cotton and the cereals flourish side by side. Farms occupy indiscriminately the winding vales, the undulations, the broad table-lands and even climb over the lofty tumuli. It is, indeed, “a lovely rural scene of various view,” so that I found snatches of pastoral verse continually running through my mind.

“Delightful Wyoming! beneath thy skies,
The happy shepherd swains had nought to do
But feed their flocks on green declivities,
Or skim perchance thy lakes with light canoe,
From morn, till evening’s sweeter pastimes grew,
With timbrel, when beneath the forest brown,
They lovely maidens would the dance renew;
And aye those sunny mountains, half way down,
Would echo flageolet from some romantic town.

“Then, where of Indian hills the daylight takes
His leave, now might you the flamingo see
Disporting like a meteor on the lakes—
And playful squirrel on his nut-grown tree;
And every sound of life was full of glee,
From merry mock-birds’ song, or hum of men;
While hearkening, fearing nought or revelry,
The wild deer arched his neck from glades, and then,
Unhunted, sought his woods and wilderness again.”

Had Campbell written from this spot he could not have given a more accurate description of the scenes around Braunfels. The “happy shepherd swains”—the “flocks on green declivities”—“the forests brown,” the “lovely maidens” and “the sunny mountains” the “romantic town”—are all accurate to the life. ’Tis true I see not the “lake” and the “light canoe;” but not far roll the Comal and the Guadalupe, and who shall say that the light canoe is not skimming over their diamond waters?

The “flamingo!” Here he is in troops and squadrons, marching over the prairie and occasionally lifting his wings for a short flight; here “the playful squirrel on his nut-grown tree”—the pecan; the “merry mock-bird” pours his melody from every tree; here the “wild deer unhunted;” here his “woods and wilderness”—

“And every sound of life is full of glee.”

The poet continues the next verse:

“And scarce had Wyoming of war and crime
 Heard, but in trans-Atlantic story rung;
 For here the exile met from every clime,
 And spake in friendship every distant tongue;
 Men from the blood of warring Europe sprung,
 Were but divided by the running brook;
 And happy where no Rhenish trumpet sung,
 On plains no sighing mine’s volcano shook,
 The blue-eyed German changed his sword to pruning-hook.”

Literal to the life—save the “war” only “in transatlantic story rung;” for most of the dwellers in Braunfels and around it, saw our own great war, and many of them participated in its thunder and carnage—a war the most tremendous in the world’s annals, and which none could have fought but Americans enraged at each other.

But to that last verse of Campbell. When I repeated it in my mind, it seemed unmistakable that his spirit, at least, hovered over these scenes when he wrote:

“Here the exile met from every clime
 And spake in friendship every distant tongue.”

For here are the Frenchman, the Pole, the “free Switzer,” the Englishman, the Spaniard, as well as the American and German. And the blue-eyed German changing his sword into pruning-hook, caps the climax of the description. Truly, genius, like omnipresence, pervades everything! Campbell and Braunfels will hereafter dwell in my mind together.

MY CIBOLO

Passed the Cibolo—a river of great valley, prodigious channel, and no water. Into its banks the mighty Colorado would fit comfortably, and yet Cibolo here runs not a drop, but glares upon us with a rugged, arid, stony bottom. It is a desert in an oasis, its borders fringed with fertility and beauty. The lilies bend over from the edge of the oasis and look into the abhorrent desert below, and so do the willows. What a strange freak! This is the death, the skeleton, the ghost of a river: nothing left but the bleached and grinning bones. Where has this river gone? Is it the Styx below, of which Homer and Virgil sang, and over which Charon paddles the shivering souls? Shadow and grim desolation of a river, you are indeed a perplexity!

And yet there is water after all. Below me I perceived a dark, grizzly pool, which “Jehu” said is “deep as a pit;” and above me I perceived another through the glimpses of the overhanging trees, which he said is “miles long, and can float a man of war.”

“And does this thing never run?” said I.

“Like an ocean turned loose!” said he. “Once I had to camp out on yan side three days and nights, waiting for it to run down. When it runs, it runs!”

“And when it stops it stops!” said I.

“It does for a fact,” said he; “it stops months at a time, and has been known to stop for years. And it is a comical river, anyhow. Some miles above here, it is bold like the Comal; then it gets sick and reels and staggers and little by little disappears under ground; and then miles below here, it comes out a big river again and hides no more. It is a comical river, the comicaest I ever saw,” added he with a laugh.

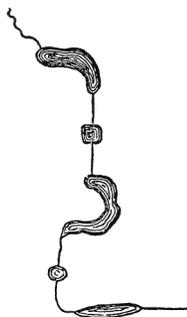
Cibolo means buffalo, but I perceived no buffaloes here.

At the village of Selma “on yan side,” we halted and drank some excellent beer.

CONTINUATION

A lofty, rolling country, consisting of great rounded swells after swells, like immense choppers on the ocean after a roaring storm. No timber but mesquite, and mostly chaparral, except in the green vales, where labyrinthine brooks wander and the live-oak spreads its broad boughs. The winds blow without rest. Occasionally the home of a ranchero is seen buried in the deep vales, as if shunning human society. Vale and tumuli are dressed in the beautiful mesquite grass, shoe-top deep, thicker than hair on a dog's back; cattle, horses, sheep and goats look saucy and independent as they bite off a bough and walk along. Generally a young Mexican and a dog or two follow these. The country is nearly all fertile. What grand crops of wheat, barley and oats might be raised! But live stock is too profitable, and the denizen thinks it is easier work, and he cares nothing for any more of these fruits of the earth than he and his family can devour. This grand country is a mine untouched. The air is purity itself. The scenery is varied and lovely. On the top of one of these immense tumuli, it is quite glorious to look over this great rolling ocean of green.

SALADO



To use the language of my Jehu, this is also a comical stream. If I should paint a portrait of it in map style, it would be as here presented.

The light lines denote a pretty, babbling creek, and the heavy spaces, deep pools of blue, alive with perch, catfish, trout and snakes. Indeed this alternation of purling brook and deep, blue pool, is characteristic of the prairie streams of Texas. Even the little rill, creeping concealed under the tall grass, has these deep pools at short intervals, all filled with sport for the angler. Though the stream may often cease to run, under the withering drought, these pools never flag,

but have the same volume of sweet, clear water at all seasons. Does not this look like Providential design? What hands wrought these deep, inexhaustible pools of pure, sweet water?

The Salado sports a wide valley, winding amid the overlooking tumuli and mesas, from which the rains drift into it their choicest mineral elements, mixed with the decaying grass and leaves of the prairie. The soil is thus charged with calcareous and vegetable matter, and is a black, mellow loam of amazing productiveness. My Jehu said that in spring time he could actually hear the crops grow as he passed them on the road. A dense forest of pecans, oaks and elms, the wild grape almost uniting them in one great arbor, conceals both stream and pool, and often obtrudes on the valley to the foot of the graceful swells. This valley is well settled, and the appearance of the buildings on the farms and haciendas, denotes a people prosperous and quite refined. Their houses are all of white limestone, and their fences invariably cedar or stone.

Salado means salty, but I tasted no salt in its sweet, pure water.

Across the Salado, the country falls—that is to say, it does not tower so loftily as between that stream and the Cibolo; still, it is greatly elevated. The tumuli and undulations roll more smoothly, and there are wide spaces of level lands. From the top of these elevations, it is a singular scene. Here rolls a chaparral so dense that a horseman departing from the road is immediately hidden from sight. It extends illimitably and every green bough is wavering in the wind, which brings to my ear a sound not unlike that of seas, continuous and indescribable. The glorious-pea-green, velvety carpet of curly mesquite looks as chaste as untrodden snow, and the soil, where exposed, is dark and rich.

CHAPARRAL THOUGHTS

A few years ago this was a vast, rolling prairie, with no growth but scattering trees of mesquite and isolated groves of live-oak. The chaparral has now possessed every foot, and is crowding hither and thither. It forces its way by overwhelming numbers, and crushes, by smothering, whatever opposes its advance. From the Rio Grande and beyond, it has pushed its way in one grand phalanx. What is its purpose, and who has called it forth to this conquest? These armies do not move without a head.

Many of the cattle men look upon it with aversion and curse it, in spite of its grateful shade and abundant beans. They say, "It is now like hunting needles in haystacks; although we admit that the grass is made far better than ever." Many of them have pulled up stakes and departed for regions where the chaparral does not exist, probably, in time, to be driven forth again.

But I regard this invasion as one of singular beneficence, whose commander is the Great Architect. At His command, the chaparral stepped forth to conquer, and to dispense blessings as it conquers. Already it has wrought a great change in the climate of Western Texas, and that change is becoming constantly more marked. By shading and cooling the earth, it has made it attractive to the clouds, and the rains come. Until late years, this re-

gion was subject to prolonged and destructive droughts, in which crops died, rivers faint-ed and disappeared, and even the grass on the prairie was burnt to the roots. As the chaparral advanced, these conditions abated, and simultaneously with its spreading over a great scope of country, such conditions ceased entirely, and nowhere since then have the seasons been more equitable as a rule. The farmer thanks God, and plows his lands in the confi-dence of abundant crops, but does not suspect that the thorny chaparral is God's messen-ger to announce and work this change.

Can this connection between the chaparral and the extinction of the droughts be acci-dental? Not so. It is the natural and inevitable result of such agency. See how the enlight-ened Khedive converted the deserts of Egypt into a blooming garden, by crowding them with living trees which drew the clouds! Should he cover the Great Sahara with a forest, he would convert that dread desolation into a garden also. Even in the desert it rains in the forest-covered oases.

The new forest came unplanted and uninvited, so far as man's agency is concerned. It is the work of Him that rules. To read the designs and plans of the Great Architect is not mine or yours; but that chaparral is executing His plans, no one can question. It is building this mighty Empire—"prepare yet the way"—which I behold so grandly beautiful around me; whose airs, if it is not sacrilege to say so, are as sweet as the airs of Heaven. It converts Western Texas from a wilderness to a populous hive of industry; it makes her the noblest and most blessed land on earth. Thorny Chaparral, I touch my hat to you as the messen-ger of Him who rules, and loves, and works! You are the messenger to announce the tread of the coming Giant!

CHAPTER II

SAN ANTONIO IN 1876

Five or six miles through the ranks of the great invader, our carriage halted on a lofty eminence, from which a glorious view burst upon us. It is San Antonio, a city of twenty thousand people—the place where the famous battle of the Alamo was fought—where Crockett fell. It sits in a wide and deep amphitheatre, whose northern wall is the Cretaceous mountains, and the rounded tumuli and undulations of the prairies slope down to it from the west and east. Through this amphitheatre meanders a river, bending hither and thither, as if it desired to kiss every foot of ground; its course is marked by tall timber. Along the banks of this river and stretching out widely over the amphitheatre, nestles the city, half concealed in the wealth of green foliage; its white stone houses glittering like glass and marble in the declining sun, and contrasting strikingly with the wealth of deep green. Tall spires and stately edifices rise here and there above the rest and the green foliage. The scene is so charming that I feel half afraid to proceed, lest the charm may vanish as I approach. Involuntarily I think of Constantinople, but I repulse the thought.²³

It was night when we stopped in front of a fine stone hotel, where Jehu was paid off and dismissed.

Does it come up to the rosy picture which it paints of itself on the eye of him who beholds it from that hill? After two days' delay, I cannot say that it does; and yet it is a weird and winning place. Two rivers wind through it, San Antonio and San Pedro—St. Anthony and St. Peter—both of sky-blue water, and hundreds of canals unite their waters; so that there is hardly a street which has not its running stream. Shade trees, bananas, fig-trees, flowers and creeping vines abound, and many of the residences are almost completely hidden under bowers. In spring, summer and autumn, when these bowers are gaudy with myriads of variegated blooms and purple grapes, alive with humming birds and the breezes laden with perfume and kept cool by the running streams that sparkle as they run, I can well imagine it a place of great delight. The structures are nearly all of white blocks of stone, many of them imposing and palatial; but too frequently the unsightly hovels, the memorials of the feeble race that is giving place to the strong one, sit side by side with these splendid structures, and mar the scene. There are three large public squares, and a cathedral as large, it not larger than any in the United States; but the streets are narrow and ill-paved, and the two rivers and wealth of foliage are its chief glory to the eye. These rivers leap from the earth in gigantic fountains; the San Pedro from two in the city, and the San Antonio from a hundred, two miles above the city. These fountains and the seats of them are all a glory. Those of San Pedro burst up in a noble grove of elms, the property of the city, supplied with rustic chairs and benches, and here, almost every summer evening, the city

discharges her gay throngs, who pass the hours in promenade or the waltz and quadrille. Those of the San Antonio burst forth under bowers of vine and in nooks that are suggestive of fairies. Labyrinthine walks lead under bowers from nook to nook, and are here extremely suggestive of youthful hearts and the first whisperings of love. I dare say that there is many a couple in San Antonio, and even at a great distance, whose first vows were spoken along these labyrinthine walks and in these nooks. Above the fountains rise the majestic Cretaceous hills, with their green slopes and forests of oak and cedar.

MIXED

I have never seen a population so mixed, and on this point I will match San Antonio against the world, giving all other places a big start in the game. I chatted to-day with a stalwart Bedouin of the Desert, a bronzed giant; studied the physique of a coal-black Australian; and a Greek from the Acropolis quoted, within my hearing, sonorous verses from Homer, at the fountains of the San Pedro. The San Antonians say there are people here from every race in the world, except the Lap and the Esquimau. Of the twenty thousand population they assign one-third to the Americans, one-third to the Germans and Slaves, and one-third to the Mexicans and French with batches to every other race under the sun, except the unappreciative Lap and Esquimau. The negro is here, but they allow him no place in the estimate. This is a remarkable filigree work. Some writer attributes the restless, undaunted push of the Americans to the mingling and effervescence of the various bloods in their veins. If the theory is correct, San Antonio should be the epitome of all the restless energy of the American nation. In a few years its youth will not be able to tell what blood dominates their veins. The young San Antonian will be the epitome of all the races of the world. If the city shall not then prove itself a magazine of enterprise, the theory of the writer just mentioned will be cruelly exploded.

Of these races the American and German seem to affiliate and coalesce naturally, while the Mexicans gravitate mostly toward the French and other Latin races. I could not hear of a single marriage between German and Mexican, and such instances are very rare between American and Mexican, while close quarters between the latter and other races seem quite common.

SOCIETY

There is much of it that is excellent. Indeed this whole region seems to have an attractiveness to the better class of people. There is something in the air and scenery that is congenial to these, and favorable to the development of intellectual and moral refinement. The people drink it from the heavens and become filled with it, as Una on the mossy bank was by the sunbeam. I dare say the peculiar meteorological and physical features of his country had much to do with the remarkably refined development of the ancient Grecian; and his

land is a Mecca to people of that class yet, though in ruins and but the shadow of what it was. It seems that the first American settlers of San Antonio were shoots of the best classes of the older States, and their families have been continually recruited from the same class, while Germany and Spain have freely sent their contributions. Its population is much swelled in winter by well-to-do people from the east, seeking a genial climate; in summer, by the families of the planters and others from the alluvial "bottoms," and at all seasons by the best and wealthiest people of Mexico, whose frequent revolutions have driven them into temporary exile. Churches and schools abound here. I doubt if there is a city on the continent which can show a more varied and interesting society of the better class, or which holds a larger proportion to the whole.

"TORCHLIGHT"

THE VERGE—WHENCE SHE PROSPERS

The city sits on the verge of civilization. To him who enters it from the west, it opens the gate to the bustling populous American world; and he who departs from it to the west, enters a wilderness. It is true that the daring stock-man has pushed his wigwam and tent a hundred miles further, and there are a few villages scattered widely apart, but it is a wilderness nevertheless, traversed frequently by murderous bands of savages, and the hiding place of worse bandits from every country. Through this wilderness—a great valley of thickets—one may penetrate five hundred miles to the Sierras of Mexico. Across it the two great tides of American civilization, the Anglo-Saxon and the Iberian, stand front to front, the one aggressive and advancing, and the other sullen and retreating. The Anglo-Saxon tide has pushed its avant-couriers to the banks of the Rico Grande, on the other side of which the rear-guard of the Iberian stands watching, oppressively conscious of the fate that awaits him. To the north-west and south-west it is equally a wilderness, while in all other directions lies a great territory very sparsely settled. San Antonio then is a great torchlight in the midst of a wilderness, and it may well perplex the stranger to conceive whence she drew her irradiation and opulence, and how she prospers.

A look at the map readily solves this riddle; for though she sits in a wilderness, and on the edge of "the waste howling," yet the region that is tributary for her wealth is enormously vast; and though the populations are sparse, yet in the aggregate they are very large. She supplies not only all Texas, west and north and northwest of her, with all the fabrics her people consume, and all the delicacies they enjoy, but she reaches out her arms into central Mexico and Chihuahua, seven hundred miles away, and draws into her lap a flood of silver and gold. She receives and distributes and levies contributions upon every pound of wool, every hide, and every nugget of ore that is raised, grown or produced in this enormous region. Every Mexican bandit is indebted to her for the pistol, blade and ammunition at his belt; every ranchero for the saddle on which he rides, for the covering on his body, and the dram with which he clears his throat in the morning; every damsel for her silks and rib-

bons and slippers, her cologne and pomatums, and the pen, ink and paper with which she dispatches her love missives. All of this makes a peculiar and gigantic trade, in which the profits are large and certain; and when we take it well in mind, we cease to wonder at this torch-light in the wilderness—her splendid emporiums and palatial homes. Through this traffic many of her citizens have built large wealth, beginning on nearly nothing.

HER PAST

San Antonio is one of the most venerable of American things. She was founded in 1692 by Franciscan friars from France, who here established themselves to introduce civilization and Christianity among the Indians—a work in which they seem to have had but indifferent success. Their great churches or “missions,” filled with dormitories, still stand in an excellent state of preservation, and the candles lighted on their altars at that day, are still burning, and have never been allowed to be extinguished. In these churches there is some fine statuary and ornamental work, showing that even in that remote day, artists of no small ability trod the soil of San Antonio. The churches were built in enclosures of high, strong walls, with embrasures for defensive weapons. They are below San Antonio, on either side of the river, at intervals of a mile or so apart, and their names are La Purissima Concepcion, La Espada, San Jose, and San Juan. Their number and size indicate that the population about San Antonio in those remote days, must have been large—perhaps not less than it is now. If the records of these old monks could be obtained and translated, they would make a most interesting chapter in the history of Texas. It is little credit to the Legislature of the State that no step in this direction has ever been taken.

In 1762, when Texas passed from the possession of France to that of Spain, San Antonio had grown in seventy years to a mixed population of two thousand French, Spaniards and Indians. Thus she began the mingling process at a remote day. Truly, “the way the twig is inclined the tree will grow!” At that time it was stated that the twenty head of cattle brought from France by the monks had increased to one hundred thousand; and these were the ancestors of the Texas cattle. At this date they have increased to several millions.

BATTLE-SCARRED

In the meantime furious battles had been fought between the Europeans and the Indians for the possession of the beautiful country. The name—Espada—the “sword”—of one of the Missions, and their defensive walls and embrasures show that the olive branch did not exclusively reign over the domicils of the monks. They probably bore the cross in one hand and the arquebus in the other.

After the junction with Spain and Mexico, war grew hotter and fiercer, and San Antonio was the centre of it. The Texans—now mostly Mexicans—raised the standard of revolt against Spain, and after a severe struggle captured San Antonio on the 4th of March,

1813. On the 4th of June following, eight thousand Spaniards and Mexicans attempted to retake the city, but were driven off with terrible slaughter. On the 18th of August, the Spaniards again advanced; the revolutionists marched out on the open plain to meet them; were defeated; some six hundred adventurous Americans among them were slain or captured, and the city was again in the hands of the Spaniards. Other Mexican States soon followed the example of Texas in revolt, and the Spaniards were at last driven out of all Mexico and Texas.

The Texans—not mostly Americans—soon became restless, and revolted against Mexico. October 24, 1835, a fierce battle was fought around Purissima Concepcion, in which the Americans under Bowie and Travis defeated the Mexicans and captured their cannons. In December, after four days fighting in the streets of the city, the Mexicans were driven out and the Americans took possession. This was a terrible struggle, in which the city was well nigh battered to pieces, and was a fit prelude to the battle of the Alamo, probably the most remarkable battle ever fought, which took place in February and March following. One hundred and eighty Americans under Bowie and Travis, resisted, during thirteen days, six thousand Mexicans under Santa Anna, and fought until not one of their number was left to tell the tale. Here the renowned David Crockett fell fighting as a private soldier, apart from his companions, leaving nine dead Mexican, as the story says, piled around his dead body. The State government has erected a monument to these stubborn heroes, on the Capitol grounds at Austin, on which their names are recorded with this inscription, which has always seemed to me the most beautiful in monumental literature:

“Thermopylae had her messengers of defeat; the Alamo had none.”

The Mexicans gathered their dead bodies and burned them on the sacred ground where they fell.

Why did not these stubborn heroes retreat, seeing themselves so hopelessly over-numbered? Had they done so, they would have saved the slaughter of five hundred heroes as brave as themselves, the patriots with Fannin and Ward, who were overpowered and captured a few days afterward, and mercilessly shot down in cold blood, by Santa Anna's order, after they had surrendered. While applauding his matchless courage, history will probably condemn Travis for the useless slaughter of his brave band, whose devotion and heroism anything told in Grecian or Roman story can hardly equal.

The old church or chapel of the Alamo, built in 1774, in and around which these terrible scenes occurred, still stands, though the wall which surrounded it has long since been torn away. Let it remain until its white stones have crumbled to dust! The citizens of San Antonio should adorn that plaza with monuments to Bowie, Travis, and Crockett, and a tablet sacred to the memory of those who fell with them.

Thus San Antonio has more history than any place on the American Continent. If told by some fine writer, it would live and charm forever, and make every foot of her a classic ground.

HER FUTURE

As the beautiful wilderness fills with people and becomes the seat of varied industry, she must needs grow great. It will be impossible to dwarf her future, unless she be unnaturally supine. The great region in which she sits mistress, can build many populous cities. Her two rivers, with their wealth of power, invite her to manufactures, and it is singular that she has not already embarked in some of these; in particular, that she does not manufacture leather and shoes for all of Texas, since the mesquite and sumach offer her illimitable resources of tannin. Her countless herds offer the raw material, cheaper than elsewhere in the United States, and the Mexicans offer cheap and quickly taught labor. What a folly to ship these hides to New England, and ship them back in leather and shoes, paying freight and insurance both ways, besides the labor and profits of the tanner and manufacturer! It is this folly that makes a people poor and dependent. When she embarks in manufactures as well as commerce, her prosperity will be great.

CHAPTER III

THE MEXICANS

I would not do well to leave San Antonio without speaking of these people and their quarters. They dwell principally west of the San Pedro, and that portion of the city is called by all the rest of the inhabitants, "Mexico," by way of distinction or derision. I have said that the houses of San Antonio were all, or nearly all, built of stone. I was at fault in this, for I did not then have "Mexico" in my mind. Here the houses are of straight cedar posts, stuck upright into the ground, and covered with roofs of grass. The cracks between the poles are daubed with mud. They generally have but one room, and rarely more than two. Some of them have chimneys, but most have not; and none, I believe, have floors. The black earth is beaten hard and made smooth with grease, and this is all they floor that they want. Some of the most pretentious have windows. These edifices are called jacels, which, I suppose, is the Aztec for "palaces"; but the Americans call them hay-ricks. When there is not a chimney to these palaces, the residents cook out of doors when it does not rain, and over a pan full of coals in the house when it does rain. Fire about these palaces must be dangerous, in view of the great abundance of straw, and yet it is a provokingly rare thing that one becomes ignited. Their beds consist of well-dried cowskin spread out on the ground in one corner, and on this they pile a quantity of straw. One will invariably find, living in these residences with the rest of the occupants, a couple or more of black dogs, utterly hairless, and the ugliest things in the world. Their being hairless, however, is a great advantage, in that they can harbor no fleas. What these dogs are good for, I could not possibly learn, as they are too lazy to catch rats, and they certainly could not master a rabbit, even should they by chance catch one. Yet the Mexicans love these strange creatures with a tender affection, and I have seen even old men take them in their arms and let them lick their lips.

The color of the Mexicans varies from that of new-tanned leather to a peculiar reddish black. Their hair is coarse, coal-black and straight as an Indian's. Their cheek-bones and noses are generally prominent, and many of the latter are aquiline. They do not average so much in size as the Americans, but a few of them are of robust stature, and some are fat to obesity. Their shoulders and chests are broader than the Americans in proportion to size, indicating strength and endurance. Both male and female are always smoking cigaritos, and they always puff the smoke through their nostrils. The men wear broad-brimmed woolen hats, of a grey or bluish color, and many have bands coiled about them, representing snakes. The number of these snakes is said to indicate the rank or estimation in which the wearer of the hat is held: one snake indicating a gentleman, two snakes a more advanced gentleman, and three snakes an exalted gentleman. They seem to me to take much more after the Indian than the Spaniard. I have indeed seen scores of them who were as much like the Digger as possible.

They live principally on hash made of dried beef and rendered fiercely hot with red pepper. With this they eat pods of red pepper, raw onions, and cornbread made into crackers, which have a strong taste of lye. In summer they sometimes appear to live for days together on nothing but watermelons, for which their fondness is remarkable and really child-like and affecting. They seem to be free and easy folk and apparently enjoy life greatly. They are, under all circumstances, exceedingly polite, and no stranger can speak to them without being pleasantly impressed by them. Their politeness is of natural growth, as one perceives it even in the naked children who run around their houses. In winter they wrap themselves around in blankets having all the colors of the rainbow. These are woven by their women; they will shed water like the back of a duck, and they have a hole in the middle, through which the wearers protrude their heads, so that almost the entire body is covered.

Many of their women are absolutely pretty in spite of their dark features. They have not the angular outlines of the men, but generally have a rich and rather voluptuous embonpoint. This when they are young, for as they advance in life they grow ugly. The Mexican women have a singular way of squatting on the ground in groups and circles, about the doors of their domicils, where they sometimes remain without moving out of their tracks, for hours. I suppose they contract this habit from the fact that chairs are an article of furniture rarely found in their houses. The men make excellent teamsters and herdsmen, and the women are said to make very docile and superior housewives. Indeed, I think that the Mexicans need only education to make them a very respectable people. They are generally very ignorant, and the women know nothing whatever except what transpires in their own little circle. Not one in a thousand, even of those who have lived longest in San Antonio, can speak one word of English. They are the most devout believers. Every day precisely at noon the great Cathedral bell tolls in San Antonio, and every Mexican within the sound of it immediately takes off his hat and stands bare-headed until it ceases tolling.

All of this is of the lower classes of Mexicans, or those who compose about ninety-nine out of every hundred one meets; for there are Mexicans in San Antonio of pure Castilian blood, who are quite as white as the Americans, and are a fine-looking and elevated race. They look upon the dark Mexicans with contempt, and call them Peons and Indians. The ladies of high class are nearly always of wonderful beauty, and they and their musical voices are among the principal attractions of the wealthy parlors of San Antonio.

The Mexicans of all classes seem to me to be infatuated on the subject of dancing. They are ready to dance at all hours, at all seasons, and under all circumstances, and they perform with great gracefulness and ease. Perhaps there is no people in the world of whom it may be so truly said that their genius lies in their heels.

TO ARMS

Up to this point I had travelled without arms, receiving nothing but kindness on the road. Believing I should feel better hereafter to have an arsenal about me, I purchased a sixteen-

shooting Henry rifle, two of Colt's navy six-shooters, and a quantity of ammunition. Now, feeling like a monitor with turrets, I leapt on the stage-coach and sped away to New Braunfels and slept.

DIVISION III

CHAPTER I

THE TEXAS PONY

When I mounted my horse, I found him in excellent condition and full of mettle. He is of the hardy half-breed—the product of an American stallion and a mustang mare—a cross which produces an animal of good size, and unequalled for such a journey as this. The pure mustang, or Mexican horse, of Texas, is a small creature, hard-headed and self-willed, tricky and treacherous, but withal a wonder of endurance. Give him a chance to engorge himself twice in twenty-four hours with grass, and he will endure any reasonable amount of hard riding without complaint. The Texans gauge the endurance of a mustang by his capacity to hold grass. If his belly be unusually large, they say he will do to tie to, and will wear out half a dozen American horses on a rough trip. These little shaggy, unkempt creatures, will, while the traveller is sleeping, crop grass all night; and when led to the saddle in the morning, they have stuffed themselves so greedily that their sides stick out ludicrously, and the girth will hardly be long enough. As the day goes on the girth loosens, and the rider will have to dismount before noon to tighten it. Raised on grass, they want no other food, and frequently it is a hard job to teach them to eat anything else. Totally unused to shoes, their hoofs are well-nigh as tough as iron, and they care no more for the rocky hills than a goat. When discontented with their rider, they have an ugly habit of gathering themselves up in a knot and springing perpendicularly into the air, coming down with a terrible jolt. They will repeat this exploit rapidly, and he must be a good horseman who will not be dislodged. While they do this, they frequently let fly some unearthly yells or bawls. The Texans call this “pitching,” and the young stockmen who are the best riders in the world, take delight in it. I have seen them prick their mustangs just for the fun of enjoying a good pitch.

THE COMAL

The Braunsfelsians say that this is the most beautiful river in the world, and let it be borne in mind that most of those who say so have seen the Rhine, the Rhone, the Seine, the Guadalquivir, and the other famous and beautiful rivers of Europe. I, too, have seen the most famous and beautiful rivers of America; and as the sparkling Comal dashes by me, I freely offer to it the crown of beauty. If not the stately Venus, yet it is the brightest, laughingest nymph of them all. To call its playful waters crystal, would not express it. They flow like melted diamond over a bottom of pearl. So limpid are they that pools ten to twenty feet deep disclose the smallest object at the bottom. One can look into its depths and see the picture of himself as distinctly as in a mirror. Milton says that when Eve first waked into

existence, she found herself sitting by a pool; and leaning over to drink, saw the image of herself below, and loved it to distraction, till Adam came. I sometimes think Milton was taught the truth by inspiration, and if what he says of this be true, it must have been in the Comal that she saw her image, and here must have been Eden! May not the great Cretaceous wall which rises above me, have been the north wall of the garden?

One unused to this river may get himself into trouble with its water, if he watch not where he plants his steps. He may come across a pool, twenty feet deep, and so clear is the water and distinct every object in it, that the bottom seems not more than a foot or two under the surface. He steps in, and, to his amazement, sinks like a rock and thinks the bottom has fallen out beneath him!

Occasionally from its north bank great cliffs of stone hang beetling over the river. In these are several caverns; one with a hall eight acres in extent, illumined with stalactites and great pillars of snow-white. Perhaps these were the concert halls of the gnomes and genii.

RIVERS UNDER THE GROUND

About three miles above Braunfels this river, like the San Marcos, San Antonio, and San Pedro, gushes suddenly out of the ground, in innumerable springs—some with such force that they produce dancing cones of water on the surface of the fountain. This is peculiar, and within my knowledge there is nothing like it in other lands. Other rivers are made by slow accretions, but these jump up full-fledged, like Minerva from the brain of Jove. They must be rivers under the ground, running perhaps hundreds of miles in perpetual darkness, before leaping into light. This would explain the limpidity of their waters, passing through the subterranean grottoes, untinged with the sediment of the hills and fields, and their channels undisturbed by intruding man or animals. But if this be so, would there not be found occasionally in these waters eyeless fishes like those in Mammoth Cave, or strange varieties unsuited to streams above ground? And yet none such have been found. It may be that pure as they are when they have reached the light, their subterranean grottoes are charged with deadly gases which forbid piscine life. I prefer not to believe this of streams so beautiful. I would rather believe that the nymphs of the grottoes stand watch and ward at the portals that lead to light, and herding the finny tribe, drive them back when they would pass through. Or perhaps those subterranean grottoes sparkle so brilliantly with gems, that the sun's light is not needed, and the finny tribe sport indifferently within and without.

I have noticed that, so far, these remarkable rivers gush to the surface where the Cretaceous formation terminates and the Eocene begins. The line of demarcation between these formations in every instance is very distinct, sometimes rising in precipitous bluffs, as in the case of the Comal; but usually the Cretaceous slopes to the Eocene in regularly descending undulations, and it is at the foot of these long slopes that the great fountains mostly burst forth. The cavernous nature of its limestone rocks makes this formation favorable above all others to subterranean streams. This formation extends enormously in Tex-

as, and its thickness is at least two thousand feet. Its northwest edge is tilted up, and thence it slopes to the southeast in an immense inclined plane, studded with beautiful mountain scenery and the loveliest vales and lawns on the American continent, or elsewhere. These subterranean rivers probably take their rise near the upper edge of this formation; flowing down through winding caverns, porticoed, pilastered, architruved and jeweled, falling over great precipices, murmuring along smooth channels, and rolling silently through dark pools. By the time they have reached the termination of the formation, they have doubtless cut their way to the base of the strata, where, coming in contact with the harder rocks beneath, and the impermeable clays in front, they are brought to a halt, and pressed upward with such force by the rushing current behind, that the superincumbent masses of rock are rent asunder, the rivers rush to the surface, and the glorious fountains are the result.

That these rivers come from great depths, is proved by the temperature of their water, which never varies at the fountain, in summer and winter. They are so temperate that one may bathe in them with delight even in winter, and during cold days they smoke like a boiler. I have never obtained the exact temperature, but believe that it is at least 80 degrees of Fahrenheit. The temperature of underground cisterns in Texas averages about 50 degrees, showing a difference of 30 degrees between the water of the surface and that of these fountains. As the heat of the earth increases one degree for about every sixty feet of descent, this would place the source of the fountains eighteen hundred feet below the surface, or about the base of the Cretaceous strata.

THE SHORE OF THE EOCENE SEA

Leaving the fountains, my pathway led up the declivity, whose stony ascent rang with a metallic sound under my horse's feet. On the top of it, the territory rolled away to the north in a continuous elevation, rising higher as it faced away in the distance; cut by ravines, sinking in green valleys, or thick with cedar-covered or bleak and stony mountains.²⁴ Below me, southward, was the vast, green prairie with its smooth undulations and tumuli, its long lines of forest marking the course of rivers and creeks, the white city of Braunfels, and the villages and farms. It was a sudden elevation of the country, a hundred or more feet above the fountains, and rapidly ascending to the north and northwest. It is a total change of the physical conditions, and a region utterly new lay before me.

Here was the shore of the Eocene Ocean; in other words, all before me was good dry land to the north, and all below, to the south, was illimitable misty ocean, whose billows thundered and hurled their spray on these very rocks at my feet. There was no island on that sea for thousands of miles, and no sails on its bosom; for then man was not. But it was not alone; for the "spirit of God moved upon the face of the deep," preparing the young world for the habitation of man; and perhaps the winged angels hovered over it and walked upon this shore, assisting in the great work. This ancient sea-shore extends westward to the Rio Grande, in curved lines, and eastward to Austin and thence north-east to an undefined dis-

tance. I know of no other region where the line of separation between two distinct epochs of the world's creation, is so boldly drawn. It is in fact almost as distinct as shore and sea.

This point is eight hundred feet above the level of the sea, and to that depth the ocean has subsided since it beat upon these rocks. George Wilkins Kendall used to say that Texas begins at this ancient shore, and that all below is not Texas or even akin to it. He loved the romantic wilderness of the Cretaceous.

MY CIBOLO AGAIN

Riding some fifteen miles over this New Switzerland—sparsely populated with shepherds and small farmers—I again descended into a wide, delightful valley, well filled with farms; down the centre of it ran a pretty rivulet, shaded with pecans, elms and oaks, and sometimes embowered under vines. I was amazed when they told me it was my Cibolo. Here it sparkled, laughed, murmured and sang; and yet where I had left it some twenty miles below, its channel was the bleakness of desolation, ugly and deformed, without a drop of running water! What manner of stream is this, which enlarges as you ascend it, and is belittled and ceases altogether as you descend it? Truly, I cannot help but think with my Jehu that it is the “comicaest stream” in the world. It is a contradiction of a river; a turning of nature upside down; standing the pyramid on its apex. I account for it by supposing that it steals away through fissures or crevices in limestone, and runs along caverns under its own channel, till meeting some obstruction it is forced to rise again. My Cibolo does not like too much company, and steals away into subterranean solitudes to enjoy his own meditations and philosophy; and when he has his fill of these, he emerges. Truly, he is an original genius.²⁵ And when I reflect that even the streams here are philosophers, I cannot wonder that the population should be infected with philosophy; for all this region hereabout is filled with philosophers and learned gentlemen and ladies, who are mostly shepherds. It is the Greece—I cannot say the Athens—of Texas. So much for the influence of my strange and original Cibolo.

This is a land flowing with milk and honey. It is a Paradise to the poor man who works, and to the rich man who loves philosophy. They have an aristocracy together.

THREE COYOTES

As I rode up the valley, three coyotes crossed the road a short distance before me, and did not seem to consider my presence one of much moment. They stopped and gazed at me a moment and then pursued their course. They had probably just had their fill of carrion, and were on their way to slake their thirst at the rivulet.

These creatures are of a reddish brown or brindled color, and as much like a dog as two black-eyed peas are similar to one another. Indeed, I have seen, in the domestic state, many dogs from which it would be difficult to distinguish them. Their ears are stiff and long, and

their tails bushy. If a large yellow cur should associate with a female bull-fice of nearly similar color, I judge that the product would be very much the same as the coyote. They are about three feet in length, exclusive of tail, and about eighteen inches in height. They invariably carry with them an air of profound melancholy, as if some mortal anguish was in their hearts. This appearance is so striking that no one can look upon them without being so greatly impressed by it that he feels melancholy himself. What can be the reason of this is a mystery to me. I conceive it to be true melancholy, for I can think of no ends which the coyote may subserve by hypocrisy. I have thought that it might be the result of a very hard life, in which there is a continual struggle for the first necessities, making prolonged and painful fasts of frequent occurrence. But this explanation is overthrown by the fact that every coyote I ever handled was in excellent order—far more so than the general run of dogs in the domestic state—and I never saw one that appeared uncomfortably lean. Food, also, is so abundant in this country that they need never feel distress about their next meal. The most probable explanation seems to me this: It is the nature of the dog to love the society and protection of man. A dog without a master is the most melancholy thing in nature, and I have known the dogs of bachelors to lie down and die with inconsolable grief after the death of their masters. It is said that man is the only animal that sheds tears, but I have seen a dog shed tears after the death of his master. The coyote is but a dog, with all of the dog's nature, and it may be that his melancholy is the result of some unsatisfied desire which he cannot understand, like "the desire of the moth for the star;" or that he feels that he is entitled to man's friendship and protection, and pines with sorrow because they are withheld. Certain it is, that he hangs closely and longingly around the haunts of men, and is rarely if ever found remote from them. Though shot at, pursued and poisoned by man, it may be that he loves from afar the hand that is uplifted against him, and yearns for the day when he may be protected and loved by man. If this be not the true explanation, my faculties are entirely at a loss to suggest what may be.

Coyotes often meet in considerable company and form a circle, facing each other, all sitting on their hind-quarters. After a series of low barks and yelps, they break forth into most piteous moans and howling, as if their hearts are broken. I fancy that on such occasions they are receiving reports on the prospect of man receiving them into friendship, and when an unusually cruel story is related of his unrelenting persecutions, their grief becomes ungovernable, and they involuntarily give vent to it in their dismal lamentations. I have listened to them until I felt exceedingly sorry for them, and have often thought that if the writers of operas could hear them, they might receive valuable hints in forming the mournful parts of their music. Certainly I have never heard from any other source such deeply melancholy and affecting notes; and I have heard most of the operas of any note, on the stage.

They are very numerous on the Texas prairies, particularly those tracts that are covered with chaparral. About San Antonio they are so tame that they enter the city every night, and travelers sleeping in the chaparral often have their sacks of victuals stolen from under

their heads. They will eat anything that comes along, whether it be a fat shoat or a tender lamb, and will drive buzzards away from a festering carcass. But the morsel which seems to them most delicious above all others, is a dried cow-skin. By this they will encamp and gnaw for days in succession, until hardly a hair is left to tell where the skin had been. I have never known them to do any damage, except by picking up an occasional stray pig or weakly lamb that has been lost by its mother.

CHAPTER II

BOERNE

A few hours' ride up the vale of my Cibolo—whose waters continually increased as I ascended it—brought me to the hamlet of Boerne, as the capital seat of Kendall County, and the rose of all this new Switzerland. It reminds me of many pictures I have seen of villages hidden in dells, forming little worlds to themselves. On the west and north is a mountainous wall of stone, crowned with evergreen mountain growths, shutting it out completely from those horizons; and from the east the highlands slope down to it with a long descent, covered with forest. My Cibolo sweeps against the abutment of this dark, precipitous wall, and Boerne sits mostly on its east bank. To the north the wall is some miles off, allowing quite a sweep to the eye in that direction. The population is five or six hundred, two-thirds German; the houses are stone, all neat, and many evidencing the prosperity and refinement of their owners. The rapid elevation of the country, after reaching the Cretaceous wall, is shown by the fact that Boerne sits fifteen hundred feet above the sea, while Braunfels at its foot, not a day's journey away, is only seven hundred. The atmosphere here is of the upper strata, pure as the icicles on Dian's temple, and in summer never hot. Hence, at this season it is a favorite resort to those seeking delightful quarters, where there is no temptation to spendthrift. Here is a fine chalybeate spring, which increases the attractiveness.

There is, as the French would say, "I do not know what" of an air of higher and most refined civilization sitting over this whole community. It impresses one with the conviction that here might his family reside in happiness and plenty, he being away himself, and that his sons and daughters, left to grow up almost at will, would develop into good men and women.

THE PRODUCTS

The products of this region are exceedingly varied, and hence the unusual and universal good condition of the people. Every countryman has his quiver full of arrows, and all are well-to-do, and most of them independent. Wheat is a never failing harvest, yielding from twenty to thirty bushels to the acre, on lands which have never received an ounce of fertilizers from the tillers. Should these lands occasionally receive a dressing of phosphatic guano, there can be no doubt that their yield would be greatly increased—perhaps as much as a third. Oats, barley and rye flourish, the two former producing extraordinary crops. Cotton is not grown, but would do as well here as elsewhere, in the valleys. The tiller is independent of the merchant or the great planter for his sweets; for the sorghum flourishes almost without attention, and the bee nearly the whole year round accumulates his stores.

He is independent of France or the Rhine for his wines, for the wild grape is so abundant that not less, as I am told, than fifty thousand gallons of wine were made the past season in Boerne and the vicinity. This wine, to my taste, is usually a strong-bodied claret, but some of it is much like the Catalan wines of Spain. Peaches, pears, plums, cherries and figs are grown on every place, and the region is also proving itself well adapted to some varieties of the apple. In addition to all of these, consider that while the farmer plants and gathers his crops and the fruits of his orchards and vineyards, his herds are constantly increasing his property without increasing his labor to an appreciable degree.

SHEEP HUSBANDRY

But the most distinguished industry of this region is sheep husbandry, which has given the locality its most interesting society and the name of the sheep region par excellence of Texas; but I cannot see that it is better than many districts I have passed over, if so good. I suspect that, like many other things, it owes its reputation to the pen, which, let us say what we will, is far mightier than the sword. Here George Wilkins Kendall came to live some twenty-five years ago, after he was full of honors obtained in other fields. He began the sheep-raising business on a small scale as an experiment; and his flocks prospered beyond anything he had known in his native Vermont, or in France and Spain. Being a most lively writer, he wrote profusely on the subject, and his articles seemed to go everywhere. Men with money came to Boerne from every portion of the United States; from Scotland, England, and even distant Australia. Many engaged in sheep-raising in Kendall's neighborhood, in order that might have his advice and example; and thus the reputation of the region grew, until there are now between thirty and forty thousand fine sheep within a small circumference about Boerne. Besides wool the shepherds derive an income from the sale of bucks; for a "Boerne" or "Kendall" buck is a sine qua non to all young men embarking in the business. Kendall from this source perhaps made as much money as from the sale of his fleeces; for a portion of his flocks was derived from the finest bucks and ewes of Spain and France, which he had selected and imported himself. Before his experiment there was no sheep husbandry in Texas; but since then, by the light of his example, it has grown to exceed that of any other State, or if this is an over-estimate it soon will not be.

The basis of nearly all the flocks, and most of the Kendall flocks, is the coarse, shaggy, diminutive Mexican ewe, whose fleece seems to be a genuine hair instead of wool. These singular creatures are associated with the purest Merino bucks, and their product in a few removes becomes so fine that none but an expert can distinguish them from the true Merino, and finally they are entirely lost in the Merino. Indeed, they are probably a true Merino themselves, for they were brought by the Spaniards to Mexico, where they have been allowed to degenerate from want of intelligent husbandry. They have their merit in their exceedingly healthy and hardy constitution, and in the fact that they are natives of the climate.

There are a few flocks which have been graded up from the common American ewe,

from Missouri and Arkansas, and I discussed with a wool-grower the relative merits of that stock and the Mexican, to breed from. He held that while the American crossed with the Merino gave a larger and handsomer animal, and was better in the early results, yet these advantages were overcome by the more rapid and thorough improvement of the Mexican. In favor of the Mexican, is also the fact that it can be obtained at about half the cost of the American—matter of much importance to the young man without much money who proposes to embark in the business.

The flocks are divided into brigades or regiments of not more than a thousand each, and the sexes kept separate, except during a short period when the finest bucks are allowed to visit the females. One shepherd, usually a Mexican, accompanies each brigade on its walk over the "range," assisted by one or two well trained dogs, which are taught not to allow the sheep to scatter. They are driven up every night to their cotes, and the dogs sleep with them and never abandon their posts. They receive no other food than the grass they pick on their walks, and this is abundantly sufficient. They are not allowed to walk over the same trace two days in succession; so that the grass is restored by the genial climate and fertile soil as fast as they pluck it.

It is estimated that a well graded flock will average annually about four pounds of wool to the head, worth at this time in San Antonio and Braunfels twenty to twenty-five cents per pound. As the care of a flock of two thousand need not exceed three hundred dollars a year, for service and maintenance of two shepherds, and the increase of animals is at least fifty per cent, the profit of the business seems apparent.

THE SOCIETY OF SHEPHERDS

No one can travel among the sheep-raisers of Texas without being struck with the fact that they are almost invariably people of intelligence, and often of high culture and refinement. They are the aristocracy of the stockmen. The cattlemen as a general thing are unmistakably rough, and rarely have many evidences of civilization about them. Indeed, they seem to me to have a scorn of the amenities and humanities, and look upon them as pitiable weaknesses. Were the world filled with them alone, there would be a darkness thicker than that of the medieval ages; no song, no poetry, no eloquence, no railroads, no ships, no gardens and flowers; but in place of these there would be abundance of chivalry and broken heads, for the cattle-raisers are bold, reckless and adventurous. Should there be dragons spitting fire and consuming things with their breath, they would be sure to find them out and annihilate them. The horse-raisers are a long advance toward civilization, and many of them very closely approximate the sheep-raisers. Were the world filled with them alone, there would be a moderate supply of poetry and eloquence, and no lack of wars. On the other hand, if we were all shepherds—and I may judge from my own observations—it would be all poetry, music, eloquence, all humanity and no war. The valleys would re-echo with the notes of the flageolet and pipe.

These are curious points, but they stick out so prominently that a traveler would behoove to be very benighted not to observe them. I have thought a good deal over the phenomena, and have come to the conclusion that the animals we associate with have a much greater influence over us than we are willing to admit; in fact, they impress us much more than we impress them; in other words, they gradually convey their natures into us, receiving in return little or none of our nature from us. Man is a very impressible creature, undoubtedly, and may be greatly affected by the society about him, whether it be of other men or animals. If the society about us is more elevated than we are, our tendency is to be elevated to it; if it is infinitely below us, our tendency is to be degraded to it. Now, the Texas steer is the roughest thing in the world, having no trace whatever of civilization or the amenities. He will rush through thorny thickets like a thunderbolt, leap stony ravines, and speed over rocks and mountains like a tempest, tail up. These are his delight, and like the man with the ass's head in the play, he would not give a bunch of thistles or peascods for all the amenities and preserves. This is the cattle-raiser's constant companion and friend, and not only that, but his benefactor, from whom he derives all his income and sustenance. It is natural, then, that the cattleman should entertain a very high regard for the steer, and at last look upon him as a model of human perfection. As time passes, he assimilates more and more to him, and before he is aware of it, has become more a steer or bull than a man, except in outward shape; and his wife and daughters are in danger of becoming, to as great a degree, cows and heifers, and his sons bull-yearlings.

Of course, I do not mean to say that this is always the case; but Nature makes few exceptions, and it invariably results so unless the cow-man and his family are exposed to frequent influences from without, in the shape of a refined society, which may overcome the steady, silent influence of the wild cattle. The cattle-raiser should hedge himself about with books, papers and music, beautify his home, and frequently transport himself and his family into other scenes.

The horse is a much more beautiful and refined animal than the steer, and even in his wildest state is by no means devoid of accomplishments. He is the noblest of all the quadrupeds, both in comeliness of person and grace of mind. Man may therefore associate with him not only without being greatly lowered, but sometimes be actually elevated; and I account for the great superiority of the horse-raiser over the steer-raiser, by this great difference in favor of the horse over the steer.

The sheep from time immemorial, and in all languages, has been the symbol of gentleness, patience, and purity, and has always been associated with pastoral verse and a refined life. These things cannot pass into proverbs without being correct, and from Nature. Even the Most High spoke of those who are chosen to life in heaven as his lambs; and the Christ was the Lamb of God. It is but the natural result then, that the sheep-raiser should be of chaste, beautiful and refined life, such as he generally is, and such as I behold him here—occupying, by right of merit, the first place in society. It is the gentler influence of the animal whom he loves and cares for and who in turn loves and cares for him, pervading him with a mild nature.

I have also observed that the sheep-raisers often have a strongly reflective and philosophic cast of mind. I judge that the constant contemplation of the calm visages of the sheep leads to meditation; and meditation leads to philosophy.

GEORGE WILKINS KENDALL

This whole region has been made classic by the pen and residence of George W. Kendall, to whom it owes its fame and most of its prosperity. He is dead, but he is still the central figure here, and one often hears his name. He impressed himself deeply on the popular heart about him. He was a remarkable character, in which there was that strange contradiction of the sternest common sense with an overflowing fancy and spirit of romance; a rare combination which makes the strongest and grandest of men. His spirit was of those that never grow old, but "flourish in immortal youth." He had built up one of the greatest presses in the country and amassed a fortune by it; had lived in the gayest capitals of Europe, with the gayest of their people; yet he abandoned all of these for beautiful, but then wild, Texas, and chose to be a shepherd. What was it but the singular spirit of romance that did this? What else impelled him on that wild and long tramp to Santa Fe, over a country till then untrodden by white men, and which has been made immortal by his vivid and sparkling, yet so genial pen? From his home and occupation as a shepherd he would often break loose like a truant, to disappear with a few chosen friends sometimes for days and weeks in succession, in the deepest wilderness, to commune with wild Nature and wild animals; living in the meantime on scarcely anything save what his rifle brought down. Some student of human nature has said that as we are all descended from savages who loved the floods and the wild woods and mountains, the ancestral instinct will still frequently crop out in the highest specimens of the race, impelling them to what their fathers loved; and Kendall makes me think that this philosopher was right. Another great Texan, Sam Houston, while governor of Tennessee, unaccountably abandoned his office and resided some years among the Indians, adopting their dress and mode of life. When visited by his friends and urged to return to civilization, he pretended to have forgotten their language, and responded simply with a grunt.²⁶ Was this the spirit of romance, or the savage instinct of the ancestry?

Kendall's family still reside at his favorite seat near this place, and his shepherd business thrives under the management of the accomplished Mrs. Kendall. I hope it will not be intrusive in me to day it, but the fact seems so in point that I cannot forbear it. George Wilkins Kendall won his lady in the salons of Paris—the daughter of a French army officer—where she was born and grew into womanhood. One of the most beautiful and accomplished of ladies, young and of the most brilliant society, yet she cheerfully gave up all of these for her husband and beautiful but wild Texas; and I am told that she has always so much loved this life, that, rich as she is, she cannot be induced to abandon it, even temporarily. Thus, even the ladies, as well as men, under the influence of the ancestry, may be smitten with the love of the romantic. How do I know but that it is something of the kind

that is impelling me on this wild trip? For I certainly do not know of any imperious necessity that I should make it.

CHAPTER III

WILD NATURE AND WILD BEASTS

After abundant rest and good fare, I rode north. Five or six miles from Boerne the path led into a congeries of grizzly hills, crowded with rocks, and starving a scrubby growth of cedar and various oaks and nettles. It is a forbidding country, given over to grimness and ruin. The ground clanks under my horse's feet and occasionally gives forth a hollow sound, as if from caverns below. The road climbs these great hills or ridges in quick succession; the valleys being mere gorges, piled with naked rocks that have thundered from the precipices above. The fury of the torrents that sometimes sweep down these gorges is shown by the bleak, stony surface, on which there is not a handful of earth. Nothing lives here. Only a few scattering cattle are seen occasionally, browsing on the coarse grass and stumbling over the ringing heaps of stone; and I can imagine that these are only wayward adventurers, who when they get out of the district will not return. I was mistaken: there goes a flock of turkeys before me, dashing up the steep mountain in a long, black line, with the fleetness of race-horses. What do they live on here? Looking around, I see numerous scraggy hackberry trees, loaded with red berries, and from these I suppose these birds draw their rations.

But what is that noise? It sounds like a shriek and a wail, and seems to be right on my path. I involuntarily grasped one of my pistols and drew it from the holster. Again I hear it, and it is absolutely a shriek and a wail. Is it possible some horrible murder is being committed in this lonely and grim region—by a band of ferocious Indians, perhaps? I felt my hair rise, actually stand on end, but still rode on toward the thicket on the right of the road, whence the noise seemed to come. As I approached it my horse grew suspicious, and pricked up his ears and shied away from that side of the road. I momentarily expected something, but could not tell what. When I was immediately opposite the thicket everything was as still as a mouse, but suddenly my horse leaped to the left, almost causing me to fall from my saddle, and at the same moment two—not Indians—not murderers—but two splendid panthers bounded across the road immediately before me. I drew a breath of relief and laughed at myself for the agitation I had felt. My horse also seemed greatly relieved for he became at once quite gay and continued so for some distance.

The panthers disappeared in the brush, but one of them leaped on a large stone not more than fifty yards from me in full view, and stood there long enough for me to have shot him, had I been so disposed. But he looked so splendid that I did not have the heart to do it. He was of a mouse color, apparently about three feet high, long and slender, with a head for all the world like a monstrous cat's, a long sweeping tail, which rested partly on the rock while the end of it, curled upwards, slowly waved hither and thither. He was eight or nine feet in length. Presently he leaped gracefully from the rock and bounded out of sight.

This animal is a true cat, and the king of cats, of whom the tabbies should be proud. He is in nothing distinguished from the domestic cat, save his greater size, uniformity of color, more slender and graceful form, and more graceful movements, which are the poetry of motion. He even has the voice of the cat—with a greatly enlarged compass, of course. If one has heard Tom and Tabby caterwauling on the eaves of a house at night, he can easily judge what the voice of the panther is. Sometimes the animal makes a noise almost exactly like that of a weeping child; and the young folk think that he does this to decoy people into the woods, in order to devour them. Panthers are not uncommon on the frontier and wilder districts of Texas, and are sometimes quite destructive to livestock. They are particularly fond of young colts, and are for this reason thoroughly detested by the horse-raiser who can only destroy them with his gun, as, unlike the wolf, they cannot be poisoned, refusing, as it is said, to touch any flesh which has not been slain by themselves. Nor will they eat any that is not fresh and sweet, being as cleanly as pussy-cat on the hearth. They have never been known to attack man in Texas, but have sometimes appeared to threaten him. An old Texan²⁷ told the writer that one evening while riding through a densely timbered valley, he was followed a considerable distance by two panthers, which kept but a little distance from him, bounding along sometimes before him, and stopping until he passed. He was unarmed, but did not dare increase the speed of his horse, fearing that if he showed sign of alarm, the animals would pounce upon him. They followed him until he had passed out of the valley into the open prairie. He afterward concluded that these panthers had their kittens close by, and adopted this strategy to lead him away from them—as we sometimes see turtle-doves and other birds feign to be wounded and flutter before mischievous boys to lead them from their nests.

Another instance was told me by a gentleman who had seen much experience of frontier life. He and a companion had encamped in a deep forest and had retired to their blankets, without fire, which they were afraid to build, as marauding Indians were known to be in the neighborhood. Presently they were disturbed by a thumping on the ground, apparently quite near them. This was at intervals of a few seconds. When they arose to see what was the matter, the noise ceased and they could see nothing. Returning to their blankets, they soon heard the noise again as before, but apparently nearer. They arose again and looking around carefully, saw, under the feeble moonlight, a huge panther crouched in a depression in the ground, not over ten feet from where they lay. Said the gentleman, "I might have shot him dead with my pistol, but did not dare do so, for fear of attracting the Indians. But I held my pistol upon him while my companion hurled a big chunk at him. He bounded away and we heard no more of him. Had we remained quietly in our blankets or been asleep, I have no doubt he would have pounced upon us. You have seen a cat when watching to jump upon a bird; she will continually raise her tail and stroke the ground with it, and this huge panther was practicing the same sort of game on us."

The frontiersmen sometimes eat a panther, but they do not consider it a first-class dish, saying its flesh has a peculiar sweetish taste to which they cannot accustom themselves. I should say that the flesh of a cat would be quite as good.

THE SISTERDALIANS

This grim, desolate region of stone and gorge abuts abruptly upon the sparkling Guadalupe which has pierced it through the center, cutting a tortuous, constricted channel overhung by great rocks, sometimes on both sides. Deep in the shaded dell sits the little German hamlet of Sisterdale, shut up from every horizon, hemmed in by precipice, clanking rock and gorge. When I first saw it, I thought of a nest of robbers in the Alps; but perhaps a more gentle, contented and happy people do not exist. But what sort of whim or fancy was it that impelled these people to choose this remote and isolated spot, when Texas has such millions of better lands to be had for the asking? It takes all sorts of fancies to make a world; else what scopes of God's globe would not be tenanted, and man would not truly possess the earth! The Lap and the Esquimau think that their lands of snow-clad hills and icebergs, with their nights of six months' duration, illumined by the gaudy curtains of the Aurora, are the most charming of earth, and they can dream of nothing more beautiful; and so the Sisterdalian loves his deep gorges, the stony mountains and the roaring river, beyond all the fairest of the Texan domain. Let him love on! There is no likelihood that encroaching populations will ever jostle these eagles in their eyrie, or invite them to vacate their nests for newcomers. They devote themselves to cattle-raising—and their cattle are almost as gentle as themselves—and to the cultivation of wheat, corn and grapes in the narrow vales, or wherever a stoneless slope offers on the declivities.

The Guadalupe has changed its course. Below the Cretaceous, it flows from the north. Here it flows from the west. It is the same sparkling stream as where I left it in the lowlands, with volume apparently not diminished, but how boldly different the scenery! It is the difference between the mountains and the plains. Here it glances and flashes, roars, plunges and thunders; but there are also many silent pools, through which its blue waters creep with scarcely perceptible motion. It is every varying its beauty, and each picture seems more beautiful than the one that preceded. Thus I thought as I rode along.

Rode up the valley fifteen miles to Comfort, a prosperous little German town on the northern bank, and passed the night.

Rode very leisurely up the valley twenty miles to Kerrville, and here I rested.

CHAPTER IV

THE FINEST COUNTRY I EVER SAW

Thus having ridden thirty-five miles up this valley, in a very observant humor, I am prepared to express an opinion of it; and the above heading I have written deliberately. This upper Guadalupe valley is as rich as it is beautiful, as beautiful as it is rich, and as delightful in climate as it is beautiful in scenery or rich in soil. I have fallen completely in love. It winds through a region of noble highlands, generally covered with open forests of oak—grand, natural parks—in which the grasses of the prairie grow luxuriantly, and ranges or groups of mountains diversify the scene in the blue distance or tower closely upon me. The valley itself is perfectly smooth, and down its center flows the beautiful river, bordered with pecans, elms, and gigantic cypress. Frequently it is several miles in width, and over all this expanse there is not one inch of soil that is not deeply, perhaps inexhaustibly rich; for do not the neighboring hills renew it as fast as cultivation can absorb its fertility? The population is still sparse, but the farms only increase the native beauty of the scenery. It is dead of winter, it is true, but these fields of wheat are glorious to behold. I have seen nothing so luxuriant elsewhere. They absolutely seem to laugh with the glorious abundance, as if they were conscious of their superb merit. What there is that is desirable in a country, and which may not be had here, is past my finding out. How this valley will one day swarm with a most thrifty and happy population!

I scarcely know how it is, but all of this valley has been continually reminding me of Greece, though I never saw Greece. The skies are the same, the climate the same and where Greece is best and most beautiful, the countries are the same. At least such is the thought that has been running involuntarily through my mind these two days past; and the idea is so irresistible that it seems to me that Kerrville is really named Athens! The skies the same, the climate the same, the country the same, why may not the upper Guadalupians be great the same as Greece has been!

WHEAT

Though cotton, corn and other grains grow quite as well here as elsewhere, wheat is the favorite crop of the farmers, and there is not one who does not devote a large share of his tillage to its raising. I asked them if they found it profitable? “No,” said they, “because it grows so well that we are tempted to make too much. It grows so well that it is a pleasure more than a labor to make it, and we plant it more for pleasure than the expectation of profit. We are too remote from market, and wheat is too heavy to transport on wagons. If we only had a railroad, sir, we would grow too rich and make the outside world too happy

with abundance of bread." They assured me that the crop is subject to no disastrous contingencies and never fails to deliver its harvest. "The droughts come sometimes," said they, "but this is in the summer, and the crops have matured long before they come." They sow in fall, and pasture their calves and horses on the fields in winter; this, they held, increased the harvest, and prevented it from heading too early and thus running the risk of frost. The harvest varies from twenty-five to forty bushels per acre, but forty-five, and even more, is not an uncommon product. They use no fertilizers, and no instrument in the tillage but the common plow. With the use of occasional phosphatic manures and the improved implements and methods for tillage, what might not these noble acres produce!

And what splendid wheat this is! If not the best in the world, it is certainly not surpassed by any that is grown elsewhere. It usually weighs about sixty-six pounds to the bushel, or six pounds over the standard, and has been known to exceed seventy pounds, I am told. A bushel of this wheat will therefore furnish from six to ten pounds more of bread than a bushel of Illinois wheat, which will not always yield so much as sixty pounds to the bushel measure. Whence this excessive weight and this singular production of bread, bulk to bulk, as compared to other wheats? It is in the perfect adaptability of the soil to the perfect development and maturity of the grain. The soil which gives wheat its best development is a calcareous magnesian, and here we have that soil in perfection, mixed with many other fertilizing ingredients. To assist this best development to a perfect maturity, a dry and elevated atmosphere under a southern sun is necessary, and here we have that atmosphere, under the brightest rays of a sub-tropical sun. Thus, soil, elevation and climate combine to give to this wheat every advantage to make it what it is—unsurpassed, if not the best in the world.

WHAT THIS WHEAT OFFERS THE TEXAS PORTS

It offers to contribute largely toward establishing Houston and Galveston among the greatest flour-exporting marts in the world. It is known that for transportation on the high seas, and particularly southern seas, the southern has a great advantage over the western and northern flour. The latter will quickly sour and greatly deteriorate, while the other may be rocked on the seas almost indefinitely and remain unaffected; because, in the sunny regions in which southern wheat matures, its moisture is completely eliminated, while in the northern wheat, it is retained.²⁸

Hence the different effect of a warm, moist climate upon these different flours; the northern wheat ferments, while the southern does not. For this reason southern flour has a special market in New York, and always commands a fancy price as compared to flour from other quarters. This "southern flour" so-called, comes from Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina; and if such is the superiority of the flour from these comparatively hyperborean regions, how much superior must be the flour of the sunny Guadalupe! Therefore I cannot hazard much in predicting that the day is not remote when the product of these beautiful

grain fields will be the favorite brands in the warehouses of exporters, and in Rio, Mexico and that West Indies; and it is by Houston and Galveston that this great commerce must be conducted. The nearness of these ports to these inexhaustible fields and the superiority of the article, will give them an advantage that will place them beyond the reach of competition by other cities. New Orleans, St. Louis, and Baltimore or New York, cannot draw the product of these fields without transporting it through Houston or Galveston, and would have to add to its price at these cities the cost of transportation to their warehouses or wharves. A little three-foot railway running from Houston up the Guadalupe would immediately set this great trade in motion.

THE PEOPLE

The people of this valley are fit to inhabit such a home; and that seems to me about as high praise as I could pass upon them. They are intelligent and hospitable; mostly Americans from the Southern and Western States, and a good many Germans. They dwell in neat houses of stone, and many of the damsels are as pretty as lilies. Truly, female beauty flourishes everywhere, and man is the happier for it. While riding and conversing among them, I could hardly realize that I was on the remote frontier, where men are supposed to be unkempt and ill-mannered; yet another day's journey westward would place me in a region uninhabited, except by wild beasts and prowling savages.

ATHENA (KERRVILLE)

Athena—for such will I call it—is an assemblage of residences, whereof each stands on a five-acre lot, with a due quantity of stores all in a row, and the usual concomitants of churches and schools. The five acres are skillfully and thoroughly tilled, so that every inhabitant lives in the midst of a farm in the midst of a city. Thus Athena, unlike any other city, lives or may live, entirely upon herself. Her architecture is all of stone, generally pretty, and in her court house it is imposing. Why did not the Athenians build this stately court house on the pattern of the Parthenon, for then the illusion that this is Greece would have been complete. Its modern structure seems to me a violent anachronism. Athena boasts a newspaper, "The Frontiersman," and I do not know that I ever read a paper with more interest. It is terse, vivacious, sensible; and I thought of Pericles and Aspasia. Athena has five or six hundred people, and the day was when Athens had not so many.

This seems to be the headquarters of the buyers of beeves, from St. Louis and other cities of the west. They tell me that forty or fifty thousand beeves are sold here each year, at twelve to eighteen dollars a head—making about three-quarters of a million dollars annually turned loose upon these little streets. The cattle-man contracts with buyers to deliver so many beeves on a day certain, and forthwith dispatches his boys into the wilderness to gather and drive them up. They boys have a grand sport of it, and sometimes enjoy a few

pitched battles or rough and tumble fights with the Indians, but they are sure to deliver their charge in good season. Father then receives his money and retires to his home on his five-acre lot, to enjoy his ease while his flocks are industriously making him another herd of beeves, to be converted into gold in their turn. A cattle-man who has boys, is here a prince at ease; and this is better than living in the midst of his cattle.

If a railroad were here, what a business it would have in transporting beeves! This alone would make it rich, and the buyers would be saved the expense and risk of the tedious drive.

NIGHT AT ATHENA

The moon is pouring a flood of silver light upon the little city; the air is vernal, and Athena is still as a mouse. No rumbling busses, no whirling carriages, no carousing bacchanals here. I listen on the breeze, if I may catch the notes of a piano accompanied with a voice of sweeter melody. The song of a white-throated songster occasionally reaches me and I hear the music of the Guadalupe rolling its sparkling tide over the rocky channel; but the note of the piano is not here. There is not a piano in Athena. It is not surprising; for how could a rich Grand or a voluptuous Steinway stand a voyage in an ox-wagon over these stony hills? The ladies of Athena must wait for the rail. And here I think I may feel a secret sort of satisfaction and right honest pride in the reflection, that they will be partially at least indebted to me for their pianos when they get them; for have I not contributed a good many round thousands and much good muscle in putting a road on foot that may reach them? An honest, manly satisfaction with one's self need not argue egotism or personal vanity; and I am not ashamed of the feeling here recorded, though 'tis myself that records it. Who would not be proud to serve Athena's ladies?

CHAPTER V

GEOLOGICAL RETROSPECTIONS

During the night a cloud passed over the valley and shook from its wings a shower of dew-drops; so that when I mounted my horse and rode up the river, all nature seemed to sparkle with diamonds. And though this is mid-winter, the air is like that of spring. How different today in the land whence I came. There, doubtless, the earth is wrapped in sleet and snow, and instead of zephyrs, the wind howls a fearful storm. Some may delight in the snow-scenes, the icicled forest and the nipping Arctic wind; but give me the green prairies, the flowery valleys, the hazy mountains, and Zephyr with Aurora maying: in fewer words, give me Texas!

The geology of this country is full of interest to those who have a fondness for such research and speculation, as I have. Indeed, so great is my fondness that I can travel over no region which does not give a new charm; and it gives me abundant company, in all my solitary rides. Each and all of the stones have wonderful stories to tell me, if I have the ears to hear them. They are historians whose volumes are infinitely more remarkable than those traced by human pens; for they tell of the achievements of the Great Architect, and how and by what agencies He worked; of the rise, progress and fall of the races that preceded; and prophets, too, they may be, of man's destiny and the higher races that may succeed him. This little historian, however humble he may appear—this little pebble I hold in my hand as I ride along—was an atom of the original fiery ocean, and saw the Great Architect when He laid the foundations of the globe and built thereon. Longer than this earth has been, it will continue to be. To my mind, these rocks and the stars of heaven are the revelation and the inspiration by which the Architect would have His creatures read Him; and if perchance they lead us into doctrines strange and erroneous, the error must be pardonable in the eyes of Him who gave them to teach us, and gave us our ears to hear them. Thus while I ride along the vale of the Guadalupe, I listen to the voice of His historians, and adore Him of whom they tell.

The formation here is the lower Cretaceous, and the strewn boulders tell of the closeness of still older beds. The Ammonite is a very common fossil here, some of them of as great circumference as a cart-wheel. I saw two fragments of this class of fossil, one a Hamite and the other a Crioceras; both peculiar to the lowest Cretaceous beds. They were exhibited to my by a farmer, who had picked them out of the Guadalupe and kept them about his house as curiosities. "This," said he, "is a petrified cow's tail, and this is a buck's horn; but he must have been a big one to carry such a thing as this on his head." When I told him that they were ancient sea-shells, he was of opinion that I was mistaken, and still held to the cow-tail theory. He then showed me a fossil which was clearly the tooth of the iguana-

don. "Now," said he, "this thing is sorter strange, but I have studied it out that it was some sort of weapon made by the Injuns."

"No, sir," said I, after fingering it well, and scrutinizing it with melancholy interest, "this is the mortal remains—the last tooth that is left, sir, of the great Iguanadon, the great Lizard of the Ancient World, whose body was sixty feet in length and thirty feet in girth; who wore on his head a great horn weighing hundreds of pounds; in short sir, this is the tooth of the Great Dragon of Ancient Days."

He looked at me a moment and quietly said:

"You be damned!"

After a moment he contemptuously kicked with his foot another fossil which was lying on the gallery before him. "And that," said he, "is a petrified wasp's nest."

"No, sir," said I, as I held the fossil in my hand and gazed upon it with melancholy interest, "this is a fragment of the 'coral groves deep in the sea,' through which the mermaidens wandered and led their lives of bliss. Perhaps upon this very fragment sat and sang and combed their locks. Sir, right over this spot where we stand rolled the Cretaceous Ocean, and here grew this coral on which the mermaidens sat and combed their locks. That was in the long, long time ago, and all the mermaidens are now dead."

He became very reticent, and looked at me with an expression which seemed to say: "Well, ding you, if you were not in my house, I'd like to give you a good licking, if I could." He measured my heft with his eyes.

How different this scene today from what it was then! Then, indeed, a mighty ocean was here, whose great billows bearing fleets of ammonites and criocerases, broke on the granite walls evidently not far off; the monster mosasaurus sported in the foam or pursued the flying prey; the shores, covered with glorious forests of ferns and palm, resounded with the bellowing of iguanadons in battle, contending for the mastery of the young world. These animals did not know that they were but links, doomed to extinction, in the chain that leads to man. And man does not know but that he is but a link, doomed to extinction, in the chain that leads to a higher nature!

If one could go back and see with his natural eyes what has been, sail on those seas and converse with those monsters, might he not read the future? Knowledge should be of Futurity as well as of the Past.

HEAVEN

If the soul is immortal, as I think it is, and we become, after we have passed the river, purely intellectual existences, knowledge-loving and knowledge-seeking, what a grand, eternal field have we for investigation, in the Architect's infinite works! When we have explored this planet and learned it all, and lived it all, perhaps assisted by the lips of some great archangel who was present at the foundation, what will prevent us, embodied ethereal essences, from winging our flight to another planet, and another, and another, through an eterni-

ty of knowledge and adoration of Him who made all these? Such is an occupation worthy of angels and existences all intellectual. But how would the cheat, the swindler, the sordid man enjoy all these? They must be provided with different occupations. When one steps across the river, he is fortunate if he can take with him a mind stored with knowledge and filled with the love of the works of Him who made him. If he does not I do not well perceive what he will do when he crosses the river.

Such is my idea of Heaven. It is not that of every one. I once talked with a negro woman in a southern State, who was noted for her religious fervor. When she attended a meeting she never failed to strike great awe among the negroes by the singular fervor of her demeanor, both while the meeting was in progress and for some time after it had adjourned. She was loud and incoherent in her praises of God and the intense happiness that comes from religion. She accompanied these expressions with strange physical demonstrations, which seemed to me much like those of a maniac or one who had lost all reason; but the negroes seemed to regard them as proof of the highest development of piety, and looked on with awe, not unmixed with envy of her good fortune in being so favored by God. I asked this woman what she thought was the occupation of souls after they had passed into eternal bliss. She said she had been to Heaven in a trance and knew all about it. Heaven was a great plain filled with houses of gold, and silver trees. The angels wandered over the plains shouting and singing, and when they felt inclined to eat, there were great numbers of roasted pigs running about bearing knives and forks in their mouths, and the blessed angels only needed to call these to themselves and eat their fill. I asked her if she would not tire of shouting and singing and eating roast pig; but she had no conception that she ever would. Her mind was evidently never ruffled by a single doubt; she received every word of the preacher, however ignorant and stupid, as God's truth, and she appeared a very paragon of religion; and yet I could not help but think that an honest doubt in my mind was more pleasing in God's sight than all her boundless religion. What will this poor creature do, if she finds Heaven not filled with roasted pigs? I have heard that this woman afterwards produced several bastards; a fact which must have caused wide-spread demoralization in the minds of the negroes who had held her in such devout esteem as a model of godliness.

Knowledge is not only Power, but it is Life; and the love of it is Life also. "The soul that thirsteth shall be filled," and it is impossible for it to be filled in the circumscribed sphere of mortality.

A STRANGE ENCOUNTER—JAVELINAS

About five miles above Athena—otherwise called Kerrville—my pathway left the Guadalupe and diverged to the north-east, going up a valley about half a mile in width, but constricting as I ascended it. It is walled in by stony ridge and precipice. There are many beautiful live oak groves and pretty sites for small farms, but no farm is visible. This valley is virgin, whose bosom no plow has touched. There are clusters of wild grapes, hardly bigger

than duck shot, of which I plucked and ate, and found them not unpleasant, but of sharp, sprightly acidity. Birds of many varieties feed on these grapes, and some of them raise a great clamor as they crush the acidulous globes between their bills. Some six or seven miles up the valley I saw a company of hogs, in full view, but a few hundred yards off. Thinking a farm must be near, I fired my gun, hoping a dog would bark and guide me to it. Instantly on the report of my rifle, these hogs dashed out of the brush from several places, boofing as they ran, and smacking their mouths at a great rate. They formed a squad, ahead of me, about sixty yards from the road, and as I approached them they seemed to grow exceedingly indignant; all bristled up their backs and popped their jaws together as if they had a notion of making a meal of me. When I was about a hundred yards from them, the largest advanced to the front, deliberately began to approach me, looking the very picture of wrath and indignation, as if he craved the honor of disposing of me at once, without assistance. As he advanced, the others expressed their applause by rounds of boofs and a great popping of the jaws. My horse became uneasy, and as the advancing rascal seemed bent on battle and displayed two formidable tusks, I became uneasy in turn, and thinking I had better look out for my safety, I raised my rifle and sent a mass of lead through his body. He fell dead. The others on seeing this raised a bigger boofing and popping than ever, and I expected a charge en masse, but as they were not precipitate about it, I dismounted to view the dead duellist. The others then retired toward the brush, slowly and doggedly, going mostly tail foremost. When in the brush they disappeared, but I heard them boofing and popping quite near at hand, as if they were still undetermined whether to charge me or not. I had no doubt I could easily get a battle out of them, if I chose to court it.

As I approached the dead brave, who deliberately brought on his own destruction by marching out to attack a heavily armed traveler who had in no wise interfered with him, my nostrils were assaulted by a guff of odor, which was well-nigh unendurable. Seeing I had slain a peccary, I determined to learn all about him, let him stink never so loudly. I judged him to weight about sixty pounds, and therefore about the size of a small hog or shoat. His head was too big for his body, and his short, thick neck showed that he had great strength. His hair was coarse and bristly, and so long about the neck that it might almost be called a mane. He had a mere stump where the tail ought to be, and this was evidently not the result of misfortune or surgical operation, for I observed no tail on his friends. His color was of a darkish yellow or dirty red, and the hairs were ringed with various marks or shades. There was a faint band of white at the root of the neck, partly on each shoulder, resembling a collar. He bore his perfume on his back, close to the tail, in a lump or swelling quite as big as the fist. I forbore to examine it closely. This odor was musk, and in small doses might not be unpleasant, but as he gave it forth, it was certainly tremendous, inasmuch that I required to have great resolution to stay by him. He differed from a hog in that his head was more pointed, his ears much smaller and almost buried in the hair, and his formidable tusks turned upward instead of backward. On his hind feet he had but one upper toe, instead of two as the common hog. I am told they live on nuts, roots and ber-

ries, and scorn to eat the uncleanly food in which the domestic hogs will revel. The Texans sometimes eat them, and say that when fat they make a very fair pork or bacon, if the stink paunch is taken off as soon as they are shot. If it is left on even for a few moments, the whole body becomes infiltrated and cannot be eaten.

The Texans sometimes call these animals javelinas, the Mexican name, but generally the musk hog. They sometimes enter a cultivated field and play havoc. Dogs are mortally afraid of them and cannot be induced to attack them. The Texans say they are the most dangerous animals in the country—panthers, bears, wolves and lions being as nothing compared to them in courage and ferocity. If a man on foot encounters them, his only hope is to climb a tree, and they will then hang around him sometimes for hours. They are probably the gamest rascals on earth, and as I studied their cranial development, I could not help thinking that there is truth in phrenology. Murderers and other ferocious villains are generally largely developed about the ears and neck, and these rascals have this murderous mark to an inordinate degree. It is said that they are always ready for a fight, and becoming once engaged, they know no retreat.

The writers on natural history do not know everything on which they write. They say that the peccary is found only in South America, and this I know not to be so. It is quite common all over Western Texas, particularly in regions that are thinly settled, or not settled at all. I inquired if these creatures ever crossed with the common hog and bred hybrid varieties. I was told that no such instance had ever been witnessed. It is probable that if a flock of common hogs should unwarily stroll upon a flock of these creatures, they would be immediately set upon and demolished.

ANCHORITIC

The valley terminates in a nook whose secluded beauty contrasts singularly with the stony escarpments, the bronzed and shrivelled thickets, and the black precipices that frown upon it. Pleasant little groves of live-oak, shady recesses and sparkling brooks are here, with none but the chance wayfarer to love them. This is a pretty little spot of the globe not possessed: a dear little lassie without a laddie, and yet so capable of filling some laddie's heart with all the warmth and happiness of love. It is because she is so seclusive and retiring that the laddies while loving her, fear to pursue. I thought it would make so blessed a retreat for some anchorite, who wishes to withdraw from the world and devote his life to innocence and holy contemplation. The stony precipices, the bronzed thickets and the stern country around would remind him of the world, with its sins and troubles, from which he had withdrawn; and the smooth, green nook would keep ever present to his mind the innocence and heaven he seeks. But how, if my anchorite, while strolling on foot, absorbed in his holy contemplation, should step unawares into a herd of peccaries? He would be obliged to climb a tree, and while thus imprisoned, with the furious, popping beasts standing guard around him, what would become of his innocence, his philosophy and holy con-

temptation? When I reflected on this, I thought if I should turn anchorite I would seek other quarters.

And yet how cheaply and well he could live here, barring the discomfort arising from danger of peccaries. Any Guadalupe farmer would sell him a bushel of the finest wheat in the world for fifty cents, so that his flour should not cost over two cents a pound, or five dollars forty-seven and a half cents a year. His meat and lard need cost him only the price of the powder and lead for a single charge of his rifle; for with that one shot he could secure a bear which would yield him two hundred and fifty pounds of bacon and at least thirty-five pounds of excellent lard or oil. This would furnish him a year without the least effort at stinting. The salt to cure it would not exceed a dollar, and yet leave him abundance to season his food during the rest of the year. The ammunition to secure this bacon and lard, I estimate exorbitantly at one cent. Coffee he would rarely care for, but we will allow him ten pounds a year, costing two dollars and fifty cents. He would need no sugar, because he could readily secure a bee tree, or enter a bee cave in the rocks and despoil it. Thus I estimate the entire cost of his provender as not necessarily exceeding seven dollars and ninety-eight cents a year, or about sixty-cents a month, or two and a quarter cents a day. He could vary his fare greatly without increasing the cost perceptibly, with trout from the brook, or venison or turkey from the hills, and abundant store of grapes and berries. I believe that venison and turkey, being less stimulating and provocative than bear meat, would be better viand for him, in his peculiar circumstances.

The cost of dress would be a trifle, as he would soon rig up a suit of buckskin, which would last him indefinitely. Five dollars a year would be a very large allowance under this score. There might be some need of soap, but the cost of this would be so infinitesimal that it is unnecessary to include it in the estimate. Thus we have all that is wanted to keep him fat and hearty, at twelve dollars and ninety-eight cents a year, or one dollar eight and one-sixth cents a month, or about three and three-fifths cents a day!

Now let us look on the other side of the sheet. Of course our anchorite would not wish to pass his life away in nothing but holy contemplation and rest; for this would be a sin and in violation of the divine law—"by the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread." Some laborious exercise would be requisite to his health. He would therefore enclose a twenty-five acre field, of which he would plant fifteen acres to corn, and ten to sweet potatoes, as being crops that are easily tilled. This would yield him, ordinarily, six hundred bushels of corn and two thousand bushels of potatoes. He would save fifty bushels of corn for his pony, and sell the balance at twenty-five cents a bushel, netting one hundred and thirty-seven dollars and fifty cents. Of the potatoes, he might save one hundred bushels for his own use and for seed, and sell the rest at twenty-five cents per bushel—netting four hundred and seventy-five dollars. Thus we have the statement of his income and expenditures:

Annual Income from field products	\$612.50
Annual Expenditure for food, clothing, etc.	\$12.98

Annual Taxes, 50c on the \$100 of realty	1.00	<u>\$13.98</u>
Net Annual Profit		\$598.52

This he would probably send to Houston or Galveston or San Antonio, to be invested in mortgages on the real estate of widows, bearing twelve per cent. These pledges would of course be forfeited, and he would in a few years find himself the owner of storehouses of brick and stone, receiving a large annual rental. It is at this point that the Devil may step in and cheat him of all his philosophy and holiness; and he would be confronted at last with the hard conditions of the camel, to go through the eye of the needle or be lost. It is thus that men grow rich.

INCOMPREHENSIBLE

And when I think of the fat comforts of this anchorite—barring the peccaries—and his easy road into wealth, I cannot but wonder at the singular folly of some men, who, in spite of pinching penury will stay in the cities; the seedy lawyers, the quaking merchants, and the poor editors. I know some of these whose bellies are said to have become accustomed to no other food but smoked herring and water crackers, with such tidbits as they may pick up in saloons during lunch time. And yet they will stay there and put up with all of this hard fare, when they could come to these nooks, and live on the fat of the land and grow rich. One of these pinched and purple men remarked to me that what he suffered here, he would not suffer in heaven. I told him I thought there was no need of his suffering either here or in heaven, and the suffering which we bring upon ourselves by willful blindness is no recommendation to us in another world; wherein I spoke of my judgement, not of my knowledge.²⁹

ELEVATED

Rising out of the cove, I felt myself lifted distinctly far above the vale of the Guadalupe. It is two thousand feet or more above the sea. The clear atmosphere enabled me to see that the country beyond the Guadalupe, though elevated, sits much below it, and in the north and west it rises by steps. As far as I could sweep to the north and west with my glass, I saw a region of ridges, mountains, ravines, valleys and table lands, all covered with a thin growth of oak or thickets of cedar. Only the valleys and table lands are arable; but all is excellent for stock. It is a vast solitude, in which no one dwells, but is frequently scoured by the stockmen, gathering beeves or branding calves. It is populous of bears, panthers, wolves and peccaries, and an occasional dread Comanche. The sportsman cannot go amiss for a jolly time, and may lose his scalp.

DISMAL

A few miles over the lofty ridge, I descended into a deep, narrow gorge, down which ran a brook. The timber and brush were so thick, and the walls of stone on each side so close and high that the sun was quite shut out. Everything was so still that the clangor of my horse's foot over the occasional piles of loose rock, was painful, and went out and re-echoed through the gorge. The country looked murderous and "Indiandy," and a suspicion came to my mind that the red rascals might hear the noise. I became as melancholy as the gorge, and fain would creep along as stealthily as a fox. A bird occasionally flitted across my path, and the sound of his wings was oppressive. How would the war-whoop of a painted savage sound through this melancholy vale? The reflection almost made my blood run cold. I would not care so much if he would come, one at a time, and meet me in the open field; but I vision my tragic finish if out of that dark thicket through which I must pass, he should, unseen, despatch an arrow through my heart!

UNEARTHLY

The water in the limpid brook looked so cool and refreshing that I dismounted to take a drink. I kneeled down, with my knees upon a rock, my left hand on another, and thus poised over the stream, inclined downward till my lips touched the water. I had thrown my bridle over the limb of a tree. While in this graceful position, my ears were suddenly assaulted with an unearthly sound—so it appeared. I felt my hat lifted up on my head, and sweat broke out on my brow. I seized the bridle hastily and leaped into the saddle. My horse seemed agitated, probably catching the infection from me. I heard the noise again, apparently from the bluff over the chasm, a hundred yards below, and instantly, when it ceased, a loud "ha! ha!—ha! ha!" broke out from the brush not twenty steps below me, as it seemed.

I cannot say exactly how I felt at this moment, but a grim resolution suddenly nerved me, and I laughed a little laugh as I determined to give them the best I had. Were they painted, furious Indians who were after me, or had I unintentionally disturbed a nest of witches in their infernal orgies? Again the noise from the hill, and again the jolly "ha! ha!—ha! ha!—ha-ha-ha—h-a-h." from the brush. Just then I heard a noise in the brush, as of a rotted limb falling from a tree, and a large owl flew out and lit on a limb projecting over the road. There he sat about a second and then burst forth with that same loud devil-may-care laughter, to which that other thing of the bluff responded with his remarkable note, which I had taken to be the war-whoop of a Comanche chief!

I felt that I had a good joke on myself, and laughed at my weakness.

But no other human being, riding through an Indian country and hearing this Texas owl the first time, would ever think owl once, while he would think Indian fifty times. He might occasionally think wolf, as I did. These owls soon got together, and the rack-

et they raised was astonishing. One would break out with his long whoop, and the other would join with a great burst of laughter, as if his sides would burst. Knowing what they were, no one could hear them without joining in their fun. They are not so large as the hoo-hoo owls of the dark bottoms of the older States, and on seeing them, one is surprised at the prodigious noise they can get out of their mouths. They are about the same in color as the Virginia owl, and have eyes that stare as if they were stark mad. Though flourishing mostly in the night and evening, they are not nearly so nocturnal as their cousins, for their loud laughter and war-whoop may often be heard at mid-day. It is impossible to express their war-whoop in words or syllables. The young Texans say it is: "Miss Bettie cook-for-me who cook-for-you-all?" and some can mimic them so precisely that not even an owl could tell the difference. Indians in the settlements also frequently imitate both their whoop and their laughter.

PISCINE

The brook debouched into a creek whose name is Wolf, which also a few miles further down becomes the Perdinales river. The Wolf valley is wider than the other, but still it is more a gorge than a valley, whose soil is sometimes covered with masses of shivered rock hurled from the precipitous hills. It has some excellent land, but no one dwells here, it being abandoned to wolves, and perhaps to rattlesnakes. I stopped on a grassy plot to graze my horse, and while he grazed I studied the nature of Wolf Creek. It was literally alive with brook trout,³⁰ and these were not in the deep pools only, but in places so shallow that their fins and backs glittered above the surface. No need of rod and line here. A diminutive pistol would do; or one might simply steal upon the wary fellows in the shallows and dam them up with a few stones so as to prevent egress, then wade in and catch to his heart's content. Wagon loads might be captured in this creek in this manner. These predatory fish seem to delight in shallow water; else they crowd into it in pursuit of the smaller fry. They are from a little finger in size to four pounds weight.

Some of the pools of this creek were so still and dark blue that I was tempted to explore them, and with a thirty-foot rope found no bottom. This is peculiar and almost unaccountable for so small a stream. So far as I could judge, the banks of these pools were either perpendicular or shelved under. I was struck with the absence of birds in this gorgeous, rock-ribbed and caverned country. No duck swam on the blue pools, and not even a woodpecker pecked on the trees. It was solitude profound.

CHAPTER VI

Crossed the creek and journeyed onward. Rocks; mountainous rocks; terrific rocks. A country given over to witches, gorges and horresco referens. Had I a companion, I think I would like to encamp in these shuddering wilds one night, to hear what manner of things prowl through them in darkness. But without a companion it would not be so comfortable. Misery loves company!

CHAPTER VII

My path diverged from the creek, and led abruptly up a gorge, northwest, while my course should be nearly east. I was cut off from the direct route by rocks, terrific rocks; hills, tremendous hills, which no man may cross—not even a goat; not even a rat; not even a snake; not even a snail, though supplied with clue to help him climb. This is like the Alps.

CHAPTER VIII

GRANITIC EXPLOSION: THE PRIMEVAL WORLD

A few miles up the gorge, the path turned abruptly east, and I was not surprised to see before me a grand outburst of granite. Cretaceous rocks rested undisturbed, in horizontal layers, in the valleys and ravines at its feet. This then, is evidently the top of a great mountain of the primeval world—one of the first footstools planted by the Almighty upon the molten orb. It is probably the only island that rose above the Primeval Ocean in a circumference of some thousands of miles; for though outbursts of granite occur frequently north of this, the uptilted strata at the base show that the upheaval took place long after the territory about them had been formed. If not the oldest spot on earth, I am justified in claiming it as old as any. It rose into being when the young world was an orb of liquid fire, and the waves of this fiery ocean thundered at its base. How do we know that the winged messengers of the deep may not have often stopped on this rock to rest? It stood sentinel over the boiling Azoic Sea; watched the slow formation of the solid earth at its feet; saw the advent of man, and will probably see his departure. And yet there is nothing remarkably striking in its appearance: a bald-headed, weather-beaten, very unpretentious old rock. To view it unobservingly, one would never take it to be the grand old historian, philosopher and prophet that it is.

EARTHQUAKE THOUGHTS

I could not help but measure in my mind the prodigious height of this old historian when it stood in the midst of the original fiery sea. If the central fires are eighty miles below us, as the philosophers say, then the historian was all of that height, and my be yet, for its feet are still bathed in the central fires. What an enormous time did it take the successive oceans to erect about it the immense breastwork of stone until they have left only a few hundred feet of its ancient head uncovered! The world is old, very old; old enough to drop into its grave. Perhaps it already has one foot in the grave!

But it is probable that in regions built exclusively, or nearly so, of granite and primitive rocks, the crust of the earth may be thin, and the heaving and tossing of the central fires quite near. This is made almost certain by the frequency of earthquake shocks in such regions, and their infrequency or total absence elsewhere. In Tertiary regions, the crust of the earth is so thick and strong that the central forces are held in check and driven to the primitive regions to do their destructive work. Thus Manhattan and New England are treated every year to several little earthquake oscillations, but these are never felt in the thick Tertiaries. Indeed, I believe that such a thing as an earthquake has never been known in a Ter-

tiary region. Such regions were built up carefully, quietly and peaceably by the sea, every joint closely welded together; this took eons of ages to perform; while the granitic regions were tossed up by the central forces in gigantic spasms, out of the fiery pit, leaving rents and chasms, and the work not half performed.

CHAPTER IX

Rocks—gigantic rocks—Cretaceous rocks; enough to lay the foundation of a new world.

CHAPTER X

THE PROMISED LAND

Finally, as the sun was near its setting, a glorious view burst upon me. It was a wide expanse of level country, thickly dotted with farms and covered with forest. But beyond it in every direction save the north, rose rocks, mountainous rocks. It was the first view of human habitation since early morn, and the effect upon both horse and rider was exhilarating. So the wandering and jaded Israelites felt when they beheld Canaan from the heights of Pisgah. He that has never traveled on horseback a whole day over rough and uninhabited region can never appreciate the music of a farmyard cock. Near the close of such a day it is the sweetest of melodies—suggestive in every note, of warm firesides, smoking viands and delicious rest. Descending the eminence, I entered the level expanse, and just as night fell, rode into

FREDERICKSBURG

This is a town of three thousand people, of whom at least four-fifths are Germans. It is built of stone, and has decidedly the air of a little city. I could not have expected to see a town so pretentious jammed away in these rocks, and so remote. It is brisk and busy, as the numerous “floating population” at every hand attests. It has three flouring mills, with a joint capacity of about three hundred barrels a day, and its chief industry is based upon the manufacture and sale of flour. It supplies a considerable part of the consumption of San Antonio, and nearly all the military posts of the frontier. This trade attracts to it a considerable trade in other lines. The yield of wheat in the vicinity is twenty to thirty bushels per acre. Wine making is also an industry, though only followed as an adjunct to other business. The mountains are loaded in their season with the “mountain grape”—black and about the size of buckshot—and from this they make a sprightly, purple wine.

Fredericksburg was founded by a German colony, about the time the romantic Braunfels planted the city that bears his name. They named it in honor of the Prussian Crown Prince, Frederick William—he that is now emperor of Germany. It had a hard time in its infancy, and suffered greatly from Indians. At one time the inhabitants were pressed so hard by the Indians, that they entered into a treaty with them, one of the conditions of which was that the whites and Indians should intermarry and raise families together. One German youth fulfilled the treaty stipulation by taking a squaw, but when the Indian bucks, naked and painted, came to take the German lassies, they would not consent, and the war broke out afresh. Finally, by the aid of the Texas Rangers, the Indians were expelled. Still, every now and then, they make forays upon the country people to avenge the slight put upon them by the German girls.

If Fredericksburg is ever reached by a railroad from the lower country, it will be from its rear, or the west. A narrow gauge is practicable by the route that I traveled from Athena, by following the valleys, gorges and ravines; but from any other direction Fredericksburg is sealed up by rocks, mountainous rocks, interminable rocks. It seems singular that the German colony should have pitched upon this locality.

THE SORT OF PEOPLE

Slept well and remained in Fredericksburg all day.

Here one first appreciates that he is on the frontier, where it behooves him to take care of himself. Every man one sees coming into the city has his six-shooter, and many have their rifles or shotguns besides. They are roughly clad, some in buckskins. Those coming with wagon trains from remote settlements, are particularly of this description. A stalwart, robust set. And though I mingled freely among them, I received nothing but courteous treatment, and saw none who received not the same. These people rarely engage in difficulties, but when they do they are dangerous. "Never put your hands on your pistol," say they, "but if you do, shoot quick." They are not a familiar folk, and do not address a stranger unless spoken to. They impress me as a highly individualized and manly race. The habit of universal arms-bearing has grown more from the necessity of protection against Indians, than a natural penchant for weapons. The people of the town share to some degree their simplicity of dress, but not their weapons.

DIVISION IV

CHAPTER I

INDIAN TALK

The few to whom I spoke of my trip advised me not to proceed beyond Fredericksburg alone, saying few ever did so unless under urgent necessity. They held that one was not absolutely safe even on the road to San Antonio; for though he might go through in safety ninety-nine times, yet on the one hundredth he might lose his scalp; the Indian hovered over the outskirts, and, like death, ye know not the day nor the hour he cometh. They spake of trains which would be on the road in a day or two, advising me to wait on their company; but when I did not relent, they undertook to instruct me in Indian warfare. "If you see them," said they, "depend upon your horse's heels, and if pressed too hard, take to the brush; there the Indian will not pursue you, for he dreads a hidden foe, armed with our destructive guns. He knows that one or more must fall in the effort to secure you, and as each will think it likely that this fate may be his own, they will finally conclude that you are not worth the sacrifice, and let you alone." These marauding Indians are mostly Comanches, generally armed with bows and arrows, but said they, "They can flirt these arrows through a buffalo at fifty yards." One said that he had seen the spike of an arrow go through the tough spoke of a wagon wheel. I had great confidence in my formidable armament and my horse's heels, and came deliberately to the conclusion that I was so ugly a customer that the Indians would probably be willing to give me a wide berth, if I would treat them with like civility. Moreover, I thought if I could not select my company, I would prefer to have none, or even that of an occasional straggling Indian. I have sometimes had some most intolerable bores in road acquaintance, and one does not know but that they may be dishonest. Therefore, on the second morning after my arrival, I filled my haversack with crackers and chips of dried beef, and departed from Fredericksburg, northwest.

FOGS AND CLOUD-BURSTS

A very thick fog rested in the ravines and valleys, and against the sides of the mountains. It was so thick that as I rode through it my gun dripped with water, and my beard and woolen coat were saturated. The water deposited by it was equal to a nice shower. And yet this is in a lofty mountainous region, where there are no expanses of water, and no streams but brooks. This fog seemed to me a cloud which had fallen bodily to the earth. Resting against the sides of the mountains, it had precisely the appearance of a cumulus. They say that in this region cloud-bursts are not uncommon; that is, a cloud suddenly letting go all hold in the upper regions and tumbling to the earth, discharging a young ocean at once. I, myself, once witnessed one of these. I was standing on the bank of a dry ravine which headed at the

foot of a mountain nearby. Suddenly a roaring torrent rushed down the ravine and over-spread its banks. Looking to the mountain, I saw that it was enveloped in a dense, agitated fog; and though light clouds were overhead, not a drop of water had fallen where I was. Those with me called this a waterspout, but it struck me as a tumbled-down cloud. At certain seasons, these unprecedented fogs appear every morning in the mountainous regions of Western Texas, and the rancheros consider them valuable for crops. It is remarkable that they occur only during seasons of drought, and are confined to the valleys and flanks of mountains. They do not dispense their benefits over districts incapable of tillage.³¹

LOST ROCKS—THE TEXAS CATAclySM

My attention was attracted to a number of stones lying about in the open post oak forest. Some of these are of fantastic form, and look like ruins. Some stand bolt upright like pillars. In the level forest there are no other rocks but these. The formation about them is Cretaceous, while they, in every instance, are granite or gneiss, or a very compact, almost vitreous sandstone. They were not formed here; they were not protruded from below; they are away from their home, and are true "lost rocks."³² Whence came these rocks, and how did they get here? There are no mountains near from which they could have been projected by the ordinary agencies by which boulders are precipitated into valleys. Is this glacial? To conclude that it is, would be to fly into the face of geologists, who maintain that the remarkable invasion of flood and ice from the Pole, did not reach below the line of the Ohio. And yet it is certain that these rocks were borne here by some extraordinary force.

As I rode along, the boulders increased in number and size, showing that the force that had borne them came from the west or northwest, and that I was approaching the district whence they came. At last the level forest terminated at a creek, beyond which rose a range of dark colored hills. Entering them I found them composed of precisely the same material as the boulders, and at once recognized their parent bed.

I first saw these rocks within a short distance of Fredericksburg, and this range of primitive hills is fifteen miles northwest; so that they have been transported ten to twelve miles certainly, and perhaps some of them much further. Some are many tons in weight. Now what was the giant that tore these boulders from the parent rock and hurled them this distance? That giant was of prodigious strength, indeed.

The force that did it was probably exerted long anterior to the Glacial Flood, and was short and convulsive in its action. It deposited no vast heaps of clay, gravel, and rounded pebbles, as the glacier did in its long prevalence over the northern regions. It was one immense, tremendous exertion of force, passing away as suddenly as it came. Its ancient date is attested by the fact that the masses of rock that were hurled into the valley at the foot of the hills, have been completely covered up by the slow accumulation of the wash and debris of ages, and that no rocks of recent date are among the boulders. It is my belief that this force was exerted at the close of the Cretaceous epoch by the upheaval of the great pla-

teau of the Rocky Mountains, and the vast plains that border it on the east. At that time the ocean covered all that region except a few Primitive, Silurian and Carboniferous districts and was hurled southeastward in one tremendous surge, and did not stop till it fell below the Cretaceous wall that runs north of San Antonio and New Braunfels. There it rested and became quiet, having been dispossessed of vast domain by the action of the turbulent central fires. This idea has not been suggested, so far as I know, by any who have written of the geology of America, but I give it in great confidence that it will be found correct. I can find no other hypothesis which will account for the singular phenomena before me.

This range of Azoic hills at that time stood above the water; and the dispossessed ocean, hurled back nearly two thousand miles at one sweep, struck it with inconceivable fury, ripping up the solid rock and transporting the fragments miles away. It seems almost inconceivable that such masses of rock could be borne so great a distance by water alone; but it must be recollected that oceanic power under such circumstances is inconceivably great.

The fantastic form of many of the rocks is the result of corroding atmospheric agencies. Some are crowned with block of stone resembling Dutch cheeses. The child of fire, granite, seems to be the only sufferer from this degradation; the gneiss and vitreous sandstone having apparently undergone no change at all. If one had any data by which he could estimate the waste of granite when exposed to the atmosphere in separate blocks, he could get a fair idea from these boulders, of how much time has elapsed since the upheaval of the Cretaceous.

THE PRIMITIVE HILLS

These primitive hills are dark, squatty, well rounded protuberances, resembling heaps of stone upon which soil has been lightly scattered. They are so bare that a goat could hardly pick his rations upon them. If they are a fair representation of what the earth was in its early stages, nothing could have been more bleak and desolate. No bird, insect, reptile or animal, flew, crept, crawled or walked over its inhospitable rocks; and no vegetation existed. And such, almost, is this primitive district to-day. As God made it, myriads of ages ago, still it is, with aspect scarcely softened. Yet in the winding vales between the protuberances, there is sometimes a pretty little lawn of rich crisp grass, with groves of dwarfed black oak and live oak. Sometimes on the eastern or southeastern exposure of the protuberances, thickets of dwarfed and gnarled cedars drag out a precarious existence. What they draw their subsistence from, seems past finding out. The only sign of animal life is a buzzard floating here and there at a great altitude. I notice that against the eastern side of these mountains there are almost invariably huge masses of detached rock, while on the opposite side there are few, and often none. This is another proof of the great spasmodic billow that swept over them from the west or northwest.³³

BIRDS THAT ARE PECULIAR

For some ten miles my horse's hoofs clanked over these stony witnesses of the primeval desolation when I descended into a secluded valley, running northeast. No one dwells in it, and the aspect of the whole country was decidedly lonesome; but the brook was sparkling and the grass good, and I halted for noonday rest. I wandered on foot some hundred yards up the brook and shot a peculiar bird with my pistol; not that I wanted to eat him, but to study him, for he is a strange creature. Some call him the bird of Paradise, and others the chaparral cock; but he has a strong general resemblance to the female peafowl. He is a bit larger than a pigeon, but looks much larger by reason of his long legs, and a tail a foot to a foot and a half in length, which projects straight out and trails on the ground. He lives in secluded, bushy retreats, makes no note whatever, and when disturbed runs away with great fleetness. I have never seen one fly more than twenty or thirty feet, and his tail is so cumbersome that I judge he cannot fly much further. His short flights seem more of a hopping than a flying. He is said to be easily domesticated; so that even old birds have been trained to visit farmyards daily, where they wandered around almost as unconcerned as chickens. A lady told me she had quite a number that visited her "every day to receive gifts of corn and wheat. At night they would slip away to the brush; and they hid their nests so well" she "could never find them." Although inhabiting such secluded districts and flying so swiftly when he sees anyone, he has a singularly sweet and gentle look out of his large, soft black eyes, which are a prominent feature of his ensemble. He goes almost always in pairs, and is seldom found east of the Colorado, and only in mountainous districts.

The name "bird of Paradise," had doubtless been given him on account of his elongated tail, like that of the Paradise bird of the East; or it may be connected with some pretty sentiment which the Texans may entertain for the bird. For he is as much protected from the murderous aim of the youthful sportsman, as the universally beloved mockingbird—the sweetest songster of the feathered tribe.

As an ornithologist I am at a loss where to place this bird. It is said that not a single member of the family of the Phasianidae has been found native in America; but if this bird is not a variety of the pheasant I am mistaken. In shape it is precisely similar to the European pheasant, and only lacks his size and gaudy plumage.

Another curious Texas bird—which I have seen almost every day, but do not see here—is called by some the Mexican mockingbird, and yet others not inappropriately call him, also, the bird of Paradise. He is the same in appearance as the common mockingbird, save that his colors are much bolder and more distinct, that he is much more gaudily dressed, and is ornamented with two long tail feathers which curl outwards, gracefully and airily toward the ends. Beside him, the common mockingbird appears very modest and homely, but unfortunately the so-called Mexican or Paradise bird is gifted with none of the musical genius of that sweet singer. He has a note, but it is a mere squeak. Like the mockingbird, he is fond of perching on the topmost branch of a tree, but instead of thrilling the

neighborhood with his sweet minstrelsy, he amuses himself in looking out for and catching flies. He seems filled with great envy and dislike of his highly gifted but homely cousin, for when one happens to come near him, he immediately assails him, and is joined in his ugly behavior by all his tribe in sight. Unlike the mockingbird, he is rarely if ever found alone, but in little companies of several; if not absolutely together, yet separated but a little distance apart. The mockingbird loves the haunts of men, by whom he seems to know instinctively that he is beloved; but this fellow avoids them, and is generally found remote from their dwellings, even far beyond the limits of civilization. I believe he rarely ventures east of the Colorado; and he seems almost exclusively a prairie bird, as I have not seen him in the timbered regions. A tree he loves, but it must be in the open prairie, from which he has a wide prospect. One of his favorite perches is a tall spike of grass, or slender reed, on which he delights to sit and rock in the wind. But unmusical and vicious as he is, nothing can be more graceful than this bird on the wing. He has a way of ascending high in the air, with an easy, gentle motion, again descending in curves or circles to his perch, as if wishing to show his fine plumage and tail to most advantage. He seems always merry and happy, except when the true mockingbird approaches him, and then he is simply villainous.

NOT ALL BAD

Hence, these rocky hills are not all bad. The primitive baldness or rugged hairiness prevails, but frequently a smooth scope of table land intervenes, covered with post-oak forest, and the rocks do not always clank. Running through these forests are numerous strips of black, fertile land, in slight depressions, thick with underbrush and luxuriant grass. These are favorite haunts of deer; for in nearly all such I encounter them in squads and sometimes herds. They gaze at me a moment, then switch their tails and depart. These strips often contain hundreds of acres, and would doubtless produce grand crops of grain, but no plow has ever touched them. These table lands, lying between granitic hills, invariably begin and terminate at hollows, down which a brook runs and frets over innumerable rocks, and generally is hidden under an entanglement of vine and brush. The rocks here exposed are generally sandstone,³⁴ probably of Cambrian age. On the table lands, if such they may be properly called, I noticed a true boulder occasionally, but no protruding rock. Lonesome exceedingly. Begin to grow weary even with myself. Won't I break down before my trip is ended?

A DISAPPOINTMENT—THE OLD SHEPHERD

Finally, the sun was sinking in the west when I saw the first indication of humanity since leaving Fredericksburg. 'Twas in a dell that might by courtesy be called a valley. 'Twas a flock of a thousand or fifteen hundred Mexican sheep, under the leadership of an old man and two dogs.

Having a mind to hear the sound of human voice, I rode up to the old man and addressed him; but he was a Mexican, and shook his head and said simply—"no entiendo."³⁵ I felt discouraged, and discharged some oburgations upon the barbarous ignorance of the Mexicans, who will not learn the language of the people they live among. It is the rarest thing to find one who can speak an English word, even among those who have been in contact with Americans thirty or forty years. I tried frequently in San Antonio to speak with old Mexicans, who looked as grizzly as the hills, but they always responded with the everlasting "no entiendo." While returning from that city to New Braunfels, I had as sole companion in the carriage, a splendid Mexican woman who seemed the queen of the race. She had an imposing physique and all the charms of full-blown womanhood. I felt a strong desire to engage her in conversation, as it seemed becoming to do under the circumstances; but she shut me up, on my first venture, with a musical—"Yo no hablo inglés, señor;"³⁶ and I sank back to my corner of the coach, where I remained disconsolate during the rest of the trip, which occupied four hours. I believe that I never looked so like a fool in my life, and I am sure that I never felt so like a fool as I did on that occasion. There we sat, face to face, two feet apart, but for all practical purposes the distance might have been a thousand. We occasionally looked at each other in a very silly way, and I fancied that she felt as stupid as myself. I was heartily glad when the journey ended. I fancied that I had a full foretaste of Plato's hell, which is to be plunged up to the ears in something that one ardently wants, and yet cannot get a taste of it. I have thought of this adventure a thousand times since, and wondered, had this lady and myself been forced to live alone together some months, how we would have got along, and what sort of language we would have formed. A compound of the best of the Spanish and the best of the English, would make a noble language indeed; and I judge that is the sort of compound we would have made. I have thought also about the meaning of the first word we would mutually compound, but have arrived at no satisfactory conclusions in regard to it.

The Mexicans of Texas are peculiar in this thick ignorance of English, as nearly all other strangers learn it in a short time. The Americans themselves quickly pick up enough Spanish when thrown among Mexicans, to get along with them very well, and even the negroes soon learn to talk it. I think this may be owing to the general disinclination of the Mexicans to mental effort, and their contentment with stupidity; but it may result partially from the toughness of our language. A young Mexican in San Antonio, who had been educated in Kentucky, said to me on this subject, "Many Mexicans read English and understand it well, but few try to speak it, because its pronunciation is to them almost impossible. There is one language that a Mexican or Spaniard can never speak, unless bred to it from a child, and that is the French; and after that comes the English. Many Mexican ladies in San Antonio speak English pretty well, but it fits their mouths so badly that they cannot be prevailed on to speak it before strangers. They prefer to be a sealed music-box." It was one of those sealed music-boxes, though a pretty big one, that I had with me on that trip. I wish I had had the key to unlock it.

And the old shepherd may be a music-box, too. Possibly. And I ride on reflecting what an admirable chance he has to turn philosopher, if he only had the stuff in him. Nothing to do but to wander over these hills and along these vales from morn until dusk, often stopping for hours to bask on a sunny slope. If I should turn shepherd, methinks I would also turn poet, or philosopher, or historian, in spite of myself; for how can one lead such a life without eternally reflecting and projecting? And yet I dare say that all the thoughts that well up in this old man's mind in a day, could they be collected and weighed, would not balance against a humming-bird's pin-feather. His life is probably a continuous sleep, and when it is ended there is a bunch of bones to tell that a man has been. This is dreary consolation. What is life without those thoughts that wander through eternity—without knowledge—without ambition—without the restless desire to accomplish good? To die like a rock tossed into the sea, and leave not a ripple behind! This is not life; it is vegetation—the life of the weed on the prairie. When the weed has lived its time, it dies and leaves a humus to enrich the soil. So when man dies, he leaves his bones to crumble into phosphate of lime, which at last will become good solid rock, which the husbandman will quarry to enrich his grounds, or the architect to erect into some wall. Thus we go on doing good in spite of ourselves; for thus nature designed us.

BUEN RETIRO

Sunset found me on an eminence from which a glorious green valley, from three to five miles in width, spread out before me, winding among the rugged hills like a great river. Its banks are solid, precipitous walls of rock. Farm houses here and there look like white sails on the river, and a village in the distance seems a fleet at anchor. I descended the steep declivity and stopped at the village of Loyal Valley, thirty-five miles from Fredericksburg.

CHAPTER II

LOYAL VALLEY

THE GERMANS AND A HIGHER CIVILIZATION

This is exclusively a German settlement; and here the conviction impresses me that the Germans as a colonizing race, excel the Americans or any other race. In Texas they have certainly pushed forward and possessed exposed points, far in advance of the Americans. It is said of Goldsmith that he touched no subject that he did not adorn; and it may be truly said of the Germans, that they touch no country which they do not fill with beauty, happiness, and wealth. They have two marked characteristics which eminently fit them for colonizing: their singularly social disposition, and their universally good, and often high education. This social nature makes them love to live in communities, and every member becomes an important social factor, whose well-being is inseparably connected with the well-being of the whole; and every one labors as hard as he can to be esteemed and fill his part well in this social life. Their education makes them aspire for a higher civilization; and they express it in making their homes attractive and beautiful. Thus, let them take hold of the wildest country, and it soon blossoms like the rose, and becomes the seat of prosperity and contentment; it becomes "home sweet home." They advance in force, and once possessed, they cannot be dispossessed. The American is more isolated in his character; he likes to stand upon his own bottom, without being rubbed against by neighbors, and hence scatters so badly that he cannot advance far into the wilderness, until the German communities have preceded him and build bulwarks against savage incursions. Then he comes and locates his isolated farms. He does not set his heart upon them as a home, does not care to beautify them as he has little taste in that direction, and is prepared to pull up stakes and depart any time, if things do not go to suit. When the German stops, he is fully determined to make things suit him, and immediately goes to work to that end and accomplishes it.

I notice that all the Germans here appear to speak English, and to prefer it to their own tongue. I remarked to the gentleman with whom I stopped, that I was surprised to see this in so isolated a German community. "It is true," said he, "we are isolated, but we cannot tell how soon we may be inundated by Americans; and we want to be prepared for the flood when it comes. Besides, we often have Americans with us, and we should feel very awkward if we could not speak to them in their language. This is our home now, and we do not feel that we can be as good citizens as we want to be, unless we speak our home language." I asked if the Germans learned English mostly by contact with Americans, or from books. "By practicing it," said he, "among ourselves, getting the start mostly from books."

The more I see of the Germans, the more I think of them. They almost invariably have

nice and happy homes, and always have something good to eat and drink. I am unable to say whether this later is a cause or result of their high civilization; but this is certain: a people who do not eat and drink well are never of a high civilization; and this will be noticed as much among private families as among peoples and races. Poor, miserable, or coarse eating seems to dwarf the intellect and suppress every noble aspiration of the heart. Thus, the Mexicans appear to live mainly upon onions and red pepper, and behold what a folk they are! The Hottentots live mostly on squashes and pumpkins, and behold the things that have the form of man! I think it is very true that if we will find what a people put into their bellies, we will have no difficulty in judging what may be expected to come out of them in the way of character and talents.

A GARDEN IN A WILDERNESS

Loyal Valley is indeed a garden in a wilderness, a spot in which one can linger and be happy. Here is a nursery in which sixty varieties of roses grow, and hundreds of the finest flora of three continents; sixty varieties of pear, forty of peach, and an army of apples, plums and grapes—all cultivated and arranged with taste and skill that cannot be excelled. It is curious to see such an industry in so isolated and remote a region; and nothing could possibly indicate so well the higher civilization of the people of the valley, as the fact stated to me by the proprietor that he had liberal and profitable customers. "I am sure," said he, "that our valley will soon have as fine vineyards, orchards and gardens as any country in the world, and I feel some little pride in the thought that it is I that am doing it." He held that people could not be happy and really blessed until they had vineyards and orchards; in this view I heartily concurred. The proprietor is a German gentleman, of high educational attainments, and he is a blessing to Loyal Valley, and to remote regions beyond it. His light shines afar.³⁷

The people of the valley are farmers, but all have their cattle, and some have herds of sheep. Wheat is the chief product. Their houses are stone, and often they have stone fences, though timber is abundant. They said they were not annoyed by Indians, because they were so isolated, and kept but few horses to tempt them. "They think we are too poor," said they, "to steal from."

PHYSICAL FEATURES

This valley is a very remarkable one; insomuch that it greatly worried my studying cap. It is thirty or forty miles long, and as big where it begins as where it ends. It lies between solid stone walls, whose heights vary from one hundred and fifty to three hundred feet, and is a true canyon. It has no running stream, but in place of it there is a channel with numerous deep pools. It seems to me that it is the bed of an ancient river, which might have flowed southwest, though its drainage is now in the opposite direction. It is either this or the earth

was disrupted by a great explosion, leaving a vast chasm three to five miles in width, which has been gradually filling up by silt from the higher land; or the bottom must have sunken and fallen to its present level. But whatever cause may have produced it, it is certainly one of the most charming regions of Texas. The soil is black and very fertile, and groves of live-oak occur at short intervals. The walls appear to be of Silurian age, and consist of limestone as far as I noticed them.

HOW ONE FEELS WHEN HE CANNOT TELL WHICH END TO TAKE

Rising above the wall, I rode through a fine forest of post-oak and black-jack, in which deer and squirrels swarmed. A remarkable strip of exceedingly rich land, with its jungle alive with these animals, tempted me to stray into it. When I turned out of it, I pursued the general direction of the road I had left, hoping to strike it obliquely after a time. I was checked up a while by a ravine, which seemed to wind in every possible direction, so that after crossing it three or four times, I was still unable to say on which side I was. In this singular position I got so completely wrapped up that I hardly knew my head from a shot-gun, but finally struck out on a course which seemed to be correct. I rode into a flock of peccaries which immediately bristled up and commenced popping their jaws. Wishing to provoke them to see what they would do, I rode slowly toward them, while they stood boofing and popping; and seizing a piece of dead branch, I threw it in their midst, at the same time calling them an ugly name. They charged me instantly, raising an infernal noise, and my horse taking fright, dashed through the woods at wild speed, my head being in great danger of being shorn off by the limbs. I was unable to stop him until we reached another ravine, at least a quarter of a mile from where we bounced the peccaries, and here I found myself again confused. However, I got my self straight at last, or thought I did, and rode on until I found the road; but was totally unable to say whether my course lay to the right or left. It was the road undoubtedly, but which end was which? I was seized with a feeling of drivelling idiocy, in which I seemed not to have a vestige of mind left. I felt like a piece of dry sponge, to be blown about by the winds; I had a most distressing sense of idiocy. My horse seemed to be even a bigger fool, and I appealed to him in vain to show me the way—he insisting that I should show him. Finally I recovered sense enough to recollect that I had a compass in my coat pocket. This was tied behind the saddle, and I had sense enough to undo the bundle. The way the compass indicated I should go, now seemed all wrong, but I pursued it and by degrees my senses returned, and I found I was right. If any one has been in similar circumstances, he will remember what an exceedingly drivelling idiocy he felt. If I fall into such condition again, having no compass, I will lie down to sleep until the idiocy has passed. I have seen wild geese frequently attacked by the same sort of stupidity, while on their annual passage. During the occultation they sail around in circles, now this way and then that way, until they appear to have gone utterly crazy, and finally settle on the ground in a state of exhaustion and desperation.

THE COMPASS AND THE AURORA

And right here I cannot but think of the vast results that have sprung from the discovery of that singular law of nature which attracts the needle toward the pole. What multitudes has it saved from idiocy and starvation, and what revolutions and achievements have followed in its wake! The discovery of no other thing has wrought such vast results to mankind; for without it, this great constellation of States would not exist. The space covered by States would still be a wilderness, tenanted by beasts and savages; the seas would be almost as sailless as those that covered the primeval world, and civilization would never have lighted its torch beyond Europe and the shores of Asia. It is probable that civilization finally would have been extinguished, and the beneficent influences of Christianity would have died with it in its cradle. The natural law under which this strange attraction exists, is, to my mind, an unexplained mystery, like the beautiful Aurora which lifts its gaudy curtains over the pole. Perhaps it is the Aurora that has charmed the needle, and makes it always look to behold it. I see in them another evidence of the Grand Architect, who finds beautiful and mysterious ways to lead us to His work. It is remarkable that His ways are all of infinite beauty. He unfolded the gaudy curtains of Aurora, and behold, the needle leapt up to it and points tremblingly to it forever; and all the seas immediately became white with sails, and Christianity and civilization went forth hand in hand to illuminate all the dark places of the world! Little instrument, what a revolution has been that caused by thee! The stars sang together when thou wert born!

RUINS—THE YOUNG GEOLOGIST

Passed out of the forest into a congeries of terrific hills; black, brown, and grey; some misshapen and jagged, and others leaning over abysses, as if contemplating the ruin below them. Here the volcanic forces thundered, ripped up the bowels of the earth, tossed the ancient strata hither and thither, and poured out their molten floods. It is a seat of confusion almost unequalled—"of desolation lorn and wild." The rocks are granite, gneiss, porphyry, masses of quartz, slates, agates, and glittering micaceous sandstones. Some of the mountains are split into halves and quarters, and the detached portions thrown into chasms and gorges at their feet, in immense piles of ruin. The disturbances here must have been of long continuance often repeated. The older granite is upheaved and pierced by new discharges of granite, and the stratified rocks are tossed upward and pitched downward in every conceivable direction; sometimes lying across each other in promiscuous heaps, like piles of fagots thrown together by urchins for a bonfire. The date of these disturbances is probably back in the Silurian, and this forsaken region has lain in ruin ever since. It was above the surface when the great tidal wave swept from the northwest, for its boulders are strewn from the foot of the hills to Loyal Valley.

This is the sanctum sanctorum of the young geologist—a retreat in which his devotions

to science would rarely be disturbed. Let him put his country together again, as it was before the tumultuous central fires tossed it into atoms, and he will have learned it all. He might build a little palace of agates of all colors, or micaceous sandstones that sparkle of silver, supported on pillars of porphyry, and adorned with chambers of quartz crystal. Or if he be not architecturally inclined, I doubt not he could find some glorious grotto under the hills, spangled with crystal and gems, where he and his nymph might revel in the luxury of love and learning; for surely he would not be without a nymph. Would not such a residence with some fairy of these grottoes be charming? With her wand she might bring him honey from the hills, or sparking wine from the fountains in the rock.

Perhaps with that same wand she might touch his forehead, making his mind gush with brilliance, before which the clouds that cover the mystery of creation would be instantly dispelled. Would it not be passing sweet to be taught, in such a place, science from the female lips and eyes of a young fairy? Child of science—here is thy home! Come hither—hasten hither!

There are no pretty vales winding among these ruins of the Silurian world. There are vales, but they are strewn with boulders that have thundered from the hills. The road winds amid the ruins like a ship tacking against a contrary wind; now hither, now thither, but ever urging slowly ahead. I would not give three cents for ten square miles of this country, except as a school of science.

CHAPTER III

THE FRONTIERSMAN

THE WAR OF THE SHEAFs AND HORNS

I had loitered so much that darkness was on me the moment I emerged out of the chaos into the valley of the river Llano, only twenty-three miles from Loyal Valley. I solicited entertainment at a small stone house—the first I had seen since morning—and it was accorded. My entertainer was a robust old man, as grizzly as the granite promontories, and in person quite as rugged. His face and lips were covered with a stiff grey beard, his head was shingled so that the crisp hair stuck upwards like the quills of a porcupine, and his waist and shoulders were Atlantean. He was evidently sixty years of age or beyond, but it was equally evident that he still retained the strength of a lion. And that he would use it as a lion, should occasion make it at all necessary, no one could look upon him and doubt. His steel-grey eyes denoted caution and resolution; in short, he looked like a man bred to rough things, and to the control of them; not courting danger, but the last to avoid it when it comes. He was of few words, and those straight to the point. He manifested the profoundest indifference as to whom I was or what was my business. I endeavored once or twice to pique his curiosity on these points, but he pushed it off. He treated me with all becoming politeness, but no familiarity. He received me as a stranger, and was evidently resolved that I should depart as one. The poise of the old man was so perfect that it sometimes seemed to me almost burlesque. When he came out to meet me at the gate he had a book in his hand, which I afterwards learned was the poems of Robert Burns. It was about the last book I would have expected to see in his hands, and it caused me to gaze at him with all the more wonder.

This county of Mason has the most evil reputation in Texas for dark deeds. Indeed, until latterly, war prevailed in it: neighbor shooting down neighbor as he would a wolf or hyena, and the law was a dead letter. I asked this man of few words what was the cause of this, not doubting that he had had his share in it. He said the quarrel arose between the farmers and stock-men, the latter being all Americans, and the former nearly all Germans.

The farmers were too lazy or negligent to build substantial fences about their fields, and the cattle broke in and destroyed their crops. The farmers, instead of making their fences strong, undertook to protect their crops by shooting their neighbors' cattle. It was useless to appeal to the law for redress or to correct the evil, for the small farmers greatly preponderated and would control all juries. To retaliate and repair the loss, the stock-men drove off the few cattle the farmers had, and sold them. This opened the warfare, and some thirty of the citizens were shot, some of them in the presence of their families. The usually

peaceful German was a ready to pull the trigger as anyone, and from all I could learn from the old man, shared about equally with the Americans in the dark deeds. My host was evidently a partisan of the stock-men, and for all I know, one of their leaders. He remarked, "I hope it all over. Enough blood has been shed to bring a bad name on our county, and satisfy all that no good can come in that way. There has been no shooting for some time past. It is all with the farmers to stop this thing or continue it. If they continue to shoot our cattle for breaking into their fields, which have no proper fences, the feud will go on, and no one knows where it will end. Let them build good fences or quit farming, and there will be peace. And there is no excuse for not building good fences where stone and timber abound. I am no farmer; at least, that is not my trade, but I have strong fences about my fields, and no animal can break through. Why cannot they have the same? If my fences were poor, I should expect my neighbor's cattle to break into my fields; but the fault would be mine, not my neighbor's, and I would have no right to shoot his cattle—much less to shoot him."³⁸

A shuck mattress to him who rides over these mountains is sweeter than a bed of roses to the voluptuary. I have tested both, and I know. Venison and fresh trout from the Llano formed a conspicuous feature at my breakfast, flanked by eggs, and cake and honey. Asking for my bill, I received the response: "I do not keep hotel; you owe me nothing; if you pass this way again, I will be pleased to have you stop." So much for this rugged old frontiersman, who loves Burns, and would probably not step around the corner to avoid any danger, whether from wild beasts, savages, or farmers who shoot his cattle. His most polite words were his last. I was not surprised at his excellent degree of civilization after seeing how well he fed.

CHAPTER IV

RIVER LLANO

River Llano sparkles with almost Comal limpidity, and carries about that same bulk of water. From its source to its mouth in the Colorado, it is perpetually singing or roaring over cascades; sometimes creeping along silently a few hundred yards through deep chasms. Like Niagara, it has quarried its way through miles of solid rock, but the material it has labored in is infinitely harder, being mostly granite, gneiss, quartz, and massive iron. Occasionally the volcanic forces have come to its assistance, rending the obstructing rock and lifting it apart in perpendicular walls. It is alive with perch, trout, eels and big-eyed, blue cat-fish, which take the hook eagerly, and it is one of the most delightful retreats in the world for the sportsman, who may play Isaac Walton to his heart's content in its waters, and Nimrod on its bank, its forests and mountainous recesses; and the scenery is always beautiful or grand. Should he wish occasionally to turn philosopher and study nature, its infinitely varied rocks and gems and minerals furnish studio and laboratory on every hand. For a water-power, I doubt if there is a river in the world, of no greater size and length, that is its equal. And yet not one ten-thousand-millionth of this enormous power is utilized.

Its valley is usually about a mile wide, but often the elevations bathe their bases in its water on both sides. Its soil is of a reddish cast, derived from granite and porphyry, not so fertile as the valleys of most Texas streams, but yields abundantly of grain. It has this splendid advantage: there is hardly a foot of it that may not be irrigated with little cost of labor or money; but, as easy as irrigation is, the people have little or none of it. They are mainly engaged in stock, and make agriculture a third-rate matter. The valley is thinly settled with an hospitable people.

I notice that many of the ladies can walk barefooted over rocks and pedregals, and seem to prefer this way of locomotion. It is unnecessary to go beyond this fact to learn what their husbands are. The latter wear six-shooters and buckskin, and are bronzed and rugged. I imagine that none of them would stop to contemplate a daisy or tulip, or even a big sunflower. They are Cossacks.³⁹

CHAPTER V

Rode up the valley. Beautiful region; the dark Primitive Hills across the river to the left; the smooth valley before me, dotted with noble groves of live-oak; and elevated and smooth or undulating woodlands to the right, covered with open forests of live-oak and post-oak, with occasional prairie lawns between. Rich mesquite grows everywhere. The timber on the river bank is mostly pecan, elm and ash. Air delightful. Elevation two thousand feet above the sea. White farmhouses at wide distances basking in the sunlight.

FORT MASON—A SURPRISE

Some ten miles brought me to the capital of Mason County. It is a site that is all beauty. It sits on a lofty prairie, with a noble prospect of great circumference. To him who approaches it, it seems a new Mecca, with its white walls and green foliage; and when he enters it the pleasing impression is not dispelled. It is a village of seven or eight hundred people, whose houses are granite and other stones, and many of them are spacious and fine. This is the characteristic of all the stores, and they are numerous and carry large stocks. In such a region I was surprised at such architecture and such wealth of commerce. The conviction at once seized me that these quarters are of much greater population than I had supposed, and all rich. In the first conviction I was wrong, for I was assured that the entire population of the country did not exceed two thousand, spread over a thousand square miles of territory. In the latter I was right, for the merchants told me that they all have plenty of money, and spend it liberally for everything except dress.

“We have tried,” said they, “to introduce dressy notions, but not even the ladies will take them.” Said one, “Were it not for the winter northers and summer heats, I believe all sorts would prefer the original dress—a good coat of skin and hair.” It is not strange that men in such a region, and of such occupation, should care nothing for dress, except as a covering from thorns and weather; but the ladies should do better. It would have a mollifying and subduing and an elevating influence on their lords, who need it. They should beautify and adorn themselves, and spikenard themselves for their lions. I doubt if the most ferocious and savage in the world could long remain uncivilized, if subjected to the influences of a sensible and tastily dressed lady, particularly if she would sing! As for myself, I regard music and female beauty as the most powerful forces in the world. They need only to be exerted to create revolutions. Man was not made to withstand such influences.

In the midst of all this attractiveness, there is one great harshness. The men, excepting those who live in the village, are walking arsenals. They bristle with pistols, blades and rifles, and their heels clank with prodigious spurs. The village looks as if it had been entered by a regiment of Cossacks, and is strongly suggestive, on that account, of force, bloodshed

and robbery. Yet these arsenals bear themselves with courtesy to all, and I heard no harsh voices and saw no demonstrative demeanor even in the drinking saloons, which I also visited. They evidently solicit no quarrels, but seem to be ever on the alert; and if a quarrel should arise, blood would flow. A gentleman among them would be as secure and as hospitably cared for as anywhere in the world; but still, all of this is disagreeable to me.

THE TAMED LION AND THE WILD ONE

I dined at an inn, and was waited upon by a bright little Miss of fifteen or sixteen summers, who was a sweet little chatter-box. I told her I did not like the Mason people, with their pistols and big blades. "Oh, they are horrid," said she. "I am sometimes so frightened in the dining-room, when they are all at the table, that I can hardly handle the dishes; and if I am asked for sugar and pies, I am just as apt to give them pepper and beef.

"Suppose one of those great pistols should fall on the floor; it might go off and kill me! But the gentlemen are mighty well-behaved, at least when they are here. But oh, those terrible pistols and knives! I wish there were none in the world."

"Do they wear their pistols and knives when they attend weddings and balls?"

"Yes, sir, they do; but they don't always dance with them on."

"Would you dance with a gentleman wearing a pistol or bowie-knife?"

"No, sir, I would not. I have refused to dance with many a gentleman because he had on his pistol, and I told them so."

"How did they take that?"

"They said I was right, and they always took them off."

"You think then, you could tame one of these fierce lions?"

"I could try!"

"Which would you prefer—a wild, fierce lion whom you could tame, or a gentle one, already tamed?"

"Maybe the tame one would be tamed too much!"

"So, if two lions should besiege your castle, one wild and the other tame, you would unbar the gates and let the wild one in."

"Oh, I would not let either of them in. I would set the dogs on them and drive them off." But this was spoken with a coquettish laugh which showed too plainly that the wild one might enter, and the tame one could go on and fare worse. Such are female hearts. Being gentle themselves, they rather admire the ungentle. A sub-lieutenant with a copious array of buttons, is a thousand times more formidable in the eyes of average young women than a whole army of bishops and monks. I was charged fifty cents for my dinner and horse-feed. The viands were infinitely good. They were venison and wild turkey, and a glorious array of wild honey.

Mason is surrounded with farms, some of them very handsome and showing high tillage. The products are almost exclusively wheat and corn.

R. E. LEE

Not far from the town, near the road I travel, stand the ruins of Fort Mason, a military post before the war, but now abandoned. Here for a long time dwelt Robert E. Lee, a lieutenant-colonel in a regiment of U.S. Cavalry. Albert Sidney Johnston was his colonel, but was then commanding on the Pacific coast. The people delight to speak of Lee and tell how he visited their houses. They say he was the most courteous, simplest and purest of men, with native dignity, gentle and unobtrusive, yet singularly commanding. A lady said to me,⁴⁰ "He was full of affability and small talk to the ladies, but none of us could be in his presence a moment without the instinctive feeling that one of the greatest of men was before us." A gentleman once remarked to me, "I never saw General Lee but once, but he made an impression upon me I cannot forget. He was standing upon the gallery of the government building in San Antonio, watching a squad of infantry that was being drilled by a lieutenant. His appearance was so impressive that I stopped to look at him and to ask who he was. There was a remarkable repose about him, singularly in contrast with the group of officers about him. He seemed a column of antique marble, a pillar of state—so calm, so serene, so thoughtful, and so commanding! I stood within a few feet of him, perhaps five minutes, and during the time he did not once open his lips. The conviction possessed me at once, and I said involuntarily to myself, 'There stands a great man!' At that time the idea of the States at war with each other had never crossed my mind. After the war had broken out and I heard that Lee had been appointed to a high command in the Southern army, I said to a major of the U.S. army, who knew him well, that I believed he could turn out the greatest figure of the war. The major said, 'Give Lee a city and tell him to fortify and defend it, and it will never be captured. But give him a command in the open field, and he will prove a failure. He will prove too slow, too cautious, too methodical. The bad man of this war will be Albert Sidney Johnston—not Lee!' I said—'wait and we will see!'

"And the terrible battles in the open field against McClellan, Pope, Burnside, Hooker, Meade and Grant, doubly and trebly out-numbered as he was, proved that my involuntary exclamation when I saw him, was prophetic. The fame of this man's military genius will grow brighter as the ages advance, and generals will study his campaigns to learn how to fight."

And I will add that the people of the North will, as time advances, feel quite as much pride in the genius and deeds of Lee as the people of the South. The names of Wallace and Bruce are today heard as pleasantly along the banks of the Thames as in the Scottish Highlands. Time and Death are terrible things to prostrate men's prejudices. The gem may be obscured, but it shines nevertheless, and its light bursts forth after a while.

THE WILDERNESS AND THE LIVE-OAK

A few miles from Mason the settlements totally disappear, and I am again in the wilder-

ness, but it is a wilderness of beauty—so beautiful that it seems strange that in this populous world it should be a wilderness. The land flows in green undulations, here and there rising into a solitary mountain, and here and there rising into groups of mountains; wide belts of timber ever in sight, and the prairies laid off into parks of live-oaks, the soil always rich. The live-oaks are the grandest specimens I have seen of that tree, and they look as if the ancient centuries had waved their wings above them. Some are sixty feet high, with branches reaching outward nearly an equal distance from the trunks. Sometimes these branches incline downward until they quite touch the ground, forming shady recesses like the tent of a circus, their dark evergreen, glistening foliage serving for the tent-cloth. This is perhaps the hardest, toughest, heaviest and most durable of woods. Let one be seasoned, and then attempt to cut it with an axe: “hic opus, hic labor est.” I have seen the strongest man strike it the heaviest blow that he could and the only token was a sharp, metallic ring and the rebound of the axe. It is so compact that in the fire it burns like anthracite. A decayed live-oak, perhaps, no man ever saw, and its growth, from its compactness and hardness, must be infinitely prolonged. I have never seen the man who could say: “I knew this live-oak when it was a sapling.” I doubt not that many of these before me are a thousand years old. The acorns are abundant, and make an excellent food for bears and hogs.

The botanists say that this tree grows only in the “maritime or low districts of the Southern states.” Here it attains its most splendid development, three hundred miles inland, and at an elevation at least two thousand feet above the sea! So much for those who write botany at home!

A GENTLEMAN IN DISTRESSED CIRCUMSTANCES

The country was so gloriously beautiful that I chose to loiter by the way. I was sitting on the bank of one of those peri-haunted brooks of Mason, chewing a little dried beef and watching the trouts like a bevy of boys and girls playing in the water, when quite a little incident befell me, which certainly I could not have expected in this solitary region of beauty. I beheld, descending the long slope which led into the valley of the brook, a solitary red dog trotting along the road toward me, with his head to the ground. When within fifty yards, he suddenly halted, and looking around perceived me as if he felt astonished to see a human being in this region. Presently he dropped his hind-quarters deliberately to the ground, and commenced gazing more intently than before. I thought he was the advance courier of some stock-man or train, and expected every moment to see a horseman or wagon appear on the hill. But as neither appeared, I began to feel quite as much interest in the stranger as he evidently felt in me. I called him: “Come, Towser!” No response. “Come on, old fellow!” A wag of the tail. With these invitations repeated several times, he at last rose from his haunches and began to approach me cautiously and indecisively, and again placed himself on his hind-quarters when about twenty yards off. Here he sat intently gazing, as if resolving some extremely doubtful but interesting problem in his mind, lifting his ears and

wagging his tail when I addressed him, but never budging an inch. At last I held out a long strip of dried beef, inviting him to come and partake, at the same time taking an occasional bite of it myself, and chewing it in a manner to indicate to him that it was very good.

The breeze just then wafted a savory odor to his nostrils, which was more than he could stand; for he immediately began to advance and did not stop until he was within ten feet of me, and he again planted himself upon his hind-quarters and gazed, first on me, then on the strip of beef—then on the strip of beef, and then on me.

He was a sight to behold—a sight to startle the blood with amazement, and to chill it with horror. He was a walking, animated death, in all save his eager eyes, in which a dozen lives seemed to concentrate, and gleamed with an unearthly fire. He reminded me so much of the horrid pictures which used to harrow up my young blood in childhood days, in an old book in my father's library, called "Death's Doings," that I was stricken with awe, and felt a shadow of superstition creeping over me. Yet the gleam of those eyes, eager and fiery as they were, was not savage or cruel; it seemed the light of other and more prosperous days gleaming through a present of the profoundest dreariness and sorrow. Every rib and every angle of his frame was shockingly protuberant. His belly was so pinched up that I thought his entrails had withered away and turned to dust. His skin stuck around him so closely that it seemed that the poor bones would break under the pressure, and fall, in rattling fragments, into the dry cavity. The hair had mostly fallen off, and appeared only here and there in meager patches. His legs were scarcely bigger than pipe-stems, and looked utterly incompetent to bear even the fragile form above them. His tail was but a black, rusty, hairless prolongation of skin and bone. In short he was the very shadow of desolation. How such a creature as this had the vitality to walk, much less trot, I could not comprehend. I said to myself, this surely is a gentleman in reduced circumstances, wafted by some merciful zephyr into my presence, that I may do him good and thus honor myself. I gave him a strip of dried beef, and as he took it, not ravenously, but modestly, into his jaws, I positively saw a crystal tear of gratitude course down his poor cheeks. He squatted on the ground, on his belly, at full length, and holding the jerked beef between his two paws, ate. Grateful as was this luscious morsel to his poor palate, he did not forget in his enjoyment the benefactor to whom he owed it.

Ever and anon while chewing it, he cast upon me a look of singular tenderness which affected me very much—insomuch that I took out of my haversack the last morsel of dried beef that I had, and placed it before him, bidding him to eat heartily, to eat it all. I can remember but few scenes in my life which gave me so much genuine satisfaction as the contemplation of the intense joy which fortune had enabled me to bestow upon this poor dog. After he had consumed the last strip of dried beef, I also gave him my entire stock of hard-tack, which he also ate with great enjoyment. Having finished the last cracker and licked up the crumbs that had fallen to the ground, he went to the brook and drank heartily, drank deeply, and then came and placed his poor head upon my knee, as if he would say—"Whither thou goest, I will go." In consideration of the mighty strength which I fan-

ciated had once dwelt, and might still lurk, within his poor frame, I named him "The Quadrilateral." Whence came this poor waif and what was he?

Recollecting that if I would not sleep in the woods or on the solitary prairie, I must be up and going, I mounted my horse and moved onward. Here my reduced friend again startled me. He arose also, and full of joyous expressions, galloped and curvetted all around me. I was amazed, wondering how such merriment and such activity could inhabit that poor body. I advised him to be cautious and moderate in his merriment, lest he should hurt himself. He followed me along, trotting gaily by my side, several miles.

Toward sunset he suddenly galloped some distance in advance of me, and turned off to the right of the road and stopped; and resting on his haunches, he looked straight at me. As I rode past him, he still did not move, but sat looking wistfully upon me. When I had passed him about a hundred yards, he turned repeatedly to look to the right and then upon myself, as if he would invite me to go in that direction. Seeing that I did not stop, presently he came galloping toward me, but instead of continuing to follow when he overtook me, he stopped again and looked to the right. As I rode on I called him, but he did not come. After watching me some time, he gave a low bark, and departed as rapidly as his poor bones could carry him, fortified as they were with all my dried beef and hard-tack, over the undulating hills to the North. Finally, as he rose upon one hill and I upon another, a quarter of a mile apart, he again stopped and gazed upon me, but when I rode onward, he lifted his head in the air and poured forth a piteous howl and immediately disappeared under the hill. And that was the last that I saw of my reduced friend, Quadrilateral. I said, "And wilt thou thus leave me, Quadrilateral? And wilt thou thus abandon thy benefactor, who has fattened thee on all his dried beef and crackers? Alas, such is the way of the world; and thy nature is but human nature after all!"

I decided that he belonged to some frontiersman, living perhaps not far off in the valley of the San Saba, whom he had followed on a trip; and some cruel accident or severe sickness befalling him, he had retired into a thicket to die of starvation or recover his health unaided, as best he could. Having in some measure recovered his health, he was now struggling to bear his poor bones home. Indeed, I thought it was somewhat ungrateful in my reduced friend, after the great benefit I had bestowed upon him, to leave me thus alone in a strange, wild country; but I haven't a doubt that it cost him a cruel pang to do so. And did he not, in the best way he knew how, kindly invite me to his home? As he stood motionless upon that last hill, I doubt not that he was debating within himself whether it was better to abandon his benefactor thus, or to return to his old friends at home. I dare say he thought of some bright-eyed boys and girls, his master's children, who had wept bitter tears over his loss, and he thought how happy those bright eyes would be to see him again—how they would pat him on the head with joy, and fill him with raw beef and venison! And it may be that a thought stole across his mind, that however kind the stranger had been to him in his distress, yet he might not like his company always, and he knew that the bright-eyed boys and girls would always like it. These reflections were enough to decide his mind,

and I cannot blame him. I hope that he may always be prosperous and happy, and remember me as I shall remember him. Perhaps without me he would not have reached his home, and felt the intense joy that I know he felt when he reached it; but however that may be, I know that I did him good, and it is a sweet thought to know that. I had made up my mind that he might follow me as long as he chose, and believed that he might render me service in the wild country through which I am to pass.

NIGHT

The shades of a moonless and cloudy night fall upon me, and I wander alone over the wild, beautiful country. I fancy that I feel like a lonely mariner on a sea of which he has no chart—whose frail craft may be driven at any moment on some fatal rock. How do I know that I may not ride at any moment into a squad of murderous savages, or a company of ferocious beasts? It is easy enough for one to ride alone through this wilderness in daylight when he has all nature before him to keep him company and divert his mind; but at night it is a different matter. Then the mind recoils upon him and hangs doggedly around, refusing to scale the black walls which encompass him. Then it is that

“Darkness visible
Serves only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades.”

Every sound that I hear sends my fingers to my pistol or rifle; every Indian atrocity I ever heard of flits through my mind, and I think of wild beasts with great, gaping mouths. And suppose I should lose the trail and strike out, Heaven knows whither, on the boundless plains, with nothing in my haversack, and not a match to light a fire! Unable to see ten paces before me, on I speed, my horse picking up his hoofs faster and faster; the laughing owl mocking me from almost every tree, and the big wolf howling sometimes so close that I feel in the atmosphere, the vibrations caused by his voice. Sometimes a night-bird of some diminutive species flits so closely to my ear that it sounds like the whiz of a poisoned arrow aimed at my heart.

Three hours I speed along till I enter what appears an illimitable range of mountains. The stones clank under my horse's feet, and I can see the big black outlines looming up against the leaden sky. The clouds are growing darker, and a thick mist puffs up into my face from the gorges and chasms. “Now,” say I to myself, “I am in for an all night ride, for if I would stop, where can I find a resting place on these sharp rocks?”

THE QUEEN AND THE LILY

Ere long, a half dozen big dogs barked and growled furiously around us, but my horse was

not afraid of them in the least—neither was I. Had my reduced friend, Quadrilateral, been here, how quickly they would have crushed his poor bones into atoms! I called aloud, and presently a light appeared through the openings of a log-house. The next moment a strong man, bearing a lantern, stood before me. I said, “I am a wayfarer who would ask for rest tonight for myself and horse.”

“You are welcome, sir,” said the man with the lantern, “if you can put up with such as we can give you.”

He opened the gate and bade me ride in. He led to a barn, where my horse was placed in comfortable quarters. Then I was conducted into the house, and a bright fire soon glowed on the hearth. I looked at my watch, and it was a quarter past eleven o’clock. He asked me from what point I had travelled. I told him and he said, “It is a long day’s ride. You must be hungry as well as tired.”

In truth I was hungry, but I said, “Never mind about that, sir. I am content to-night with lodging, I can well wait till morning for my supper.”

“Oh, no,” said he; “one who has been out all day should have some supper. I know what it is myself.”

This was so promptly spoken, and there was withal so much good-man and sincerity about it, that I made no further objection. The frontiersman stepped to a room adjoining the one in which I sat, and standing in the door, said, “Girls, rise and get this gentleman some supper.” He then went into another room and seemed to busy himself in making a fire. While he was out, I observed the room. The house was built of logs, but it was commodious and scrupulously neat. Along the walls were a number of bucks’ antlers, so arranged that they served as shelves for several rifles and shot-guns, and from some of them hung flasks and pouches of powder and ball. The furniture was of the modest sort; one or two plain tables, and chairs with raw-hide bottoms. Rather a costly clock clicked from the mantle-piece, and several books were arranged nearby, mostly devoted to subjects connected with rural life. There was some evidence of female taste and hands in the numerous pictures along the walls, some of which had been cut from pictorial weeklies. Notwithstanding this unpretentious residence with its meagre furniture, there was something that seemed to say that the air of a higher civilization rested about it.

My host soon returned. He was certainly not a showy man. His visage was bronzed, his hands rough and powerful, and his whole appearance showed that his life was passed mostly out of doors, in strong physical exercise. Yet his bearing was that of a gentleman, and it was easy to perceive that he was a man of sense and some scholarship. He spoke pure English, and put the words pat in their places, and there was sometimes even a little suspicion of the stronger poets about them. I said to myself, “This is the style of man to subdue the wilderness and make it blossom; vigor of body, with vigor and some grace of mind.” And yet, I had seen none of the “blossom,” but only perceived a faint suspicion of it. I said again, “This is either a column of marble transported out of place, or it is a phenomenon amid rocks and brambles.” I asked him if he was engaged in agriculture? “Not much, “ said

he, "only enough to furnish ourselves, and a little for those who may be passing by. Our country is noble for agriculture, but we are too remote to make it our business. What we raise must be able to transport itself on its own legs. I make my living by the copulation of my bulls and cows."

That other quotation from the same play immediately flashed upon my mind: "Good sooth, she is the queen of curds and cream!"—and it was prophetic.

TWO SURPRISES

Two girls now entered the room and passed into an adjoining one, both casting a look upon me as they passed. That was the kitchen, for my nostrils were presently saluted with the pleasing odor of cooking rations. Soon one returned and spread a white cloth on a table at my side, other articles of table-ware quickly following. This girl was about fifteen or sixteen, and a blonde. So fair was she that I could see the blue veins, like little "rivers running through a field of snow." A wealth of fair locks fell over her shoulders unrestrained, save by a single little ribbon. Her eyes were blue, like the blue-bird's eggs I used to rifle from the nests when I was a boy. Sylph-like, not fragile, she looked as if she had done nothing all her life but laugh in shaded gardens or dance in marble halls. To say that she was pretty would simply be to say that the queen rose is so. Her beauty was of that style which seems to be ever inviting pursuit, yet ever fleeing when the pursuit begins. Love was in her soft eyes and in all her motions. How could this apparition be but a surprise in this deep wilderness? I said to myself, "This is the Lily: this is the nymph of the lilies!" I thought it strange that this fair creature should be the daughter of this gnarled sire. And yet have I not written him down as a column of marble transported out of place? The chips that fall from a column of marble must need be marble.

She returned to the kitchen and brought out plate after plate of smoking viands. Then came her sister, bearing a pot of coffee. This sister was the opposite of the Lily: she was all that is beautiful contrasted sharply with all that is beautiful. She was not a brunette: just a shade less fair than her blonde sister, but her hair was of the glossy blackness of the raven's wings, falling in a profusion of ringlets. Her eyes sparkled with a brilliancy of blackness. Her features were of the Grecian cast, and as regular as if they had been chiselled by an artist. She was much taller than her sister, so much so as to be imposing; and her movements were all grace. How could this but be a surprise to me? Two sisters of the same father and mother, and yet so markedly unlike, except in the beauty that marked them both: the beauty of each being the best of its class! This shows the various fountains from which our multitudinous American race descended: the Lily from the pure font of Saxon, and her sister from the pure font of Norman, and each the purest and best of her line. As she moved before me so majestically, I said, "This is the Queen!" I judged her age to be about nineteen.

I do not know the names of the various parts of the female dress, or the materials of which they are composed, and I am therefore lost when I come to them. Suffice it to say

that each wore a neat and tasty pattern suited to the household, and a bright yellow apron in front. Each wore a single plain ring, and there were no diamonds pendent from their ears. Perhaps their diamonds are in their hearts and lips.

For a moment I found myself debating within myself—which of these two sisters would I take, if I could take either?—and I concluded that I would take both, or either if the other were away. The frontiersman brought my mind back by asking me to be seated at the table, and the Queen sat in front of me to wait on “the stranger.” The Lily sat in a corner, as if musing to herself and saying, “He who would take me must come for me, and I will hide when he comes.”

I made apology to the Queen for disturbing her at so late an hour. “Oh, sir, don’t mind that. We are always pleased to assist travellers, and we see them so rarely. Sometimes for a month we do not see anyone but our few neighbors.” Paterfamilias amused himself by reading a newspaper, and the Queen and I chatted gaily as I partook of the bountiful repast. She was as easy and ready as any lady I ever met in the parlors of the great cities, and more attractive; for, besides her remarkable and commanding beauty, she was full of naïveté and originality, the freshness of nature, the bouquet and aroma of the virgin prairies and woodlands. Like a bird, she “warbled her native wood-notes wild.” And this was in the deep wilderness beyond the confines. Was not Eve, when she dropped from the hands of God in that wilderness of Eden, queenly and of winning grace? Were her thoughts not all original and beautiful? But how if she evolved from a polyp, and found herself lying, rough and hairy, in a slimy ooze?

After I had supped, the frontiersman asked me to join him in a pipe, and the Queen and Lily disappeared with the cloth and dishes, and I saw them no more that night. When we had burned out one pipe each, the father said, “I suppose you must be tired. Let me show you your room.”

I had seen the blossom—yeah, two of them, and had felt the fragrance.

PECULIAR—EAVES-DROPPING

He took a light and led me to the door of the next room. It was the same from which the Queen and Lily had emerged to get supper for the stranger. I entered, and there was a bed, but not a single article of covering was on it! Said the father, “We are short of covering, and as the night is cold, you had better let me get your blankets for you.” He brought them in from the room where I had placed them when I came in, and bade me good-night.

I took in the position at once. This was the sleeping apartment of the Queen and Lily, which they had abandoned to make room for the stranger. They had given me their bed, but had taken away the covering to spread a nice little pallet for themselves on the floor by the fire, in the room where I supped! I knew this to be so, because I heard them gaily chatting while they were making the pallet by the fire-place. I heard every word, because the partition was thin, and there were chinks through which I might have seen, had

I sought. Paterfamilias went out of the house and returned with a big armful of wood. He said, "Girls, you must keep a good fire all night. It is freezing, and I do not want my babies to catch cold."

"Never mind about the cold, Papa; we will get along all right. We will snug up by the fire like two little kittens." I knew by her voice that it was the Lily that said that.

"Say Papa, don't you want a kiss to-night?" That was the Queen.

"On, I reckon I can do without kisses till morning," said the frontiersman. "Besides, if you give me a kiss, I reckon you'll both be coming after me for ten dollars in the morning; and time, you know, are hard."

The Queen and Lily laughed, but they both ran to him, and I heard them deliver upon the powerful frontiersman's lips two hearty kisses. "Now," said they, "you may tell us good-night!"

I felt heartily ashamed of myself. I felt that they should have the bed, and I the pallet before the fire. I was on the point of rushing out, but the father had already retired, and that restrained me.

Did ever man oust two pretty ladies from their bed before, compelling them to sleep on the floor like kittens, while he occupied their bed? I have never thought of this since without blushing with indignation at myself; and yet how could I help it?

WHERE THE PERIS DWELL

While undressing, I observed the furniture of the room. Here again was simplicity the simplest and so outré! A small table stood in the center, with a few chairs around it; a number of bucks' horns adorned the walls, and from these depended numerous dresses of the Peris, which they had neglected to take away in their flight, or else had left intentionally—thinking perhaps that if I should grow cold in the night, the dresses might be of service to keep me warm. The bedstead was of planks nailed together, and at the head of it was a double-barrel shot-gun, capped and half-cocked. Invade those premises who dare! But the bed and pillows were luxurious, stuffed full, as I suppose, with down from the breast of the swan. Such is the place where Peris dwell!

There were many books on the table: among them *Ivanhoe*, *Peveril of the Peak*, *Quentin Durward*, several of *Bulwer's* and *Cooper's* novels, *Scott's* poems, *Milton*, *Tupper* and others. Will not the reading of these works, thought I, make these young creatures unhappy in this wilderness? Will it not make them pine for the gay scenes with which such works fill their imaginations?

I soon slept profoundly on the bed of the Queen and the Lily. I only hope that they on their pallet by the fire slept as well.

MORNING

Paterfamilias awakened me by tapping on the door and saying breakfast would soon be ready. On lighting the lamp, I saw that it was an hour to sunrise. This struck me as peculiar, as Western people are not generally given to early rising. In a few minutes I sat at breakfast with the family. The Queen and Lily looked as fresh as water-nymphs that have just risen from the laughing brooks. They had evidently suffered not much from sleeping on the pallet by the fire.

Materfamilias was present—a quiet lady of forty years, more like the Queen than the Lily. The same dark locks, the same brilliant eyes, though softened by time, and much the same graceful demeanor. But the Queen's splendid brow showed where the superiority lay. Her mother had given her what was best in herself, and nature in improving the gifts had bestowed others.

After breakfast the frontiersman left the house, and as I had no inclination to move at so early an hour, I indulged the opportunity to chat with the Queen and Lily. I spoke of the Centennial at Philadelphia, and the Queen spoke as vividly about it as any Philadelphia lady in sight of the great Art Hall. She said she had a great desire to attend it, and was endeavoring to persuade her father, but as yet he had not consented. I said I expected to visit the Centennial, and nothing would please me so much as to have a young lady accompany me. I then somewhat impudently asked if she would not be that one.

"Oh," said she, "if I should go with you, you might run away and leave me alone in Philadelphia, and what would become of me, a frontier girl, turned adrift in that great city?" This with a laugh, indicating that she thought she might still be able to paddle her own canoe, even under circumstances so strange. She added that it would be foolish to suppose that a city gentleman would be pleased with a wild frontier girl like herself. "I guess in company you would try to keep me veiled, and my tongue tied."

MIRANDA

I told her—tempting her—that the most beautiful and interesting to me of all the creations of Shakespeare's fancy, was the young Miranda, raised by her father on a solitary isle, where she saw no other human being until accident threw in her way:

"Ca-Ca-Caliban,
Get a new master, get a new man!"

"She was," I said, "as lovely as Eve when Adam first saw her in the garden of Eden; and neither Miranda nor Eve was less lovely from not having been trained in what they call fashionable society, in other words, from having been girls of the frontier, as they certainly were. On the contrary, their loveliness was the most perfect, coming fresh from the

hands of God and nature. After a while a Prince was wrecked on this solitary isle, and seeing Miranda, he instantly fell deeply in love with her. I would have done the same, if I had been the Prince. I see no difference between San Saba and Miranda's isle, and perhaps there is not much difference between the Prince and me. He took her to his gay capital, and he did not abandon her. He made her his Princess, and she became renowned. What pity if he had left her on her isle in the sea!"

"That is a very pretty story," said the Queen; "but if I had been Miranda, I would much rather have gone away with the man whose genius invented the story, than with the Prince himself."

AIRY BEINGS

And she neatly turned the point by immediately adding:

"What a wonderful man Shakespeare was! Do you not think that he knew everything? And yet they say he was an ignorant man, too,—at least as to scholarship."

I said Shakespeare's mind was omnivorous; he devoured every book he could lay his hands on, but those were few. Besides, he found "books in the running brooks, sermons in stones." The truth is, he probably had more learning than any man of his age.

"But that would not account," she said, "for all his wonderful wisdom. Secrets of nature were familiar to his mind when they were undreamed of by others. The stores of knowledge were opened to him through mysterious ways. He knew more than Milton, with all his learning, who came long after him. I sometimes think that those airy beings whom the poets often speak of—the Muses, the Nymphs and the Naiads—were not all imaginary, but true, immortal, celestial beings, with whom they held secret conversation, receiving light and knowledge from their lips. Else, how could they have created such beautiful things, and known all knowledge before others?"

I did not speak; I listened, and she continued:

"Was not Undine a real existence who told of herself to the poet, who merely repeated the story that the spirit told him? I believe these celestial spirits talked with Milton night and day, and that through them *Paradise Lost* is a divine inspiration like the Bible. May it not be an unguarded reference to these strange visitors when he said:

'Myriads of spirits unseen walk the earth,
Both while we sleep and while we wake?'

"And when Shakespeare speaks of the 'airy tongues that syllable men's names,' may he not have had in his mind the spiritual guardians of his genius, who syllabled his own name? And then there is Homer, who lived in the profound ages of darkness when books were unknown; yet with nothing to guide him, as they say, but his own genius, he produced a work that has been a model to all after-times, unsurpassed and unequalled, except by Mil-

ton, who is greatest where he shows that he studied and loved Homer. Do you not think that Homer wandered in the groves of Parnassus conversing with those celestial beings who love the gifted great? or that they descended from Olympus and whispered into his ear his grand creations while he slept?"

I spake not. The Queen, warming, continued: "And so Milton, when he speaks of his blindness, says:

'Yet not the more
Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt
Clear spring or shady grove or sunny hill:
Then feed on thoughts that voluntarily move
Harmonious numbers; as the wakeful bird
Sings darkling, and in the shadiest covert hid,
Tunes her nocturnal note.'

"Is not this a confession of his strange, celestial visitors? And thus, he who dwelt in Fairy Land and wrote the Fairy Queen:

'How oft do they their silverbowers leave,
To come to succor us that succor want!
How oft do they with golden pinions cleave
The flitting skies, like flying pursuivant,
And their bright squadrons round about us flaunt!'

"Is not this a confession of these celestial visitors?"

"It may be," said I, "for the gift of fancy is a fearful gift. So at least said one of the greatest of those thus gifted; and perhaps he had in his mind, as you say, the celestial visitors who fed the flame of his genius."

"I do not doubt that it is so," said the Queen. And while she spake, her brilliant eyes sparkled, and it seemed that she might be one of the celestial visitors herself. Thus Byron:

"Such inhabit many a spot—
Though with them to converse can rarely be our lot."

It was my first time to converse with one; for is she not a true naiad—wood-nymph?

After this I did not think it worth while to ask the Queen whether the rocks about her were Silurian, Devonian or Carboniferous. She had sounded the depth of the Pierian spring; and why should a nymph and naiad not?

THE WILDERNESS AND SOCIETY

I said tantalizingly that I could not see how people could be content to live so remote from the busy world and society—particularly the educated and refined. This brought out materfamilias, who previously had had very little to say.

“As for myself, I care for no other society than my home, my husband and children. This is world and society enough for me, of which I can never become tired. I feel now that the settlements are growing too near, and I would like to go further out.”

The Queen and the Lily said they were happy in their home, and were by no means ambitious to leave it. “As for intelligence, if we have any,” said the Queen, “it is the possession of it that makes these apparent solitudes the more agreeable. If I did not have some intelligence, I would go to the cities, where frivolity might make ignorance endurable.”

I now questioned not that I had fallen into a home of nymphs and naiads, and that the frontiersman was a Gnome or one of the Genii.

SHIPS THAT MEET AT SEA

It was eight o'clock before I thought of my onward journey. As I walked out to saddle my horse, I hoped that he had fallen ill during the night, that I might have excuse for delay. But he unfortunately was well and hearty. Had he been sick who can say what history might not have been made? It was a sly thought, emanating perhaps from one's love of self—but I thought there might be some regret in that home at my departure. I know there was in my own breast. Two ships often meet at sea, and after exchanging courtesies an hour or so, they spread their sails and separate. With regret they watch each other sinking beneath the horizon.

My horse being equipped, I returned to the house. I took the Queen and Lily by the hands and bade them adieu, and I did not see a tear in their eyes! But I consoled myself for this apparent indifference with the reflection that nymphs and naiads do not weep and “great griefs are dumb.” Paterfamilias came to bid me adieu, and said, “I will always be pleased to see you when you pass.” I felt my heart grow sick as I rose on my horse and left.

Suppose one of those noble girls should marry a rusty-legged cow-driver, who never had a thought higher than his quirt, or a chew of tobacco? What a death in life would be hers! And yet such women might be able, possibly, to manufacture “a thing of beauty” even out of a cow-driver.

A CONVERSATION ON THE ROAD

After leaving the home of the Queen and Lily about a mile, I rode beside a young horseman. He was mounted on a prancing pony, and dressed in a gay buckskin suit, very pretti-

ly trimmed. A fine looking, vigorous young fellow was he; a rifle on the pommel of his saddle and a six-shooter buckled to his waist. After some general conversation I asked him if he knew the gentleman at whose house I had passed the night, giving his name?

"Certainly I do," said he; "I have know him always, and a first class man is he."

"He is very poor," said I quietly, "is he not?"

"Poor? Good God!" said the young horseman. "That man's got more money than both your horse and mine together can pack. Suppose you had two or three thousand beeves to sell every year, at fifteen to twenty dollars a head, wouldn't you have pretty much money?"

"I should think I would."

"Well, sir," said he, "that is that's man's case exactly. I tell you he has oceans of it."

"And he is rich also in two pretty daughters, is he not?"

The young horseman turned, and looking steadfastly upon me a moment, said, "You bet!"

He then left, in another direction, saying, "Take care of yourself, and look out for the red-skins." And I continued my solitary ride into the Far West.

CHAPTER VI

RIVER SAN SABA—IRRIGATION

The San Saba carries a bulkier volume than the Llano, but it has not its ethereal limpidity. Its blue waters are stained with an impalpable white sediment, as if they had a small ingredient of milk; this caused me to suspect that they bear white sulphur or gypsum in solution, though this is not observable to the taste. Its valley is a noble one, smooth as a floor, of the blackest, richest soil, often spreading out many miles in width. It is famous for its wheat—thirty to forty-five bushels to the acre—and its splendid, white-skin onions which may be eaten almost like apples, its wealth of grapes, and its abundant pecans, which here seem to have found their choicest abode. A dam across the river here and there, with lateral and longitudinal ditches, would irrigate all the valley. For forty miles above its mouth it is tolerably settled; thence onward, very sparsely, and often for great distances, not at all. With this valley supplied with dams and ditches and railroads, it would be one of the most charming and desirable spots on earth, and soon one of the richest. The populations of these Western valleys are yet too sparse to enable them to effect a general system of irrigation, and State aid would well come in. The small outlay would be rapidly repaid in the great increase of wealth and the number of her taxpaying citizens. The San Saba now has a few thousand acres irrigated, and the product of such fields is immense. It is almost beyond human credulity to believe what the crops will yield on this soil, when well tilled and never allowed to suffer from needed moisture. I saw one of these irrigation ditches, twelve feet in width and eight in depth, which the enterprising farmers were excavating by their own joint labor, at such times as they could spare from other duties. They intend to make it eight miles in length, so that it will irrigate some eight or ten thousand acres. Irrigation is secured by simply tapping the river at a point above the land to be irrigated, and diverting a small portion of this water out of the channel. When it is desired to inundate the land, the ditch is dammed and the water spreads over the surface, increasing the fertility by depositing the gypseous of sulphurous sediment of the river.

MENARDVILLE—THE ULTIMA THULIANS

Rode into Menardville and delayed two hours. This is the jumping-off place—the watchtower on the borders of civilization. Passing out of the limits of the little burg and facing West one sees a dangerous and almost trackless wilderness rolling away before him some hundreds of miles. To this point has the great, aggressive American tide advanced, and not an inch further, and its representatives here are merely skirmishers that foretell the coming of the main body. Its population is about two hundred and its appearance is as peculiar as

its position. No grand boulevards paved with marble and asphaltum here. It is built in a thicket of brush, and so securely hidden that the traveler does not see it until he has entered it. No marble palaces and long rows of brick here. Indeed, a traveler might ride through it at night and never suspect the presence of a city, except from the occasional gleaming of a light through the brush and the barking of dogs. I doubt not that panthers, wolves and bears prowl nightly through it, and slake their thirst at the brook on whose banks laughing children romped but an hour before. It is said that these beasts prowled nightly through the first cities built by man, and wherein differs this from a city built by primitive man?

The houses are peculiar. They are boxes built of rough and warped oaken boards, innocent of paint or whitewash. Often the boards have shrunken so much in drying that wide gaps are left between them, through which the winds of heaven have full play. In case of a slanting rain, the occupants have no other recourse but to huddle together on the side whence the rain comes not, and wait till the elements have spent their fury. The flood falling to the floor would speedily be devoured by the cracks. In case of a fierce Texas Norther, the position must be nearly intolerable; for though that portion of the body next to the fire might be kept comfortably warm, the opposite exposure must suffer greatly from the eager, nipping wind. Sudden and tremendous outbursts of rain are common in this country. Imagine one of these falling in the dead of night during the paroxysm of a norther, when the fire has gone out and there is no split wood in the house, driving the people from their beds and huddling them half naked and shivering, in the corner for hours at a time!

It is said that our poor primitive ancestors sometimes suffered greatly from the elements, and I now have no doubt that they did. Many a time were men, women and babies expelled by the storms from their comfortable beds of skins, to take refuge in the opposite corners. It is quite enough to make one's heart sick to think of the inconveniences which our poor ancestors were put to, from not being so smart as their children are.

There are two or three little stores here, mere shells, which the most unhandy cracksman could exploit in three minutes; and the fact that these stores are never exploited, is ample proof of the honesty of these primitive people, and of ancestors whom they resemble. A dishonest rogue is a thing unknown in this region, unless perchance there may be some skulking villain hiding from pursuit of law; and here it behooves him to keep himself exceedingly well behaved; otherwise these primitive people would speedily mete out to him the primitive justice of our ancestors, without the slow help of judge and jury.

The men who dwell in this city are also peculiar: a stalwart, sinewy race, bronzed, and bearded like a dozen pards, all armed to the teeth; but they wear their arms just as other people wear coats and vests—mainly because it is fashionable and a matter of course. A more amiably inclined people I never saw; and they seem to vie in hospitality to the stranger; not obtrusively, but with a native, inborn, quiet hospitality, which gives the stranger at once to understand that they mean what they say. They are nearly all young or middle-aged men. To subdue the wilderness and stand guard over the watchtowers of civilization does not belong to the old, to whom “the grasshopper is a burden;” and yet I see a few strong

old men here whose heads are white as if a hundred winters had sprinkled their snows upon them—old men youthful in everything except years. They are a sharp, quick and intelligent people, and there are some who are evidently of superior education. These were doubtless stray young gentlemen, whom a restless spirit of adventure decoyed from their homes in the old States, finally stranding them on the shores of this Ultima Thule. They are appreciated here; for as I have often observed, these rough frontiersmen do dearly love to see educated and sensible young men settling among them. They perhaps regard them as the little lump of leaven that is to leaven the whole loaf, and rarely fail to help and promote them when the opportunity offers. Of such is the gentleman who keeps the records of the Court of Menard, with whom I chatted a good deal. I dare say when a boy he rubbed his back against the walls of some university; and here he is, on this remote confine, shedding a light around him, esteemed by all, and destined to grow upward as the country grows. I found him in the court-house, a rough box twelve by fifteen, where he sits lord and master.

Let no pin-feather youth, however, think that he may come among these frontiersmen and be made a social or political lion at once. A pretentious, foppish young fellow would be grievously discounted by them, in spite of all his book-learning and elegance of manner. He must have a good store of common sense, and understand how to adapt himself to the situation. He must eschew all airs of assumed superiority, for these frontiersmen are nearly all men of as much sharpness of mother-wit as boldness of heart. Most of them have seen a good deal of the world, and they speedily detect the spurious. He must show a heart for honest, manly work, be companionable, bear himself respectfully and courteously toward all, and I will warrant that he will soon find that he has around him a noble army of friends who will always be glad to advance him, and will feel proud of him as one of themselves. The mothers and daughters will esteem him as much as the fathers and brothers, and perhaps take a livelier interest in him; for the female heart, always and everywhere, aspires to a higher condition, and it is by no means difficult for a sensible young man in a position like this to warm their fancy with the idea that he is to be one of the props of the better order of things. When he comes to the frontier let him bear my suggestions in mind, and I do not doubt that, as he prospers and grows happy, he will always bear me in grateful remembrance.⁴¹

These men are nearly all engaged in stock-raising, and so were our primitive ancestors. They have built this little city for mutual protection and society. They are all Americans, as far as I noted.

THE FEMALE ULTIMA THULIANS

I regret that I had no opportunity to exchange courtesies with a single one of them. I saw them, but as the humming-bird or butterfly sees the laden flowers in a glass house whose doors are closed. I saw a number on the banks of the pretty Menard brook, engaged in washing their garments in tubs, while a troop of little ones romped on the grass at their

feet. I was near enough to observe their healthful and powerful development; the solidity of the plastic moulding that covered their frames; for they were kirtled to the knees, and their arms were bare to the shoulder, and their shoulders were bare. As I contemplated them I could not help but think that no dandyish boy would be fit mates for these primitive ladies, but that they behoove to be men who would master these ladies' hearts. What cares a woman for a man upon whom she must look downward? That lady is always heart-sick, and may be, sometimes untrue, who feels her lord to be her inferior; for it is a reversal of the order of nature, which teaches her to look upward instead of downward. To her, life is a desolation unless she has ambitions of her own to cultivate, or children in whom she may forget her husband. If my brows may not be crowned by female hands with laurel, I will endeavor to secure at least indifference by keeping away from them. I would not believe in the tale of Venus and Adonis if the popular idea of Adonis were the correct one. It is supposed by the unthoughtful that this unaccountable youth was only remarkable for his feminine beauty; but he was a wild-boar hunter and a prodigious horseman. He was a noble specimen of the physical development of manhood, accompanied by daring and heroic courage. Had he been a little effeminate beauty, bepowdered and bescented, as the popular idea usually represents him, I dare say the imposing Queen of Beauty would have scorned him instead of surrendering, without summons, to his discretion.

And is such female development, as I see it in this group before me—vigorous, muscular, conveying the impression of force—averse to the sentiment of love? Or does the love of man prefer the delicate, the fragile, the weak? I think not so. Venus was but a female Antinous, a very giantess of beauty. She overthrew the hearts of men and gods alike: Mars, Vulcan, and Hercules, were willing slaves at her feet. Helen, who caused the most renowned war in history, was a big, muscular woman; such were Cleopatra, Zenobia, and in fact all of them who have most stirred up mankind with the love of them. We may make pets and amuse ourselves with the little beauties, but it is the big ones that tyrannize our hearts and drive us to war and desperation; not the fat, or the squabby, by any means. Was there ever a little woman who produced a bigger commotion than a tempest in a tea-pot?

As I rode past the group, one of the ladies, though laughing, seemed a little disturbed, as if she would shrink from my observation. Her wish to avoid observation attracted it the more. I thought I beheld a history in her. When I was a boy, I was much in the habit of passing a magnificent grove, in which was a large seminary of learning for girls. It was a place considered aristocratic; fathers and mothers who would be aristocrats, generally sent their daughters thither, though it pinched many parents severely to do so. I dare say the lady at the wash-tub who shrank from my observation, was schooled at that place as a "high-born ladye." Truly, life is filled with pictures: then a romping school-girl, living in palaces in the air, breathing attar of roses; now a stately mother at the wash-tub, with a squadron of laughing babies tumbling at her feet. Thus life goes on, and we fulfill the purposes for which we were created. But why should she shrink from my observation? Did she think that I would esteem her less, seeing her performing her duty at the wash-tub? I es-

teemed her the more; and it is possible a thought of envy of her husband may have passed over me. That young woman may be the mother of great men, and I dare say she will. If we will trace the lives of all great men, we shall find none whose mother ever hesitated to stand at the wash-tub, if it befell her in her line of duty to do so. None but the strong-minded women can be the mothers of strong-minded men. Kitten women are the mothers of kitten men.

CHAPTER VII

COGLAN'S CAVE AND WHAT BEFELL

Leaving the ladies at the wash-tub, and observing my arms to see if all was right, I rode beyond the confines into the great wilderness, passing six miles through a fertile but brushy region, to Coglan's Cave, where a beautiful stream issues from a large rock.

The aperture leading into the recess is six feet high and wide enough for two men to pass in abreast. It being noon, I stopped. I did not attempt to enter the dark cave, but it is probably a large one.

While wandering about this pretty place, I stepped suddenly within a few feet of a beautiful animal. I said, "This is a porcupine, with all his quills set!" A portion of his body, including his head, was jet, glossy black, while the rest of it was as white as snowy satin, except the large busy tail, which he carried erect over his body, and spread out like a fan; it was composed of a succession of black and white rings. He seemed very little alarmed at my presence, but moved off slowly in an exceedingly graceful manner, as if conscious of his superb beauty and wishing to show it to the stranger. No belle in the ball-room ever moved with more graceful motion, or was more beautifully decked out. I pursued, admiring. As I gained upon this beautiful and graceful creature, it stopped and turned broadside toward me, looking upon me with a singular look of not being much afraid, and not particularly desiring my company. I then saw that there was a bright white band across its forehead, just above the eyes looking like a wreath or garland. I had approached within fifteen or twenty feet of this rare beauty, when it suddenly made a quick motion or sweep with its magnificent tail, and instantly my nose was assaulted with a most formidable odor, of a suffocating character, and pungent in the nostrils, like a mixture of cayenne pepper and ammonia. I staggered back under the volley, overwhelmed. I also felt at once a strong disposition at the pit of my stomach, as if I would retch.

It was a skunk I had fallen in love with and pursued, and the knowledge of it broke upon me with disgust. Knowing the dreadful character of the beast, and dreading another volley, I retreated precipitately, insomuch that I stumbled over some vines and fell into a nest of brambles. On rising, I saw the foul beauty retiring with an apparent air of triumph, and as gracefully as ever. Fortunately, none of the fluid which creates this odor, struck me; had it done so, my position would have been disastrous in the extreme. As it was, the air was so saturated with it that my clothes were considerably infected, so that I carried a distinct odor about my person several days.

I had often seen the skunk before, but never one so beautiful and large as this, though I saw many of the same sort afterward. There are many varieties of them, and this was the glory of them all. What glorious pets these creatures would be if they could only be divest-

ed of their perfume box; for I dare say they are of a nature to be easily tamed. How odd that such extravagant beauty should be so foul; and what a remarkable provision for defence, that of discharging an insufferable stink upon the adversary, and proudly retiring under the confusion thus produced! It is difficult or impossible to comprehend what is the position or duty of the pole-cat in the economy of nature. It is to me a problem without solution.

These dreadful animals are sometimes extremely vicious, and have been known to attack men unprovoked. A gentleman who witnessed it gave me this instance: "I was," said he, "far out on the frontier hunting bears, Indians, and other wild animals, with a party of seven or eight headed by Judge Cowan, of Llano. We had encamped on a little creek that flows into the Colorado, not far from the mouth of the Concho. Judge Cowan and myself were sitting on the opposite banks of a little dirty, greenish looking pool, trying to course some bees that came there to get water and suck the mud. When we stepped up to the pool we saw two pole-cats a few paces from us, apparently engaged in courtship, but we paid them no attention. The Judge was sitting on his hunkers closely watching a bee that seemed about to depart, when one of these pole-cats leaped upon his back and clamped his teeth into the collar of his coat. The Judge grabbed him, and seeing the nature of the animal uttered an exclamation of despair. He threw him to the ground with violence and as quickly as possible; but it was all to late. The animal had 'let fly' all over him, enveloping him in a dense fog of intolerable smell. His clothing was saturated. The Judge vomited violently, and said he would die the most miserable death that ever man did die. I could not approach him near enough to give him any succor, had it been in my power to do so. He was compelled to strip himself to his shirt and drawers, and even then emitted so great an odor as to be well-nigh unendurable. The worst of it to him was, that it was winter; a fierce norther might be momentarily expected, and there was not a human residence, where clothing could be obtained, within a hundred miles. The result was that the Judge had to wrap up in blankets and stay by the fire for several days, while his clothes were buried in the earth to extract the odor. It had that effect to a great degree, but still the Judge was a rather disagreeable neighbor during the rest of the expedition."

ANCIENT RUINS

From Coglan's Cave I rode south-west five miles to river San Saba, whose glorious valley is here a solitude, but such it has not always been. Here are the crumbling ruins of a mighty edifice of carved stone; and the remains of a net-work of irrigation ditches, extending miles along the river, tell of a former population, enlightened, prosperous, and multitudinous. This was a colony of farmers, miners, and evangelists, established by the devoted Franciscan Fathers to do good in the dark places; and after years of peace, they were set upon by the treacherous savages about them, and not one was left to tell the sad tale. In a single night, perhaps in a single hour, the red-handed savages did more harm than they ever have done, or ever can be capable of doing good.⁴² This terrible butchery struck such

horror into the hearts of the devoted Fathers that they never attempted to re-establish their colony, and this beautiful land has been left in its wilderness since. Even the adventurous Americans and colonizing Germans have not sought to possess this ground that has drunk torrents of innocent blood. This is said to have occurred in 1742, but the ruins might lead one to suspect a more ancient date.

CHAPTER VIII

FORT MCKAVETT

MILITARY LIFE IN THE WILDERNESS

Quartered at night at Fort McKavett, with the sutler, who kindly gave me shelter, as there were no citizens to whom I might apply. This is a place that nature has made all beautiful, situated at the head of the San Saba in a deep amphitheatre, in a noble grove of oak and elm. An immense, boundless plain rises just beyond and rolls away hundreds of miles, rising here and there into mountainous ridges. Six companies of troops, four of negroes, are stationed here to guard the frontier and lead a life of unsurpassed laziness. The officers and men, so far as I saw them, carried about with them an air of immense languor—as if they had nothing to do and did not particularly desire anything to do. I should think the life of a United States officer at one of these remote posts must be one of profound stupidity, unless the officer has great resources within himself. And what must it be to the ignorant man whose life is bounded by what he sees! It seems to me that nature would rot. I once heard a good old lady say that “an idle mind is the devil’s workshop.” This is true, for if the mind is not diverted by some good and useful occupation, it will go into wickedness and produce a foul crop of uncleanness. What crops of uncleanness must grow in the minds of these men who languidly and nervelessly strolled before me, as if the noise of the grasshopper in his little flight was an insufferable weight? Place a body of French officers and troops in the same situation, and they would soon hatch a new revolution. I do not believe that an idle man can go to Heaven; and none of them are virtuous. While among these people I was continually thinking of Thompson’s “Castle of Indolence,” and I doubt not that this singularly somnolent creation was suggested to the author’s mind through observing a military encampment in time of peace.

Rode north over a mighty, rolling prairie, with parks of live oak, mounting higher and higher into the ethereal regions. Grandest grazing country in the world, whether for sheep, horses, or cattle.

CHAPTER IX

At noon I rode on a lofty "backbone," from which it seemed that the entire universe lay below me. This point is probably three thousand feet above the sea. Naked stones and desolation. It is a region of profound silence, save the perpetual beating of the winds. The only living creatures are a few Mexican buzzards, with white wings, floating lazily in the upper regions, and lizards warming themselves on the rocks.

THE HORNED FROG

Some of these lizards are so original in their appearance that I stop to capture one; this is easy to do, as his motions are not fleet. He is an oddity, and if he were as big as an elephant, he would be the most monstrous of creatures. Even as he is, only three to five inches long, his appearance is decidedly monstrous. He is the connecting link between the frog and the lizard, and so much of either that it is hard to say of which he most partakes. He is called the horned frog, but I can see no reason why he may not just as well be called the horned lizard. His feet are those of the lizard, his body part frog and part lizard, the lizard predominating; his tail part lizard and part pollywog. He has however, portions of his building which are peculiarly his own, suggesting neither frog nor lizard, nor any other animal or reptile that walks or swims or flies. His head is a complete, widely open angle, adorned with a multitude of brisk scales projecting upward and backward like horns, two of them towering prominently above all the rest, giving the little creature an exceedingly ferocious aspect. Two lines of horns project down his body, one on each flank and the other above the spinal column. He is a dark grey, with minute white spots sprinkled all over him, and his eyes are a brilliant, jet black, like two bird-shots stuck into his frontispiece. His mouth when open is prodigious, looking as if it might swallow Jonah as easily as the whale did. His motion like his general make up, is a mixture of frog and lizard—a hop, skip and crawl, but the latter seems his favorite method of propulsion. Now imagine this creature, with all his horns and monstrous assemblage, increased in size to that of an elephant or buffalo, and conceive yourself coming upon him unaware on the wide prairie or in the deep forest! Would not the hair stand on end, and would not human nature sink under the dreadful apparition! And yet, during the Cretaceous age, just such a creature as this, only many times bigger than the buffalo or elephant, peopled these very plains—the great iguanodon. This little creature is, possibly, the lineal descendant of that monster of the ancient world, altered by adaptation to the changing circumstances and climes. And singularly enough, this little descendant of the great iguanodon, sticks closely only to the Cretaceous regions in which his monstrous ancestors flourished ages ago, and is rarely seen beyond them. Formidable as he seems, and terrible perhaps his ancestry, this little creature is

a model of gentleness and docility. When one takes him into the hands, he looks up with his little dark, brilliant eyes, with an expression which seems to say—"I would not hurt you for the world!" One may turn him over and tickle and provoke him ever so much, yet his temper will remain unruffled, and he will still look up with the same tender expression. Such is his sweetness of temper under all circumstances, that he is a great favorite with the little Texans, who frequently drop him under their dresses, at the neck, that he may tickle them as he crawls upward or downward on the naked flesh. He is a pet with all who know him and have leisure to fondle him. He takes his meals on a mixture of flies and tender herbage, and his drink he gathers from the night dews.

This great ridge of backbone is the dividing line that separates the waters of the San Saba from those of the Concho.

BIVOUAC WITH EBONY SOLDIERS

As I approached Kickapoo Springs at sundown, after a leisurely but most solitary ride of thirty miles, five negroes, black as the ace of spades, wearing the uniform of the U.S. Cavalry, advanced to meet me, and when I asked for lodging for the night, their heavy lips opened with a pleasant smile, displaying their large white teeth. "With pleasure, sir," said they with one accord; "we are glad that you have come;" adding that they had plenty to eat, but were sorry they could furnish me no bedding. In the kindness of their hearts, it never occurred to them that I would be loath to accept their bedding if they had abundance of it. They were of the 10th U.S. Cavalry, placed here to guard a station and attend a small herd of mules belonging to the San Antonio and El Paso mail line. They had a respectable little stone house for their quarters and their mules were enclosed at night in a stone corral, over which one sentinel, relieved at intervals, stands guard while the others sleep. They were all privates, and were as neat as new pins, even their brogans glittering with polish. Their rifles, sabres and pistols were brilliant with careful keeping. Having supplied my horse bountifully with hay, corn and barley, and secured him in the corral, they invited me to supper, at which I sat round the board with them. They were very polite and attentive to me and seemed anxious that I should have the best morsels. Their table etiquette was faultless and cordial. Their supper consisted of the usual soldier rations, flanked by wild turkey and trout. These with the mules were the sole occupants of this isolated station.

After supper we sat together out doors in the delightful night air, smoking our pipes and conversing familiarly. The negro is perhaps the most social of the human races and I was curious to know how they liked this solitude. They had no books or papers and could not read them if they had. "Ah," said they unanimously, "it is the wearisomest life in the world. We just counts the minutes on our fingers as they go. We like soldier's life where there's people, 'specially black ones, but way out here in the wilderness, where we never see anyone, 'cepting it's a chance traveller like you, who is good enough to stop with us at night, it's just like being buried alive. We couldn't stand it at all, 'cepting that we know that

our 'listment will soon be out. Then we are going right back to civilization. We never have anything to do here but to feed and rub the mules, and eat and sleep. No Injuns ever troubles us. We wish they sometimes would, just to stir us up a little. They passes all around us, but never gives us a call."

I felt sorrowful for my ebony entertainers. The negro loves slothfulness, but here he has it in too big a volume; he is crammed until he feels the dead weight of satiety.

I asked them which they preferred, their life here or life in the cotton fields? "Oh, give us a little cotton field of our own, and we would stay by it and work it forever!"—but I could not, though I put the question by indirect ways several times, get them to say that they would prefer a cotton field with an overseer. Their military life had given them a certain degree of manliness and individuality, which they evidently would not be willing to sink in a life so suggestive of their former condition.

The negro soldier, I am told, rarely or never deserts, and he makes by no means an indifferent man of war, being very tractable, scrupulously obedient to orders, and taking readily to military airs and manners. The last war⁴³ showed that, when well disciplined and officered, they will stand a great deal of wounds and death. I have observed that they have a poetical, almost superstitious devotion to their government; they are truly patriotic. It was perhaps the fatal mistake of the South, in the late war, that she did not at once manumit her slaves and put a large body of them in her armies; and such was the desire of her generals and soldiers and no doubt of a large majority of her people, but the politicians, who are generally behind the people, would not dare attempt it.

My soldier friends seemed anxious I should talk with them all night, but having drawn their fund of knowledge and conveyed to them about all I had to impart, I bade them good night; and spreading my blanket and great coat under a live oak, slept in the open air.

CHAPTER X

KICKAPOO SPRINGS

PRETTY BUT SCALY

After breakfast my soldier friends pressed me with such cordial hospitality that I determined to remain with them till another morning, and thus give my horse a good rest. And here gushes out one of those magnificent fountains for which the mountain regions of Texas are celebrated. It issues at the base of the great backbone, from a crevice in a huge rock, in glorious outburst of limpid water, forming a pool twenty feet in width and four in depth, as brilliant a sheet of water as earth can show. It glides, sparkling and flashing, down the valley, shaded with live oaks and pecans, bordered with a rich green lawn, on which the sweet grasses a foot high, make a soft, thick carpet beneath the feet. It is alive with trout, which sport in wild play, while the squirrel chatters and the raven shrieks above them, stealing a chance to seize them when they unwarily slip into too shallow waters. As in every other instance within my knowledge, this fountain bursts from the foot of the Cretaceous hills, and is so tepid as to be almost thermal. It is a place of charming beauty, and yet so wild and lonely are its surroundings that one feels oppressed with the shadow of an undefined superstition as he wanders along the valley. The silence is profound, save the murmuring of the water, the splashing of the trout, the chatter of the squirrels, and the cry of the ravens.

I could but mark the demeanor of the dark soldier who walked by my side. He was cautious and solemn, and kept his eyes rolling from one direction to another, in careful scrutiny. He said in a half undertone, as we sat on the bank of the stream and watched the trout, "This is the scaliest place in Texas, and it looks so, too. I don't like the ways of them ravens. They make me think of dead men's bones. They 'mind me of hearses and their black plumes. They and the Injuns are close kin and always go together. Many a poor man has seen his last sunset here, and these same ravens, that they say never die, picked their bones." He then told me the tale of many Indian murders at Kickapoo Springs, and pointed out a spot where he and his companions had found a dead man's bones, which they carefully collected and buried. Said he, "We never go far from the station, and when we do we keep a sharp lookout." He believed that Indians "loafed" around the Springs at all times, watching an opportunity to pierce someone's heart.

HAIL-STORMS

"And not only," said he, "is this place dangerous from Injuns and wild animals, but it is

dangerous even from the elements. It storms with thunder and hail here sometimes, worse than any battle ever that ever was fought. Last summer I was standing in the door of the station-house, and I saw a great dust coming over the prairie. I watched the dust, and presently I saw great white balls striking the ground and bouncing up again and coming to'ards the station just like cannon-balls. Them, sir, was nothing but blocks of ice, as big as my two fists. Presently they struck the walls of the corral and popped like bombshells. If they had hit any man, sir, they'd a knocked him stone dead and gone through and through him. These big ones didn't fall thick—but scattering like; and directly the little ones, about as big as walnuts and hen eggs, came by the millions. They rattled on the roof, beat the limbs off the trees, beat the mules half to death, killed cautions of squirrels and ravens, and just kivered the earth. I never seen the beat of it. Such a thing as that catching a man out in a prairie, there'd be no redemption. One of them, sir, some time ago, stoned a flock of sheep to death, near Fort Davis, and the old herder only saved himself by gitting under a rock."

He then told me a sad tale which is true. A few years ago a major in the U.S. Army, travelling with his wife and daughter and an escort, from one of the remote forts to San Antonio, encamped at night at the valley of Kickapoo Creek, near the stream. At a late hour of the night one of these terrible hailstorms came up. Knowing the danger of his situation, as soon as the storm abated sufficiently to allow him to expose himself to it, he stepped out of his tent, and perceived an immense white wall, stealing rapidly but silently upon him. He rushed into the tent and gave the alarm, but before he could get his family out, the great rolling wall of ice was already crushing irresistibly around them. His little daughter was swept away and lost; his ambulance and mules were borne off, and he and his wife escaped with difficulty.

The little girl's body and the ambulance were found the next day some miles below. Within an hour the singular flood of hailstones and water had entirely passed, and Kickapoo Creek rolled along with no more than its usual current.

I asked the soldier if such storms were of frequent occurrence. "I never seen but that one," said he, "but they may be expected at any time in the summer. When you see a red-looking cloud coming, thundering awful, if you ain't near a good strong roof, look for a hole in the rocks."

I, myself, have had some experience of these hailstorms, and know that they are formidable.

CHAPTER XI

Another delightful night under the live oak, and a bath before sunrise, still more delightful, in the glorious fountain. And then, after breakfast, despite the solicitations of my soldier friends, who desired me to wait another day, that I might have the company of the mail coach, I struck out on my solitary ride. Parks of live oak; grand rolling prairies, green as summer; flocks of deer and antelopes, which gaze at me a while, whisking their tails nervously, and then bound away. Then a mountainous region—dreary, dry and desolate in the extreme. Finally, at noon, I enter a region utterly treeless, but beautiful in its green carpet, and graceful in its undulations. Even the creeks, without a stem upon their fertile banks. All is nudity, except the ever luxuriant, glorious grass. This is like being alone on the wide, wide sea. I seem but an infinitesimal speck in this vast expanse. Should I be bounced by too many Indians here, what could I do but stand and fight? If I should run, where would I go? There is no place to hide.

COMPANY ENOUGH—A TEXAS NORTHER

It is excessively warm. No summer day could drag more oppressively than this. The sun exerts his fury, and the air is deadly—unnaturally—still. Not a blade of grass bends its tall head, but stands bolt upright and motionless. A haze issues out of the ground, or is it the atmosphere so motionless that it becomes visible? “This,” I utter audibly to myself, “is the very condition that precedes an earthquake, when all nature falls paralyzed through dread of the approaching catastrophe.” Herds of deer are hurrying over the plains toward the mountains, some with their tongues hanging from their lips, like dogs panting for coolness. Far to the north I observe a little black, ragged, wispy cloud, hanging above the horizon with its base sunk beneath it. It lifts up and shoots out great black arms with singular rapidity, as if some powerful, propulsive force attended it. It seems a thing of life, so instinct is it with motion. In the meantime the deadness of the atmosphere has become more appalling, and the sickly heat has increased. I take off my coat and vest and unbare my bosom to the broad prairie, saying like the fainting nymph, “Come, gentle air!”

My horse is as wet with sweat as if he had just emerged from a lake, and he pants with heat. I think of loitering in cool saloons and sipping iced juleps, being so hot that my imagination comes to relieve me with cool and tempting pictures. Looking again I observe that the great black cloud has covered half the heavens! It is shooting up great spires and puffing up shapeless masses with electric rapidity.

Suddenly, with no warning whatever, save in these portentous phenomena, a storm of Arctic wind is precipitated upon me. Its impact is peculiar. No light currents precede it as the messengers of the coming change, but it strikes at once with full force, like a great

rushing flood with perpendicular walls. It feels as if it had been caged for months in caverns of ice, or swept thousands of miles over fields of snow. It is like stepping out of a hot vapor bath into a snow-drift. Before I could get my discarded vest and coat upon me, I was chilled to the marrow, and to recover a comfortable degree of warmth seemed a hopeless undertaking.

This is a regular Texas Norther, and a more eager, nipping, searching wind does not exist. There are no intermissions of quiet, no stopping to take breath, but the great stream of Arctic air pours on in a continuous flood. This continuity, this ceaseless activity, this perpetual motion is its terror. Each atmospheric particle eternally, irresistibly, pushing the particle before it, will penetrate every interstice of the garment and reach the naked flesh at last, in spite of all the fortifications of dry-goods that may be piled up against it. To ride square into its face as I do, over this vast prairie, where it has unobstructed sweep, is really terrible. It is like charging upon a deadly array of icicles, all with points keener than needles. The eyes, ears, and nose suffer fearfully; and entering the mouth, it not only stocks the cavity full of cold, but eliminates every drop of moisture, making it dry as a chip and extremely uncomfortable. The fingers become numbed, and a heavy pair of boots avail little to protect the feet. The particles of raging atmosphere force each other through the pores of the leather, under the socks, and soon the lower extremities ache with exquisite pain. Truly, this is the most searching wind that ever blew. It will find out every part of the body, applying blister after blister of cold, until the last particle of warmth is expelled. The mercury has tumbled at once from about ninety to near the freezing point, an instantaneous fall of near sixty degrees; so that where summer reigned but a moment ago, it is now the bleakness and terror of winter. The annals of meteorology are without example of such rapid change elsewhere on earth. To make the matter worse, a driving misty rain begins to fall, making my situation to the last degree distressing. It is blown full into my face. It does not come directly from the north, but a few degrees to the west, exactly into the course which I am pursuing.

Whence come these remarkable winds, and what use do they subserve in the economy of nature? They are exclusively Texan, and are unknown beyond the borders, save a short distance across the Rio Grande. Below the Texas coast their impetuous career is continued a hundred to two hundred miles, though sometimes they die out before reaching the coast. When they have been unusually prolonged and severe, they "right about face," returning whence they came, with their intense cold taken off, but still too chilly to be comfortable. From this it appears that they bank up the atmosphere over the Gulf to an inordinate height and when the propulsive force from the north has ceased, they slide back to the starting point.

It is clear that they take their rise on the Llano Estacado, or great Staked Plain. The atmosphere over this great plain becomes heated and rarefied and is finally expelled from the hot surface on which it rests, and the cold blast rushes down from the upper strata with tremendous force to take its place and fill up the void. Where this occurs, it is like a monstrous

Niagara Falls in the atmosphere, the current of cold air plunging over a precipice some ten thousand feet high, then spreading out and rushing over all Texas. That this current comes from the line of perpetual snow and ice, can scarcely be doubted by one who has felt the intense and singular iciness of its breath. No one, I suppose, has ever happened along when this great flood of frozen air was tumbling down from the upper regions, but should any one do so, I dare say he will remember it to the last day of his life, should he be fortunate enough to make good his escape from being pressed to death to the earth and pinned to it with stakes of ice. If nature can have anything more terrible than the point of descent to the earth of one of these Texas Northers, I am not able to conceive what it may be.

This I take to be the meteorological philosophy of these northers. If it is not the correct one, then my philosophy is stumped. And yet I see in them a most beneficent arrangement of the Creator, terrible as they generally are to those who are exposed to them. They make the only winter that is known in Texas, and they give to the frugal countryman the only showing that he has to save his bacon. Without the norther, there would not exist a single ham or a clear middling in Texas, save what comes from the north-west. Indeed, human nature might stagnate from the unbroken prevalence of summer heats; Nature might sink, relaxed, but these northers come by to prop her up, to fortify her and infuse a new current of energy and vigorous life into her bones and muscles. Then in the wider Tertiary lowlands the new earth, being filled with carbonaceous matter, must be constantly discharging gasses upon the atmosphere, not promotive of health. The norther brushes all of this away into the Gulf of Mexico, and supplies, in place of it, the purest atmosphere of the tenth heaven. After the norther has subsided nothing can be more sweet and delicious than the atmosphere of Texas. It fairly rings with brilliance, sparkles with electrical purity, and almost intoxicates like old, pure champagne. The lungs drink it in and rejoice. Then, if anyone, in the dark, will rub a cat he will be astonished at the amazing number of electric sparks that will flash from her. All nature is then literally surcharged with electricity and is drunk with health and joy. These northers never hurt anybody, except the unfortunate who happens to be caught out by one in a great prairie and then the suffering he endures, terrible as it is, is temporary. He is all right as soon as he can get to fire. They leave no after-claps of colds, pneumonia, influenza or consumption. Even a far gone consumptive receives no harm, but actual benefit—so great is the delicious purity of these terrible winds. They occur frequently from November to March, but terrible as they often seem, and really are, the mercury rarely falls below freezing during their greatest fury. They are usually not accompanied by rain, but when they are, particularly in the upper regions of the State, where the rain is often converted into stinging hail, their terror is increased. Sometimes they break in upon an impending rain, and the clouds scatter before them, like a flock of ducks before the sportsman—leaving a beautiful sky without a cloud-speck upon it.⁴⁴

CHAPTER XII

It is night, and it is one of Tartarian blackness. It seems as if the clouds had descended to the earth, and were driven past me by the furious norther. In addition to my trouble from the wind and rain, now comes the confusion resulting from the dread of being lost on the boundless prairie and freezing to death, since there is no possibility of kindling a fire. The road is no more perceptible to my eye than if none existed. I leave my horse to his own instincts, and urge him ahead with the spur. He puffs as he labors ahead, to dispel the whirling wind from his nostrils. In the pitchy darkness, I plunged into a rapid, seething river, and crossed; its frigid waves rising high on my horse's flanks, and inundating my boots. This I knew was the Concho, the river of plains.

CHAPTER XIII

“Speed, Malice, speed”—amid storm, darkness and sleet—stiff, hungry, and half frozen to death. A half hour passed on. Plunged into another river, which took my horse to mid flanks, drowning my boots; rose upon an eminence and saw a multitude of lights gleaming before me. Presently I was in Mr. Babcock’s hotel at Fort Concho, and felt a thrill of delight as I sat by the blazing fire, emitting a small fog as the heat expelled the water from my saturated garments. I had travelled forty-four miles during the day—one-half of it in the face of terrors. It was midnight when I slept.

DIVISION V

CHAPTER I

CAMP CONCHO

ALL GROTESQUE

On stepping out after breakfast, I realized the oddity of the situation. I had penetrated into the strangest land in the world, in which everything is grotesque. Nature had disrobed herself even to the undershirt and drawers, and these fitted as tightly as the gossamer dress of an athlete. Dame Nature had sprung suddenly before me in the garb of a rope dancer, the thin fabric being all Lincoln green. This picture came to my mind so vividly that I caught myself, for the first time in my life, laughing at Nature, whom I love so well. Hitherto I had found her, if not always splendidly clad and adorned, yet not in a state of transparent nudity; and this condition seemed all the more absurd in view of the scudding mists and stinging norther which continued with reckless fury. "O fair undress, best dress!" is not true of dame Nature any more than it would be true of any other dame in such a tempest as this.

The vision is here as unobstructed as it would be on the back of a giant billow in mid-ocean, when there is no spray in the air. There is not a tree nor even so much as a twig that is visible. The biggest vegetation that grows is a blade of grass. When urchins grow naughty, materfamilias is compelled, from the nature of the case, to apply a good box to the ears; and what Dominie Sampson would do in trying to preside over a nest of unruly school-buddies, would be past finding out if cow-hides were not readily procurable. One may travel a half day's journey and scarcely find twigs enough to roast a sparrow's egg.

In the distance, to the north, there is a range of low mountains, which are also grotesque, if not positively absurd. They appear to have once been great mountains, lifting their peaks into the snowy clouds; but a race of giants, passing by, shaved them off to a ridiculous, squat dwarfness, as tables, perhaps, upon which to spread their victuals; or platforms, perhaps, from which the gigantic demagogues harangued the dear populace; or stages, perhaps, upon which they enacted farce, or tripped a light fantastic. Their tops are smooth-shaven plains, and though they are strung out, one after another, as far as the eye can reach, they are as indistinguishable from one another as two Dromios.

I have been in natural situations in which I felt "cabined, cribbed and confined," and wished that I had the wings of a dove that I might fly away; but here, too much freedom is oppressive, and the mind calls for a limit. The sky and horizon are too remote, and it seems the "void infinite."

Camp Concho is situated between two rivers at their point of junction, and the point is grotesque. Nature can do, or will do, nothing here as she does it in other places. When

two rivers run together, with a long tongue of land projecting between them, that tongue is generally a low sedimentary deposit, crowded with forest and vine that rejoice in the fertility. Here the tongue is elevated fifty feet above the rivers, commanding that adjacent territory in whatever direction I look. The tongue is thickest at its point. Elsewhere narrow strips of land elevated above the surrounding regions, are barren to the last degree, generally naked stones; but here is a rich alluvial soil, looking as if it had been compounded for some fine lady's garden. In other regions the channels of rivers usually have a gradual descent, at least to the water's edge, but here they precipitate downward, like the plumb to the line, and, if deviated at all from the perpendicular, they slope under. The waters of rivers in other lands look dark in tempestuous weather; but the waters of these rivers flash like diamonds whether the skies are brilliant or black. In other rivers, the cat-fish and eels for the most part wear yellow skins, and have little, snaky, weazen eyes; but here their skins are a blue as litmus, and they have big pop-eyes. In other countries trees grow on the top of the ground; but here they absolutely grow under ground, in rank, dense forests, revelling in luxuriant growth. This seems incredible, I know; and it is all of that, but it is so. Prodigious forests of gigantic trees under the ground, growing so thickly that a mole can scarcely ride his brother between them! It is "prodigious," but it is so! I shall go with my reader into one of these subterranean forests after awhile, and we shall find them greatly peopled with squirrels, an odd sort of bird, and we shall hear the whiz of the rattlesnake around us as we cut our way through these deep shades and trackless depths. And we shall see dark, silent pools of water, at which the inhabitants of the subterranean forests drink.

ART IMITATES HER

And Nature here is not alone in her grotesqueness. Art has sat too near the rose, and has become penetrated with its fragrance. She imitates Nature's example, and equals her on a diminutive scale. The bricks, of which some of the houses are built, are very grotesque. In other lands they are moulded of clay and sand and burnt in fire. Here they are moulded of clay and straw and are baked in the sun. In other lands bricks are red; here they are cream to dark dove—sometimes black. In other lands bricks are but bricks in size; here they are great blocks, aping great stones dug out of the bowels of the earth. In other lands bricks are cemented together by lime and sand; here they are placed in the dry wall and left to furnish their own cement by gradually melting together. Thus if one should build a fabric of blocks of molasses candy, and place it out under the dews of heaven, it would soon become one solid mass, and in heavy rains might all melt away. So might the adobe houses—for such these bricks and the houses built of them are called—but they are protected against that fatality by the rarity of the rains. They are the true dry weather houses.

And the roofs of these grotesque houses are exceedingly grotesque. On the tops of the walls is placed a series of stout poles, slanting to the rear, the front wall being built considerably higher for this purpose. Then is laid a thick stratum of long grass; upon this is placed

a stratum of mud; then another stratum of grass, and then another of mud until the desired thickness is built. In process of time these various strata become greatly consolidated, but never so much so as to prevent colonies of stinging lizards from taking up their residence in them; from which place they descend almost nightly during warm weather, into the beds of the occupants making their quarters for a time entirely too hot for them.⁴⁵ But grotesque as they are, these houses, from the thickness of their walls and roofs, are warm in winter and deliciously cool in the summer. Such is the Babcock House—the hotel in which I am quartered.

Seven hundred soldiers with brass buttons and armed to the teeth, stationed in this boundless prairie where there is nothing to fight, save a few straggling Comanches and Lipans, seemed to me the climax of grotesqueness. Why that is enough to clean out the last Indian in Texas before breakfast! And yet they do not do it; this fact is also a grotesqueness, rivalling if not surpassing that of Nature hereabout. These men, except the officers, are all blacks, belonging to the 10th U.S. Cavalry. There are ten companies, and it is the capital military post of the State.

The quarters of the officers are also grotesque, when considered from a standpoint of this vast wilderness. They are spacious buildings of stone, with all the modern improvements, even richly furnished, and would be no mean feather in the architectural plume of any city. When the eccentric Lady Hester Stanhope built a palace of oriental splendor in the Arabian desert, it was grotesque; and no less so are the palaces on which Uncle Sam has so profusely spent his money. He poured out his money to the tune of several hundred thousand dollars, and evidently came to stay.

BIG EXPECTATIONS—AND WHAT THEY CAME TO

The sutler's store is palatial. It had to be, to play its part in the grotesque role. Built of noble, carved blocks of cream-colored limestone, it would attract attention on magnificent Broadway. It was built by the sutler who preceded the present one. He evidently came to stay, but did not. He thought so much of his post that he contracted to pay the influential gentleman who procured the appointment for him, five thousand dollars in periodical installments.

Two of these he paid promptly, but defaulting on the third, he was promptly discharged from his post, and the present sutler appointed to supersede him. He appealed for mercy, but in vain. He was forced to sell his palatial store-house and large stock of goods to his successor at a heavy loss, and was turned loose a bankrupt with a large family to support. His main text ever since then, as I learn, has been, "Put not your faith in Princes or the sons of Princes," varied occasionally by the substitution of politicians for princes. While he hath waxed lean, his successor hath waxed fat because he did not have the palace to build, but bought it at a low price, likewise his goods, and possibly had no stipend to pay to an influential friend. *Credat Judoeus Apella!* He enjoys the monopoly of the trade of

at least a thousand regular liberal consumers, besides many transient customers, and never loses a cent. He credits none but men of the army, and the paymaster always pays the bills before he pays the soldier. It is no wonder these positions are sought with so much avidity. Sutlers always get rich if they have not to pay too much for the whistle, and if they do not themselves become corrupted by too rapid money-making, and drift into spendthrifts.

One can buy anything in this sutler's store, from a box of axle grease, or a Scotch herring, to a roll of Brussel's lace, or a cask of Holland schnapps; but I bought nothing but a single cock-tail, for which I paid a quarter of a dollar. It was as good, with the exception that there was no ice in it, as any I ever sipped in the gaudy saloons of Broadway.⁴⁶

THE HOLY ANGELS

Near the Fort on the opposite bank of the North Concho, sits a cluster of adobe houses, known as Santos Angeles. I have travelled thither, crossing the river by leaping from one big stone to another, until I lit on the north bank. Being there I wished I were away, yet a singular spell bound me to loiter an hour. Its population is about a hundred, said to be very bad subjects, and appearances certainly do not belie the tales that are told on them. The males are Mexicans and Americans, and the females are all Mexicans, as far as I saw them. The former are said to earn their wages by enticing the negro soldiery into their dens, and depriving them of their money at the card table, and sometimes by bolder exploits on the road. Some are suspected to be birds who have flown from distant quarters to escape the meshes of the law. The women appear to be such creatures as would naturally be attracted to such men, and are said to share their enterprises and profits, as faithful and skilful decoys. I never saw a folk whose countenances so boldly declared their business and evil within. It is said that intellectual and pleasing engagements give beauty to the face and purity to the eye. This is undoubtedly true, to a great extent; and so is the reverse of the proposition. Here it is bloated languor among the women and red-eyed deviltry among the men: their countenances are clouds that have no silver lining; yet there is a swagger and devil-may-care about both. I could not help but think that if this folk should all go to the devil together, that worthy would be ashamed of his guests and slam the door in their faces. But it is a question with me whether people who sink to such depths really have any souls to go anywhere after they are dead. The soul may be the growth of a better life. It is a sad thought to think that every one of these was once fondled on a devoted mother's knee and was the hopeful pride of a father. If these parents live, let us offer a flower to their bleeding hearts.

I was leered at with strange interest, though there were none who undertook to force any familiarity upon me. When they addressed me I responded with courtesy, but not that sort which encourages renewal. Some say that almost nightly some poor fellow is here sent to his long home with blade or pistol, but this is no doubt an exaggeration. The sutler has a branch store here, and I should think that his clerk behooves to be a most circumspect man of fortitude and nerve.

The name of this place is sacrilegious, and he must be an impious or sarcastic wretch who so named it. It means the city of the "Holy Angels." If some Mexican thus named it, it is regular enough; for one can hardly hear of a highwayman or big thief in Mexico, whose name is not "Jesus" or "Emanuel."⁴⁷

THE CEMETERY—"UNKNOWN"

Above the fort a few hundred yards, between the two rivers, is the cemetery containing forty or fifty graves marked with headstones, on quite a number of which is the inscription: "Unknown," which, though a single word, tells to the heart a longer and sadder story than if the whole stone were filled with words. It tells of the traveller slain by the skulking highwayman or Indian, of companion murdered by companion on the lonely road-side in the vast prairie, or the unsuspecting stranger enticed into the dens of the "Holy Angels" and there slain for his money. It tells to him who stands and reads, that a foe lurks continually around him, awaiting his chance to lay him low and write above the sod that shall press his bosom—"Unknown." He turns away sick at heart, determined to look for the foe behind every stone or turf in this wilderness.

This post has been occupied by the army fifteen years at least, and always in considerable force; and yet of the forty or fifty graves here, not more than half are of soldiers, and there is not one of an officer; this proves that men do not readily die here, and officers not at all! It probably required the hand of violence to put the cemetery into existence, and without turbulence, it would be slimly inhabited, indeed.

COL. ANDERSON—COMPAGNONS DU VOYAGE

I called on Col. Anderson, commandant of the Post, whom I found like all West Pointers I ever knew, a gentleman and scholar. I asked for a detail of two soldiers to accompany me, I proposing to defray expenses. He said he could not detail soldiers as an escort to private gentlemen for private purpose. After explaining myself more fully, he said, "It is of the nature of a reconnoissance, and may be of service to the country. I will not order my soldiers to go with you, but if two will volunteer, I will give my consent." I thanked him and he added that I should have two good, reliable men if any at all.

An hour later, two mulattoes in cavalry uniform called for me at Mrs. Babcock's. Conversing with them, I soon found that they suited me, and explaining fully my proposed route, I offered them fifty dollars each for their company. They promptly accepted, adding that they would report satisfaction to the Colonel and report in person to me at sunrise the following morning. They were bright, intelligent fellows, robust, free-born, and enlisted in New York City. They had seen considerable service on the frontier, but knew nothing of the country whither I should lead them. One is Jones Johns by name; the other John Powell.

Promptly at sunrise they saluted me, mounted on strong horses, and formidably armed. We had seventy-two shots between us without reloading. Filling our haversacks with cheese and hard tack, and a little coffee and salt, we rode up the Concho.

CHAPTER II

A POPULOUS CITY

SUBTERRANEAN FORESTS

After an hour or two we found ourselves riding through the streets of a populous city, whose inhabitants on seeing us, scampered away in hot haste, and stood at their doors abusing us. As we drew near their doors, they skulked within and would not venture out again until we had turned our backs upon them; seeing which they immediately returned to discharge their volleys of abuse like some cowards who bluster greatly when they see that their adversary has no desire to fight them. These are peculiar folk, who build their residences underground, and pile up mounds of dirt about the entrance, probably to prevent the ingress of floods when it rains. This is a city of Prairie Dogs, and I judge its population to be several thousand, from its extent and the clamor of the inhabitants. But why call these noisy little urbans dogs, since they in no respect resemble the dog? It is true, when seen at a distance, squatting at their holes barking, they look much like a fat puppy, and their bark is similar; but take one in your hands, and all suggestion of canine ceases. He then becomes a fat, chunky-bodied squirrel; and such he really is, save that his tail is short and nearly hairless. He loves to sit on his hind-quarters as the squirrel does, and in such position one would surely take him for a fat squirrel who had lost his tail. He is edible, and save that his flesh has a slightly bitterish taste, it is much like that of a squirrel, being more juicy and tender.

We captured several of these creatures, and every one of them was fat almost to obesity. This would seem remarkable, in view of the fact that usually there is not about their cities a sprig of grass, or anything on which they might feed. The American Encyclopedia says that they live only on grass, and graze only at night. Neither statement is correct. Grass is not their food, because, in the first place, their mouths are so constructed that they could not eat it without infinite discomfort; and secondly, they cannot usually obtain it if they would. Wolves always hover around their cities, and at night they are particularly on the alert, for that is wolf time, and these little fellows could not venture abroad at that time in search of grass, without being instantly devoured. They know their enemies, and stay home and sleep at night.

Where then do these little creatures, who are lumps of animated grease, get their oil—since all is poverty and bleakness around them, so far as can be seen?

My reader has doubtless wondered where the Conchoites and Holy Angels get their fuel in this treeless region. So did I, and I wondered still more when I learned whence they get it. A deposit of excellent coal has been found a few miles north of the Fort, but it has

not been utilized. Riding over these vast prairies, though one sees no trees one will often see a tender little switch of the mesquite shooting a few feet above the ground. Now stop at one of these and strike at its root with pick-axe; nothing will be expected but tender, fibrous roots, but instead of these the pick comes in contact with a heavy solid body. Surprised, one removes the thin covering of earth, and finds a living log, as thick as a man's leg, extending he knows not how far. Exploring further around the same little shoot one finds many logs the same size, and an infinite number of branches extending from them. Thus, each little twig yields from a quarter to a half cord of fuel-wood, not equalled for that purpose by any other wood within my knowledge. Thus, these treeless plains are filled with fuel, almost equal in its supply to the heaviest forests. These shoots do not increase in size, but after attaining a certain dimension, too small to be dreaded by an urchin, they either stand at that, or die and give place to others. The large roots taken from the ground leave branches which speedily replace the loss by growing other roots as large as those taken away.

From these remarkable subterranean forests the Conchoites and Holy Angels obtain their supplies of fuel, and from the same, I doubt not that, the populous of prairie dog derives his store of provisions. I have not explored one of his cities, but I dare say that he who does so, will find these subterranean forests in full vigor or partly destroyed. When they have been destroyed to such an extent that they will no longer keep him fat, the prairie dog gathers his colony and departs for other fields—suffering heavy slaughter from wolves by the way.

Who can explain these subterranean forests? Some say it is because the sun shines so hot here that trees cannot grow under its rays, and that therefore they hide themselves from its rays and flourish under-ground. This is not so, because the sun does not shine so fiercely here as in many other regions of the State where forests abound, and not nearly so hot as in the tropics where forest and jungle run riot. Others say that it is because there is not rain enough to support forests above ground; hence they grow beneath ground, and live upon the moisture that the earth affords. This is not so, because trees drink and feed with their roots and discharge with their pores and leaves, and the moisture that would feed a great growth under ground, would equally feed it above ground. Others say it is because fires often sweep the prairies, compelling the vegetative force, that would otherwise produce trees, to the production of enormous roots. But this is not so, because when the trunk is killed, usually the root dies also; and there is no evidence that fires prevail here more than they have prevailed in other portions of Texas where trees are numerous. And, more-over, it is a fact that even in this ocean of prairie there are a few trees here and there, even of mesquite, in positions as much exposed to these fires as they would be on the site of the subterranean forests.

I leave the explanation to philosophers, and, in the meantime, can think of nothing better than this: When the Architect creates a peculiar condition of life, he creates a peculiar condition of circumstances favorable to that life; and when the peculiar circumstances

cease, the life peculiar to them ceases; and another takes its place, suitable to the changing order of things. This is true history, from the beginning of the world to the present, and doubtless ever will be. Thus, the buffalo that once roamed over the American continent has retired before the advancing forests, as the Indian has retired before the advancing civilization. So I doubt not that in time the conditions of prairie-dog life will expire, and the forests that now grow under ground will grow upon it, admitting and creating cities of men in place of these cities of so-called dogs. This, then, under its present condition, is prairie dog country, par excellence. It will hardly do to say that the Architect would not take the pains to create so grand a scope of country for such lowly conditions of life. The poor polyp, boneless, brainless, headless, motionless, once had all the world to himself.

A MIXED AND HAPPY FAMILY

These prairie dogs have strange friends, who sit in the family circle and live with them in the closest friendship. Let us attempt to enter one of their subterranean abodes. We knock at the door and are answered instantly by the deadly whirr of the rattlesnake, who like a brave and considerate fellow, warns us not to advance into this danger; but assures us that if we persist, he will welcome us to a hospitable grave. He is the faithful and eternal sentinel that guards the door, and the little dogs must pass over or around him every time they leave or enter their abode. The hungry wolf knows that he is there, and could not be induced to thrust his nose into these premises. I have seen these deadly reptiles basking at full length near the doors, the little dogs scampering unharmed all about them. Possibly a small percentage of the baby dogs are given, a willing sacrifice, to these creatures, in consideration of the protection which is afforded against wolves and other enemies.

In the evening or early morning may also be seen, hopping through the prairie-dog cities, a diminutive owl who, when disturbed, retreats into the dog homes. What part he fills in the social circle, I have not the least idea; but he is ever there. There also dwells with them a curious little rabbit, with legs so short that any boy may beat him in a foot race. Knowing his weakness in point of legs, he never ventures more than a few yards from his particular domicile, and for this reason he is very hard to catch, keeping his ears always erect and shuffling away at the slightest noise. He is prettier than the Molly Cottontail, but not half so large. What his duty is in the household is also past finding out.

Here then is a singular household—the most remarkable, no doubt, in the world. Imagine that it is ten o'clock at night, and that they are all going to bed. First, old father and mother prairie dog creep into bed and store themselves snugly away; then the little ones pile themselves up around them. After a while father and mother rabbit enter the same bed, followed by a bevy of little ones; and when all are sound asleep, old mother rattlesnake, with a swarm of little sons and daughters, crawls in and coils up around all the rest, thrusting her cold head under the warm furs of the dogs and rabbits! Is it not a wonderful family? In the meantime, old father rattlesnake stands faithful sentinel at the door. As for the owls, all—except the lit-

tle featherless babies—are out at night catching grasshoppers and lizards, and have a whole bed to themselves in day time. During the day the other occupants are gathering food in the underground forests, or, having filled themselves, are frolicking out of doors in the sunlight. Now, if my reader is a little boy or girl, would not he or she like to pile into that bed, too? It would doubtless be so warm and comfortable!

These cities are sometimes a day's ride from water, and as the household cannot live without it, there can be no doubt that the subterranean forests are supplied with lakes and streams. Thus, how careful the Great Architect is of all his creatures! Thus, I have said that I would conduct the reader into subterranean forests, populous with life and cool with brooks and pools, and I have done so.

THE LAST OF THEM

About twelve miles from Fort Concho we ride through a herd of cattle, browsing in a green nook, protected from the moderate norther and misty rain. They are up to their bellies in grass, and as fat as prairie dogs. They are the advance skirmishers, and here is their last post. They raise their heads and look upon us with a mingled expression of wonder and stupidity, as if they would say to us: "Poor things, are ye lost and gone?" They are as gentle as milk-kine, and scarcely move out of their tracks to let us pass.

STARTLED—THE BEAUTIFUL SWAN

Riding quietly along the banks of the blue Concho, admiring the lovely valleys, the smooth, green hills, and the misty mountains in the background, we were suddenly startled, as if with a noise of a thousand horses plunging violently in the river. We thought of an army of Comanches plunging across to charge us, and every man grasped his gun. The noise continued some moments, and presently a flock of glorious swans rose above the steep banks and flew up the river, sending forth a great "Kwonk! kwonk!" There were not less than fifty, and the noise that startled us was produced by striking the water with their wings in the effort to rise. In this manner they go several yards on the water before they clear it and mount into the air; and the uproar is very great.

Even the Texans do not know what their noble state contains. I read an article in the Texas Almanac by an intelligent gentleman who claims to know all about the birds of Texas. He says swans are not found in the state except on the coast in winter. Yet here they are in all their pride of beauty, far, far from the ocean. As we continued to ride along, we could scarcely look into the Concho without beholding these superb birds floating on their bosoms, and their "Kwonk! kwonk!" was continually in the air.⁴⁸

What a glorious bird is the swan! White and chaste as the snow-drift—arched neck, resting partly upon the back, exposing the full, snowy bosom,—and bills and large eyes of jet!

“Fair as the bosom of the swan—
I’ve seen thy breast with pity heave;
And therefore love I thee, sweet Genevieve!”

That bosom must indeed be fair, to rival the bosom of the swan; for it is beauty’s paragon: a rounded swelling out of perfect symmetry; the emblem of heavenly health and virgin purity. When floating on the water, nothing is so graceful as the swan. It is the music and the poetry of motion. It is said that Jupiter sought in vain, in his proper person as king of the gods, to win the love of Leda. He at last came in the guise of the swan, and she fell before a beauty that excelled her own.

A SERENE PICTURE—THE DAYS OF OLD

About noon we stood upon the brow of a precipice or parapet of stone that extended a great distance to the northwest, and below us lay one of those pleasing scenes peculiarly Texan. It was an immense vale of level beauty, deep green, whose western wall was beyond the vision, yet indicated by a low range of misty mountains. Herds of deer and antelope were feeding on the rich pasture, and flocks of blue cranes stalked slowly over it, apparently culling the tenderest morsels. One of these flocks was so large that it seemed a herd of sheep, but my glass soon resolved them into an army of stately birds. As I beheld all this and swept the field in every direction with my glass, I thought I had never witnessed so lovely a scene. And yet so still, so serene, it seemed asleep! Descending into the vale, we found a beautiful creek sweeping along the base of the wall, over a bed of solid stone. In a depression some distance from the creek, I found a number of shells, such as still live in the waters of Texas. While viewing the vale from the cliff I said to myself, “This was a Lake of the Days of Old,” and these shells convinced me this was truth. When the vale is struck with the plow, these shells will be turned up everywhere.”⁴⁹

This lake existed within the present geological day; and if its waters were such as now flash in the beautiful Concho, what a glorious expanse of liquid beauty it was! And there were none to love it? There were flocks of swans, like white spirits of the blest, disporting upon its peaceful surface; and how do we know but that the hierarchs who witnessed creation lingered upon its banks and bathed in its pearly waters?

“Like Maia’s son he stood and shook his plumes
That heavenly fragrance filled the circuit wide.”

The Concho has cut its way through this lake-shore of stone near its eastern extremity, and the channel seems to show that it was formed first by slow erosion and lastly by violent disruption, or a sudden giving away of the wall from the pressure of the water. There was, no doubt, a beautiful cascade here in the days of old, nearly as tall as Niagara, but far less in volume.⁵⁰ The vale is all rich, very rich.

ANTELOPES

Having ridden some thirty miles since morning, we encamped in the lake bed, on the bank of the Concho, in a small thicket of mesquite brush, a dozen miles from the eastern shore. It was more than an hour before dark; and after turning my horse on the luxuriant grass, I walked off alone toward a herd of antelopes that were feeding a half mile up the vale. As I approached them they showed disturbance by huddling together, and then bounded a hundred yards farther away, when they stopped to gaze at me. I, myself, then stopped and the pretty animals seemed to have their curiosity greatly excited; some of the boldest advanced a good way toward me, then stopped, occasionally bowing at me and pawing the ground. Observing the interest they were taking in me, I lifted the skirts of my coat over my head, and, bending the body forward in a stooping way, began to advance upon them, now veering to the right, now to the left, like one that is well drunken; they, all the time gazing at me with great amazement, backed a little distance farther away, occasionally. Finally, when within a few hundred yards of them, I stood still, and bowed at them repeatedly. They seemed to regard this as a very unaccountable performance—looking first at me and then at one another, and sniffing the air in the manner of a goat. I believe if I had remained in this position they would have burst with curiosity, or charged deliberately upon me, to solve the riddle of what I was. But, observing that the sun was setting, I drew my rifle upon one of the boldest, and fired—it fell. It was a tender nanny, but full grown, and in admirable order. I cut the ribs out of each flank and a foot of the spinal column from the rump, and while I was thus engaged, the others, which had retired but little distance, showed more than ever signs of unsatisfied curiosity. I think I might have destroyed half the flock before seriously alarming them or satisfying their curiosity. When I got back to camp, the two soldiers had a smart fire of mesquite brush, before which the game was roasted, dripping all the while with gravy. It was sweet, juicy, tender, excellent. It tasted much like the best, juiciest mutton, improved by the addition of game flavor.

While the meat and coffee were cooking I told my adventure to the soldiers. One of them said, “Of all the fools in the world, antelopes are the biggest. If you try to creep on one, you can’t get near enough to kill him with a rifle cannon. But just throw an old red blanket over your shoulder, and step right out on the prairie where they can see you, and they’ll come running to you from every which way. You can shoot ’em down like dogs.”

These animals seem compounded of the deer, sheep and goats, with strong points of resemblance to each. They are larger than a deer and more heavily built, have the horns and head of a goat without his beard, and the general body appearance of a goat, though they carry their heads erect like a deer. They are all of a reddish color with a large white spot on each flank, white belly, and short, stumpy tail like a deer’s. They run but indifferently well, and their gate is precisely that of a goat. The cow-boys on horseback often catch them with lariats, then they bawl very like a goat. They are easily tamed, but make too affectionate pets. They will stay continually about their master rubbing him with their heads, and are

liable to but him like a goat, out of pure friendship. They are peculiarly a prairie animal; no man, I think, ever saw one in the wild state, in a forest, or even on the forest's edge. Indeed, they seem to regard forests with singular aversion, as if they thought them the abode of the wicked. Hence, they are never seen except on the almost boundless plains, where they are numerous. Their coating is a mixture of that of the deer and sheep, with a peculiarity that is its own: long, coarse straight hairs, hollow like a goose-quill, which break into pieces with a slightest handling, as if rotten; and under this comes a thin coating of fine wool. The long hairs, besides breaking into pieces so readily, very easily come out of the flesh. An antelope could hardly go through a forest or thicket without coming out well shorn. This may be a reason why he so hates the timber. The flesh is much more like mutton than like kid or venison.

After supper we put the fire out, lest Indians might be attracted to waylay us in our sleep; and though the night was raw and chilly, I slept well in my blanket in the tall grass in the brush.

CHAPTER III

SOUVENIRS

THE GORGE OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH

After a short ride we found that the lake bed terminated against an abrupt elevation running north and south. This was the western shore of the lake. Upon this elevation we rode through a dark, natural pass, walled in by rock on either side, with numerous grizzly and cavernous recesses. This spot is known far and wide in Texas as Dead Man's Hollow; and from its looks alone, it surely deserves its dismal name. An unseen enemy could here glut his vengeance; and being attacked, one has little hope of escape. The whole place is suggestive of murder, and the wind as it sighs through the hollow or shrieks through the crevices, seems to say, "Take care!" The raven shakes his lethiferous plumes about us and seems to look into our eyes and say, "Take care!" And there is no telling how many have gone to the last account from this spot. Fifteen graves mark the wayside, all with crosses bearing the ominous word—"Unknown." These wayfarers were all murdered where they lay, either by Indians or highwaymen. One of these murders was not long since. Two young men were traveling to Mexico with money to buy mares. When in this pass, while conversing probably about the graves by the roadside, one of them drew a pistol and shot the other dead, and, taking all his money, hurried away, leaving his companion on the spot where he slew him. Some soldiers from Concho, going the same way, soon found the dead body, and, recognizing in it one of two travelers who had stopped at the post the previous night, they pursued the murderer and captured him. He is now in the Texas penitentiary for life. Of the others, I learned no tradition. They are probably men whose disappearance will forever remain a mystery to their friends. On the same spot perhaps many more have been murdered, whose bodies were concealed by the murderers or dragged away by wild beasts. It is impossible to pass over this grim spot without a shudder and dread. The drivers of the El Paso mail-coaches approach it with terror, and enjoy relief when they have cleared it. It is the Gorge of the Shadow of Death.

AMAZEMENT—THE AMERICAN BISON

Riding out of Dead Man's Hollow we rose upon a lofty, rolling plain, locked in on the north and west by a beautiful chain of mountains; a scene of amazement was before us. As far as the eye could reach, almost every foot of ground was hidden by a black, moving mass, and a noise came up to us like the sound of millions of tramping feet. There was an odor of musk in the air. We stopped and gazed upon this scene of wonder. The edge of the

great mass was not more than two hundred yards off, and it lay athwart our way. It is no exaggeration to say that twenty to thirty thousand buffaloes were before us. They seemed number without number. As we moved upon them those nearest us commenced moving to the north, pushing those before them, and suddenly the whole mass was in lively motion. The plain trembled beneath their feet and emitted a roar like continuous distant thunder. From the other side of the Concho and out of the valley they came surging, all moving to the north. Those coming out of the valley completely surrounded us, and for an hour we rode slowly in the midst of the herd, which separated and left only a little elliptical circle about us, often but a few yards in extent, so that we could have popped the great animals with a coach whip. I sometimes felt alarmed lest those pushing behind would force the front ones upon us. Our horses were at first greatly excited, but after a while stared upon the scene as if they enjoyed it. When the pressure was over I could restrain myself no more but drew my rifle, brought down six, in probably not so many minutes. The soldiers did not open fire, saying that one battery was enough to glut us with slaughter. And, indeed, it was so. After the great army had passed to the north beyond the chain of mountains, and I beheld the noble animals stretched on the plain, the blood smoking from their nostrils and cruel holes in their bodies, I felt remorse that I had been guilty of a wanton and unmanly wrong. Of tons of quivering flesh around us we took less than a hundred pounds, mostly from the rump of a fat heifer, leaving the rest for the ravens and wild beasts. One spectacle, particularly, made me ashamed of my barbarity. I had severely hurt a noble fellow, who looked as if he might be a prince of the herd, and as he staggered with the wound, his companions nearest him gathered closely around him, as if to support his tottering body and help him out of the reach of danger. This scene was so affecting that I stood still to watch it, and could not be mistaken that it was a conscious act of the buffaloes, to help their stricken comrade. They were willing themselves to undergo danger if they could help their friend.⁵¹

It is no sport to hunt these animals, lordly in appearance and gigantic as they are, when encountered in these vast herds. It is nauseating slaughter, not a whit more inspiring than walking into a flock of unresisting seals on shore and crushing their heads with clubs, or beating pigeons from their roosts with a pole. A horseman can stand at ease while a great herd is thundering by and shoot them down until the soul sickens at the work. All that one must guard against, is being trampled to death by the surging mass, against their will; and there is little danger of this if one is mounted on a manageable horse, for they will always, if they can, divide and leave a vacant spot about a stranger. Those who write of this animal often entertain us with fearful battles and hairbreadth escapes, but I believe that nearly all of this is fancy; though I have no doubt that if an old bull should be wounded and left behind by his herd, he would turn upon his persecutor and give as good an account of himself as he could. I consider a herd of wild Texas beeves as infinitely more terrible.

And yet what a formidable and ferocious aspect the buffalo bears! There is not a more formidable looking creature in existence than an old buffalo bull. He seems a great mass

of terror, always prepared for scenes of conflict and danger. His monstrous size, the great hump on his shoulder, his enormous head and neck enveloped in a dense mass of shaggy hair and beard, his eyes blazing amid a tangled mass of dark locks—all make him as grizzly and ferocious to the eye as it is possible to conceive. A flock of rampant lions would certainly look puny by the side of these monstrous beasts. And yet, he is so harmless and inoffensive! A mere boo-hoo or a clap of the hands will divest him of all his terror. He is a true Quaker gun of nature, whose grizzly aspect should excite more our pity than our fear.

There is another point in which I suspect buffalo appearances to be deceptive. I do not believe him to be nearly so prodigious as he appears. His long, shaggy hair makes him seem much bigger than he really is; just as I have seen a lady's lap dog that looked portly dwindle to a mere rat in size on being shorn. So, if the buffalo were shorn of the profusion of locks on his head, neck, shoulders and belly, he would certainly be greatly reduced. I doubt much if any buffalo will turn fifteen hundred pounds of true carcass, or yield as much flesh as any one of hundreds of cattle slaughtered in our abattoirs every day.

In color, buffaloes are tawny like the lion, and there is a lighter and darker shade observed among them. Their tails are like a lion's, with a black tuft at the end; their eyes a brilliant, melting black; their horns black, stout, keen at the point, enormously wide apart and almost straight. In regard to the flesh as food there cannot be two opinions. It is a juicy and tender as stall-fed beef, and it is better, in that it has not flavor of the stall. The flavor of game is about it, and of all game animals perhaps it is the best. It is astonishing what quantities one can consume of it, without feeling oppressed by the load. For some time I ate five or six pounds a day, not only without inconvenience, but felt all the better for it, and had no suspicion that I was a glutton; and this when it was cooked in the most crude manner, on a stick before the fire, with no condiments but a little salt. One of my soldier companions thought he had eaten ten pounds at one meal. I cannot imagine a more savory dish than a choice piece of buffalo meat prepared by a skillful cook. But this applies only to a well-chosen animal. The old bulls are unfit to be eaten, tasting gummy, coarse and saliferous, and leave an unpleasant odor of urine in the mouth. This is especially the case at certain seasons, when they are chiefly engaged in bellowing on the plains and pawing with their feet. One of my soldiers said that while out with a hungry scout, they encountered and killed a solitary old bull in a lonesome valley. They ate him heartily, in spite of his disagreeable flavor; "but," he added, "my mouth tasted and my whole body smelled like a peach-orchard boar for a week." This is like the condition of Caliban, who, after having been wallowed in a stable, protested, "I do smell all horse, at which my nose is in great indignation."

They devote the months of August and September to multiplication; and then these vast plains roar night and day with the thunder of the bulls, who engage in terrible battles with each other. At such seasons the old bulls, no longer able to bear a good front in such encounters, retire by themselves to secluded valleys and gorges—listening no doubt with melancholy interest to the bellowing of their more lusty brethren, as superannuated vet-

erans on the retired list may hear the roar of battle far off. Their young are brought forth in April or May, usually a male and female at birth.⁵² When captured young they are very readily tamed. A friend of mine reared a heifer and a bull, captured when suckling calves. The animals became so fond of him and his family that they could hardly be kept out of the house, and followed the people about like dogs. When they grew older they contracted the habit of knocking down his fences, invading his gardens and fields; and, not being able to restrain them, he concluded that their beef was better than their company, and slew them. He and his neighbors declared that they had never eaten such excellent meat. I have never known the buffalo to produce hybrids with the domestic cattle; but I have little doubt that it is practicable, and that such a cross would work an admirable improvement of our beef stock.⁵³

A GLANCE INTO THE PAST AND FUTURE

As this vast army went thundering to the north, disappearing behind the blue chain of mountains, I looked upon them with a sad interest. I thought of what they have been and what they soon will be, and beheld in them a great race rapidly marching away into the shadowy depths, out of sight and out of memory of the living. And along with them marches another race, whose destiny is bound up with theirs.

Time was when the buffalo ranged over the American continent, from the Atlantic to the Rocky Mountains; he is now confined to a territory that is daily contracting its boundaries. His enemies are increasing upon him on every hand, and a hundred years hence I doubt if there will be a single specimen of his race on the continent. Within a short period, those who come after us will look upon his bleaching bones with as much curiosity as we now look upon the fossil relics of the mastodon and mammoth. And it is not the advancing white man alone that is hedging him around with destruction. Nature has placed the seal of doom upon his brow, and moves to his destruction with as certain tread as the white man, if not so rapidly. The buffalo, like the antelope and the prairie dog, is the son of the prairie; the broad, sunny plains are his beneficent mother; the shaded forests are not his, and he loves them not. Condemned to them, he would soon die of melancholy, if not of starvation; as the albatross would soon die if transported whither he could not hear the multitudinous voice of the sea and ride on its foamy billows. In past time the American continent was all a great prairie; and as the forests advanced, the buffalo retired before their gloomy grandeur.

The forests are still advancing, slowly and steadily, step by step, to the grand music of the centuries, and will at last push their grand columns to the shores of the Pacific. In this condition of things, the buffalo would not live if he could. Life would be a burden to him without his boundless prairies, and death a welcome relief to his sickened heart and wearied bones. When Nature has set her seal of doom upon a race, death becomes to it an aspiration, and the paths that lead to extinction are easy and desirable. It is euthanasia. Thus Nature executes the sentences of her law in love.

As I beheld the last black line of the great thundering mass sink behind the mountains, I thought it might be the last I should ever see of this departing race, and I spoke an involuntary farewell:

“Vale, vale, longum vale!”

Nature’s volume in which their history is written is nearly closed, and a new epoch dawns over their land from the east, bringing a total change of scenes and conditions.

THE MOURNER BY THE HEARSE

I have said that the Indian is following this funeral march into the Shadowy Depths. He lingers but a little behind, and is drawn irresistibly onward. It is the fascination of impending doom leading him down great declivities “to shores where all is dumb,” a fascination that he cannot resist if he would. The Indian cannot live without the buffalo, any more than he can live without the sun. From him he procures his food, his raiment, the material with which he covers his cabin, the shield that protects him from the arrow of his enemy, and often even the fuel with which he warms himself and cooks his food. Take the buffalo away from him, and you take his all, making him a miserable outcast, shivering and starving. It will force a total change in his conditions of life, which would of itself speedily work his extinction. When the last buffalo is gone, there will be nothing left of the North American Indian, save a few dejected hangers-on about the out-skirts of civilization; listless, and silently awaiting the impending doom which they know is above them, casting its shadow into their hearts. Like the last of the buffaloes, death will be to them a poetry and aspiration, and a sweet boon; because they are walking the paths that Nature has made to lead them to the shore.

Does not every Indian know of this impending doom, and feel the shadow upon his heart? It may be that all do not comprehend it, but I believe there are none who do not feel that there is a shadow upon them which no sun-light can dispel. There is a strange funeral dirge whose notes continually break upon their ears during the day and startle their slumbers at night; a sweet note of melody from the eternal spheres, as sweet as it is melancholy. They may not all know that this is the Syren, Fate; but many of them do.

I believe I never saw an Indian, even of the least exalted tribe, in whose countenance I could not detect a trace of melancholy; and in many this spirit was conspicuously present. In my youth I knew the noble old Placido, chief of the Tonkawas. This man possessed a grand soul and a great heart, and of him nature had written in every lineament: “This is a man!” There was a sweet, sad gentleness about this old warrior, which could not fail to attract many observers. He seemed a prophet contemplating the future that threw the strange, sweet shadows about him. It was the shadow of the doom of him and his race reaching down into his heart, and the old man knew it. He knew that the Great Spirit had

called for His red children, and that they must depart from the earth, and sink into the great Ocean of Forgetfulness, leaving not even a waif on the surface to float to the shore and tell that the Tonkawa had lived. He saw his own tribe passing away until scarcely a hundred were left of the thousands he had led. When Capt. Jack was informed that he must die, he heard it unmoved, and said, "My Indian heart is dead, and I do not mind to die." Those five words—"My Indian heart is dead"—tell the whole story. The shadow of the doom of his race had chilled the vital power, and made death a dream and aspiration.

PER CONTRA

How different the conquering race, before whom the Indian and buffalo are dwindling away, and to whose conquests even Nature lends her auxiliary hands! No shadow of doom upon that brow, no subsidence of the vital power there! Fortitude and daring burst up within that heart like the strong waters of a big fountain, and Nature spurs it with the ambition of a higher destiny. The volume of its history is but just opened, and perhaps its greatest achievements yet await it. May not even I, in this vast wilderness, the home of the buffalo and Indian, with but two at my side, be an unconscious prospecting courier of the great conquering hosts that linger a little behind—sent forward to blaze the way?

CHAPTER IV

A SPECULATION IN WHICH THERE IS MONEY

We rode over a prairie three miles in width and an uncertain number in length, composed of white, sharp sand, with a thin coating of wiry grass. It is a singular geological phenomenon, and the first sand-prairie I have seen in Texas. The stampeding buffaloes had much torn it up, and our horses sank to the fetlock. "Now," said Jones Johns, "if I only had this sand-prairie near San Antonio, I would quit soldiering and grow rich—selling sand to the plasterers and for the streets and yards. The San Antonians go twelve miles to get their sand, and pay a big price for it at that. Ugh! It just makes my mouth water to look at this sand. If I could only move this prairie to San Antonio!" I suggested to him that perhaps he would do better by buying the prairie and letting it stay where it is; "for," said I, "by moving the prairie to San Antonio all at once there would be a glut in the market and sand would depreciate. This is probably the only sand for miles and miles; and this region must soon fill with people who will want sand for their mortar. This prairie will then become a mine of gold to the owner, who will have naught to do but sit on the roadside and sell sand. Railroads will be built, and he can then open a sand store in San Antonio, becoming a great merchant. It is one of the greatest opportunities of the age." He looked eagerly at the sand, and said, "It is so! If I survive this 'venter, I intend to buy this tract. I'll get a land warrant at two-bits an acre and locate it here."

"Don't be in a hurry!"

"No—don't break your neck," said John Powell; "for if a million of men were to come here to buy land, they'd every one cuss this spot. They wouldn't have it as a gracious gift."

"That is so," said Jones Johns. "Men's foresight ain't as good as their hindsight. But I'm going to save up my money, and right here will I stretch my tent."

The sand is clean quartz grit, and its presence here is phenomenal.

CONCHO SPRINGS—ET TU, BRUTE

Arrived at Concho Springs, the apparent head of the Concho, sixty miles from Concho Post. It is one of the loneliest looking spots on earth—a depression in a boundless plain, into which numerous ravines debouch. Chains of low mountains west and north shut out the incognita beyond. It is more silent than the Arctic regions beyond the Esquimau line, where the beating of the heart in the bosom is all that is heard; that is to say, that it would be if it were not for the ominous raven that shrieks above us and disturbs the air with his funereal wings. We dismounted and picketed our horses on the grass in silence, looking curiously around and feeling instinctively that we should not separate too far apart. The Con-

cho, which had been rapidly dwindling, is here a mere brook, rising out of the earth in two or three bubbling fountains. As we leaned over the fountain to fill our cups, we beheld a number of moccasin tracks recently made. We looked at them and then looked at one another. Presently Jones Johns picked up an arrow, with a keen, barbed point of steel, that had evidently just dropped from a hostile quiver. We examined it with a grim smile, knowing that there was no use to turn pale. Johns broke the silence: "I smell something like polecat. That's just the way Injuns smells. I tell you they are clost about." We discussed what we should do, and concluded we were as safe here as anywhere within sixty miles, and therefore would rest in peace and calmly take whatever fortune might send us—feeling that if we should fall, being innocent, we would alight on a silken couch. We reclined on the grass and ate our mid-day meal, our guns by our sides and our eyes on the watch.

RETROSPECTION—ARTESIAN WELLS

This whole Concho country at no remote day will support a great population. It is a country yet unfinished on which the hands of the Architect are still engaged in bringing it to the perfection He intends for it. It is embryonic; and yet, in its incomplete condition, it is a grand country. What will it not be, when creative energy has put on the last stroke? Besides its delicious climate and thick carpeting of all the richest grasses of Texas, it is so nearly all fertile that poor spots are rare; and this not only of the valleys, but of the rolling highlands and lofty table lands. The soil has been derived from calcareous, gypseous and magnesian rocks, and so loamy is it that it would be a work of love to the plow to slip through it. There is probably no region on earth where the small grains would yield larger crops or better quality. Wheat would here revel to its most splendid development.

The region wants trees for the unshaded plains, more running streams, and more rain. These will come in time from bountiful nature; but in order that this noble region may not so long be unpossessed and unenjoyed, man should encourage and assist nature. As for the valleys, the work is easy to give them abundant vegetation and moisture to sustain it; but there are wide spaces so destitute of water that a bird would hardly dare fly over them without taking his canteen. The rainfall on these arid scopes is barely sufficient to support the hardy grasses; indeed, sometimes they almost perish from thirst. Until the forests have advanced, bringing with them rains and springs, and new creeks and rivers, the artesian wells must be resorted to, to make these extensive areas useful even to the herdsman; and these can be secured only by the aid of the state. Artesian wells would here work wonders greater than Aladdin's lamp. The forests would hasten their advancing steps, the rains would descend, and the vast and lonely wilderness would become almost at once a region of boundless wealth and unequalled beauty and pleasure. This is the work of the statesman, and that Governor of Texas who shall accomplish it will build for himself a "monument more lasting than brass, and taller than the regal heights of the Pyramids." He will in fact enlarge Texas by creating and adding to it another empire.

Jefferson Davis, while United States Secretary of War, conceived this grand idea, worthy of a statesman, and dispatched Captain John Pope, of the army, to show its practicability. That officer accomplished nothing—boring a few shallow holes here and there—and Davis' term as Secretary expiring too soon, the experiment was never renewed. Pope's failure caused many to think that artesian wells cannot be obtained in this country. Nothing could be more absurd. There are myriads of fountains and rivers in the dark recesses of the earth, and it is quite impossible to sink a shaft that will not reach some of these. The only conditions of success are that the bore shall be deep enough, and that the strata shall rise at some point, not too remote, above the surface of the bore. The strata in this region lie precisely in a position most favorable to these wells, and are not broken up or intercepted. They rise step by step toward the northwest, forming an immense inclined plane, till at last, within less than one hundred and fifty miles, they are two thousand feet or more above the lower edge of the plane. If vigorous subterranean currents do not sweep down this plane, it would be without precedent and an anomaly in nature. I dare say that a shaft sunk a thousand to two thousand feet at any point in Texas, except probably its extreme northern edge, would be followed by a great outburst of water. The fact that all the great rivers of Texas have their sources either on or at the foot of this plane leaves no doubt of this. It is a work which will be demonstrated and accomplished.

IN DARKNESS

Two hours at Concho Springs, during which our horses stuffed themselves greatly, as if providing against an impending famine, did not lose us our scalps, and we rode west with whole skins. Ascending out of the depression we rode on a plain that seemed interminable, level as a carpet, and covered with luxuriant grass, on which the setting sun poured a golden flood. Hundreds of antelopes fed on the expanse or stopped to gaze at us. It was a sudden elevation of the whole territory a hundred feet above the spot we had just left.

Night came upon us, and it seemed the most unconfined, limitless night I ever beheld. It did not seem to come from above, for the stars shone with wonderful brilliance through the rarefied air; but it seemed rather that we rode on a promontory, with an ocean of darkness below us, from which it puffed up and covered the spaces above us. So real did this spectral ocean appear that I seemed to hear at intervals the roar of the billows pushing one another and bursting against rocks below us. Such is the singular effect of witnessing night fall on one of these promontories of the globe. And it was not all phantasmagoria; for the darkness did literally move up from the adjacent lowlands, which are first submerged in night. It was not all stillness. Numberless birds of night whisked through the air, some of them making a pleasant melody as they vaulted into the heavens. Suddenly we were startled by a sound like that of a brigade of cavalry charging furiously over the plain. Our horses arched their necks, pricked their ears, and almost danced with excitement.

“Injuns!” said John Powell.

“Injuns!” said Jones Johns.

“Buffaloes!” said I, in a suppressed voice.

We stopped and tried to look into the darkness; but, though the point whence the sound came seemed at first to be but a little distance off, we could see nothing. We grasped our rifles tighter. It gradually died away, and then ceased altogether.

“If them’s Injuns they’ve taken a tremendous stampede,” said Jones Johns. “Guess they think the Tenth Cavalry is at their heels.

At that moment we heard the distinct neigh of a horse, answered immediately by many others from different directions.

“What do you make of them now?” said John Powell, with manifest uneasiness.

“If them’s Injuns there’s a caution of ’em,” said Jones Johns.

The neighing soon ceased, and all was silent again, save the flight and melody of night birds.

We rode onward cautiously, our horses stepping spiritedly and gaily, as if they wanted to show themselves. Presently we rode upon a pool of water, reflecting the stars in its bosom. When our horses put their heads down to drink, they smelt around and snorted before tasting the water.

“These horses feels suspicious,” said John Powell; “they know something’s up. They smell Injuns.”

I dismounted and filled our canteens from the clear pool. “Boys, shall we camp?”

“Not here, by no means,” was the response of the soldiers. “If them’s Injuns they’ll come here for sure, to get water. Let’s move on.”

As I did not wish to leave this water until morning, we rode two miles south, and, coming to a small clump of mesquite brush, dismounted and took up our abode for the night. Our horses were both picketed and hobbled, so that in case of an attempt to stampede them, it could not prove a success. The grass was knee-deep, and a grateful couch it made to our weary limbs. We had traveled over forty-four miles during the day. We kindled no light, but wrapped ourselves up in blankets. Profound peace soon reigned in camp.

VOICES OF THE NIGHT

Before falling asleep I amused myself some time by taking note of the voices that broke the stillness of night. At intervals I heard distinctly what seemed the sound of a waterfall at great distance, or water rushing suddenly over a rocky channel—heard but a moment then all was still. This waterfall may have been fifty miles away, but a breeze passing by caught up the sound and bore it to my ears in the still night. I listened to these sounds with interest, to catch every note; for when a boy I was startled once by a precisely similar sound, which I have thought of a thousand times. As in this case, the sound seemed to come from the skies, was heard distinctly a second, and then ceased. As I knew there was no waterfall in the region, I thought in by boyish fancy I had heard one of the crystal fountains of Par-

adise, and for fear I would not be believed, I never told it. I was alone in a wide campus, in the early part of a clear morning. What singular acoustic phenomenon is it that brings to us these distant sounds?

Occasionally some heavy bird of night hovered closely over us, his feathers cutting the wind with a peculiar noise. Some of these birds were so large that I judged them to be eagles, attracted by the buffalo meat we had with us. Then there was the snipe, or lark, or whatever it might be, springing into the air and singing as he soared. His music was a sweet melody that gradually lost itself in the skies, like the song of "an unbodied joy whose race is just begun."

The lonesome cry of the big wolf mingled with these sweet sounds, and broke over the plains like the wail of a lost soul on the banks of the Styx. Sometimes the cry of a dozen of these rose into the air from as many different directions at once. At last I fell asleep to the music of sweet larks and prowling wolves.

CHAPTER V

EVOE!—THE CHARGE!

It was gray of dawn when a loud snort from our horses awakened me. The two soldiers bestirred themselves at the same moment, and we all grasped our artillery. As I did so I beheld two large wolves sitting side by side, not more than thirty yards off—looking straight at us. I was about to pull the trigger, when the soldiers asked me to desist, saying that our horses, which now snorted away very vigorously, were not disturbed by the wolves, but evidently by something else. I assented, and paid no further attention to the wolves. At the same moment we heard the neighing of a number of horses.

“There now!” said John Powell; “didn’t I tell you so? The Injuns are upon us, certain.”

Stepping to the edge of the brush, we saw a brigade of horses approaching us. “It is so!” said I. “It is so!” repeated the soldiers; and we put our thumbs to the hammers of the guns. The brigade was not more than three hundred yards from us, and steadily advancing. In a moment we observed that the horses were riderless, and there was a feeling of relief and a decided sensation when we exclaimed—“Wild horses! Mustangs!”

Our horses were becoming more excited as the gay cavalcade drew nearer, but knowing they were safe from stampede, we fell back into the brush to conceal ourselves, so that the mustangs might come upon us. The point was an excellent one, both for concealment and observation. It was on a knoll, or slight elevation of the surface, and the brush and tall grass were so thick that not even the keen eye of these sons of the prairie could detect us, until almost immediately on us.

On they came, and it was a beautiful sight to behold. They had seen our horses, and were coming directly upon them. When about a hundred yards off, they stopped with one accord, their heads lifted up and looking toward us as if suspicious of a lurking enemy. Presently a squadron of the boldest pranced out before the others, and after a few curvettings marched deliberately, with arched necks, to our hobbled steeds. These were the most beautiful animals I ever beheld. Some of them were pure milk white, without a spot or stain; they had long, flowing tails, thick mane, pendant forelocks and feet of jetty blackness. Bless my soul! thought I; suppose I had a couple of yon fellows to draw my buggy through the streets of Houston—would I not cut a swell? Others were as black as ravens and almost as lustrous as a mirror in the sunshine; others were bay, others chestnut, others sorrel, others cream, and others spotted with red and white or black. These advance fellows were all stallions. They came right up to our horses and bit and squealed at them. The others, taking courage, galloped bravely up, so that in a moment our three horses were surrounded and hidden out of sight by the gay throng. It was the most magnificent cabalado I ever saw; not a poor or shabby one among them; all fat and sleek as moles—looking

as if they had just been carefully rubbed by the most skillful hostlers. It was a sight worth a trip to see.

“Look here; I’m afraid they’ll kick our horses to death,” said John Powell. “I think we’d better get out o’ here.”

In that opinion I agreed; and all of us stepping out on the plain, not forty yards from them, was as if a thousand fearful apparitions had fallen suddenly among them. The bounded away, their heads and tails lifted high in the air, dashing furiously off, as fast as their gay legs could carry them; and they continued to go in this way till they sank out of sight and out of hearing. Our horses made a foolish effort to follow them, and when we went up to pacify them, they did not wish us to come near them, but turned their heels to us and squealed. Their eyes blazed with excitement, and they behaved for all the world as if they thought that they were wild horses, too. I could but laugh at the ridiculous put-on of the poor beasts of burden; but it was, after all, nature boiling up within them. If they had not been hobbled with good rawhide thongs, we would have been set afoot; for nothing could have resisted their headstrong fury to run wild, too, to live with their beautiful free brethren of the plains. I certainly could not blame them; for should I discover on this trip a race of wild ladies as surpassingly beautiful over their tame sisters as these wild steeds are over the tame ones, I should undoubtedly run wild, too, and take up my abode with the wild ladies. Railroads and cities and foundries and the haunts of civilization would know me no more. My life would thenceforth be the color and fragrance of the rose.

We brought our horses to their senses by a strong pull of the stake-rope; and yet after we mounted them, it was amusing to see how they behaved. They arched their necks, shook their heads, lifted their heels extraordinarily high, and emitted snort after snort.

These wild horses are not as large as the domestic horse, but are more compactly put up, and seem to be stronger in proportion to size. There is nothing lean or lank about them, but all is closely knit and well-rounded symmetry. The true Morgan stallion seems to come about as near their size and appearance as any breed of horses I can think of. They are the true equine Achilleses—so beautiful, strong and agile. They are larger than the Mexican horses, commonly called mustangs in Texas, and infinitely better looking. The latter are generally coarse and shaggy, but the true mustangs are the belles and beaux of their race. The dark shades prevail among them, but nearly all other colors and shades are well represented. In the early days of Texas, when these wild horses were common on all the great prairies, the settlers made it a business to hunt them, catching them with the lasso; and there are many old Texans who obtained their start in horse-stock from this source. They are said to be easily tamed, even when caught full grown, and make superior saddle horses.

WHENCE CAME HE?

All who have written of this prairie horse state that he has descended from the stray or lost

horses of the first Spanish settlers or explorers. I do not accept this theory. I believe that he is an American production, as much so as Powhatan or Montezuma, and roamed over these prairies as freely when Columbus discovered America as he does today. That he receives accessions from the domestic horse is certain; for I saw one large individual in this herd, very unlike the rest, who had distinct saddle marks on his back and flanks; but these are waifs who have contributed very little to the common stock—not even enough to impress upon it a variety of form and size. I look upon the wild horse as the native son of the prairie, like the antelope and buffalo, and like these he will cease to exist when the prairies have been occupied by the forest. The fact that the horse was unknown to the Indian on the coast and to the Mexican, when the new country was discovered, does not prove that the horse did not exist within it. It proves only that the horse did not exist in those regions, where there were few or no prairies; and such was the territory where the first European adventurers touched it. The Indians of those days were not accustomed to long journeys;⁵⁴ they were circumscribed within narrow limits by hostile tribes, who scrupulously maintained the doctrine of nonintercourse; and they were not apt to learn that horses existed on the boundless prairies of the west, or that their red brethren ever rode on their backs. Some will say that if it is true that he is a native son of the prairie, he should have been found by those who first visited the northwest, where great prairies abound. The fact that the horse in the wild state is necessarily a subtropical animal will answer this objection. He could not exist in a region subject to intense cold and deep snows; and even if he would visit the northern prairies in summer, his way to them was barred by wide belts of forest, which, like the buffalo and antelope, he abhors. I dare say that when La Salle visited the Texas coast he saw wild horses in abundance, if he pushed far into the prairie region.⁵⁵ When the first Americans came to Texas, they found some of the Indians rich in herds of horses, and they brought on severe troubles with them by raiding upon them, to steal their horses—a game which the Indians have been constantly playing upon the whites ever since.

If these wild horses are the descendants of domestic horses that strayed from the early settlers, why were none found on the prairies of Florida and Louisiana, which were, and are yet, ample for the support of large herds? If the theory is correct, we must suppose that the settlers of those states were much more careful of their horses than those who first came to Texas and Mexico; or that their horses were much less inclined to run away.

The horse in a diminutive form is found fossil all over Texas, in the later Tertiary deposits and alluvial soil. His fossil bones of larger size are also found in Kentucky, and even as far north as Minnesota in the same deposits. It is certain then that he existed in this country long before the days of Columbus, or even Adam. Having been here then, why should he not be here now? There is no evidence in geology that he became extinct, but rather that he continued to improve in form and size, and retired westward and southward only before the advancing forests, and the increased rigor of the climate which took place about the time of man's advent in the world. The bos also existed in those remote days, and we have his descendants in the buffalo, which, for all that we know, was as much unknown to

the Indians east of the Mississippi as was the horse. If the bos could survive, why not the equus?

DEW DROPS

As we rode back to the pool at which we watered last night, the prairie was radiant with myriads of little suns. Globules of bright water sat upon every blade of grass, and from all of these miniature suns—the reflections in the dewdrops of that great orb which had just risen—flashed and shot rays into our faces. The grass was as wet as if a heavy cloud had settled upon it and parted with all its moisture. Thus, in midwinter as well as summer, the dews—heaviest I ever saw—come nightly upon this lofty plain. In other regions the dews affect the lowlands, and come only in the warmer seasons; but here they come alike to the lofty tableland and the valley, and at all seasons. Is not this a marvelous design in Him Who rules? Without these extraordinary dews, where would be this luxuriant verdancy and fertility of these plains? What is now one of the most beautiful parts of creation would be a barren desolation—the sport alternately of hot whirlwinds and frozen tempests—shunned as a region of death by all living things.

THE HAND OF PROVIDENCE—THE VOLCANIC FOUNTAINS

Arriving at the water, instead of one pool we found a dozen or more. These are the Mustang Water Holes, as written in the maps. They are circular, as much so as a well, and apparently not less profound; the water is cool and pure. Some of them are three hundred feet in diameter, and none less than a hundred. They are separated a few feet apart, and each rises a few inches above its nearest neighbor to the east, so that in case of overflow the water of the most remote would flow through all. They have no current flowing into them, and none flowing out, that is perceptible. They are situated in a level plain; two parallel ridges of low, rounded mountains, forming a beautiful valley between, extend nearly down to the water holes from the west, and a very slight depression leads away toward the head of the Concho. These fountains, pools, or cisterns, or whatever else they may be called, are said never to diminish their pure sparkling water which remains at the same level, quite up to the top, even during the severest drought.

Whence came they, and what are they? I can account for them on no other ground than that they are the remnants of a deep volcanic fissure, and that their waters issue from profound depths. Such phenomenal pools or cisterns are not uncommon on these streamless plains. One who has seen nearly all of this vast region told me that often, when he believed he should perish for water, he had suddenly come upon them—many of them as round as a well and but little bigger, and so deep that he could find no bottom with his stake rope. “Some of these,” said he, “looked precisely as if they had been wrought by human hands. The water stands nearly level with the top, and is always sweet and pure even

when in the midst of salty and gypseous regions." Why are not such as these found in regions filled with springs and traversed by streams? Because they would answer no purpose, and supply no necessity. Without them here, even the buffalo, the antelope and the wild horse could barely venture upon the borders of this great unfinished country, and the dews would be distilled to nurture the luxuriant crops of grass in vain. The roads that penetrate this region bend hither and thither to reach these pools like a ship beating against a contrary wind; and without them the populous part of Texas would be separated from Northern Mexico and the Pacific, almost as effectually as if an ocean of fire rolled between them. They were necessary, and therefore they were ordered, and the volcanic forces were dispatched to form them.

THE SENTINELS AND PROPHETS

A little distance from these remarkable fountains, three sentinels stand side by side, alone in the vast expanse. As is fitting in those who are pushed forward to blaze the way of the advancing hosts, they are robust and strong. They are three solitary live oaks, hearts of iron, rising in grandeur, and stretching their broad arms as if saying to the prairies: "And you shall all come under our dominion!" There they stand—grand, noble trees—at least a hundred miles in advance of their hosts, and not another tree of any sort probably within fifty miles; they seem to feel proud of their solitude, as if by this they knew they were the chosen agents of the Architect, by whose fiat they were thus advanced. Let them stand forever, or until their iron hearts are wasted by eternal Time! They probably saw this country before the foot of the European touched American soil; the buffalo and the red man have rested under their shade for centuries; and now let them stand to witness the teeming populations of the East, that are destined to swarm around them under the torchlight of civilization. The messengers of God to foretell the advance of the hosts, let them stand until He calls them hence!

The Cypress of Somma, which still stands on the lofty flanks of the Alps, was written by Julius Caesar nineteen hundred and nineteen years ago (about 45, B.C.). When Napoleon was cutting his great road over the Simplon, he stood in its shade and directed his engineers not to touch that tree. Thus we know that at least twenty centuries extend their shadowy wings around this venerable tree, and we are taught by it something of the age of the monarchs of the forest. Let him who dwells on this plain in the centuries to come know by these signals that in the year of our lord 1876, these three oaks, alone in the wide expanse, were apparently in the middle of life, fresh, powerful and vigorous. From this let them measure the life of the iron-hearted oak!

PURSUIT AND DEATH—THE JAGUAR

After breakfast under the mantle of the prophets we rode West, up the green valley be-

tween the mountains, and witnessed a scene which showed that all is not peace, even in this solitude. An antelope swept down the valley rapidly toward us, a strange beast following closely behind him. They passed within thirty yards of us, and neither appeared to notice us. The antelope seemed nearly exhausted, while the animal in pursuit bounded along apparently without effort, as if conscious that the end was near. This was the jaguar—*felis onca*—more commonly called the Mexican lion, one of the most ferocious of beasts; color light brown, body five to six feet in length, two and a half feet in height, and a heavy, tiger-like head. Our first impulse was to relieve the pretty antelope by discharging a volley into the jaguar, but we concluded to watch the result. The antelope changed his course, running through a narrow pass in the mountains to our left, and both disappeared. We followed, and had gone but a few hundred yards when we saw the antelope coming back on his tracks, the jaguar still in pursuit and almost at his heels. When opposite us, about fifty yards off, the jaguar with an easy bound sprang into the air, alighting upon the antelope's shoulders. He clasped his forefeet closely around the antelope's neck and buried his head under the throat—the poor animal in the meantime bawling and crying piteously. He staggered under the weight of the carnivore and after a few steps fell to the ground, the latter still clinging to his throat.

Johns and myself now jumped from our horses, and, handing the reins to Powell, hastened to take part in the deadly scene, and to save the antelope if we could. At fifteen paces we opened fire with our pistols; the jaguar turned to look at us a second, and then dashed up the mountain side—bullets in rapid succession striking the rocks about him. We fear we did not wound him. He disappeared. The antelope rose and staggered a few paces and fell again. A large wound had been torn at the base of his throat, from which his blood was gushing. His flank and shoulders were also torn by the sharp claws of the beast; seeing that there was no hope for the poor animal, we shot him through the head to relieve him of his pain. It appeared from the wound, and the way that the jaguar crouched to the throat, that he had actually been drinking the blood while he struggled. Did such scenes occur before that fatal apple was eaten? Ah, Mother Eve, if ancient legends are true, how grievous has been thy sin! In thy gentleness and beauty, what a pity thou didst not know what cruel scenes would follow thy transgression! Thy gentle heart would have sickened, and Eden would have needed no angel bands to ward thee against the tempter, and yet in vain!⁵⁶

A CHANGE INDEED—THE FLORAL FIEND

We did not return to the valley, but turned to the southwest, following an obscure trail, which seems to have been, at some day, a small road. It is not now all beauty and amenity; quite the reverse. Barren, stony scopes occur: solitary, isolated mountains, and tablelands with perpendicular walls that look like fortresses. The walls of some of these are destitute of stones, and are composed of layers of clay and white, powdery marl, as stypitic as soda on the tongue. These fortress-like table lands are very peculiar and difficult to explain.

They seem not to have been uplifted, but rather that the contiguous lands, by some accident, have subsided away from them, leaving them standing alone. They are from ten to thirty feet in perpendicular height, and often quite inaccessible on top. For miles and miles there is no vegetation save a short, crisp grass; not a drop of water and no animal life. Finally we ride into a mountainous district, for which bleakness is no name. Wide, flat stones, sometimes extending hundreds of yards, emit a hollow sound under our horses' feet. In the crevices of these stones, that fierce ugliness, the prickly pear, has struck its roots, and, strangely enough, flourishes in the unmatched sterility, luxuriating in what would be death to all other vegetation. Its ferocious aspect and the strangeness of its situation add to the grimness of the scene. This thing, living on stones in the most desolate spots of earth, reminds me of the infernal fiends who are said to disport themselves and play games of hell in hissing flames and lakes of liquid fire. It may appropriately be called the Floral Fiend; for surely it is hideous enough, bristling with deadly spines, sharper than needles, and set off with flame-red plumes, suggestive of the flames below. I dare say that if anyone should run against one of these fiends at night, he would smell an odor of brimstone.

A BAND OF PHILOSOPHERS

While riding along the flank of the mountain in this abode of the accursed we saw beneath us in a verdureless vale, a company of antelopes walking hither and thither and curiously observing everything. They were not seeking food, for there was absolutely nothing of that sort. They would stand on the brink of a precipice, and project their heads as far over as possible, as if studying the dismal scenes below; then they would contemplate the stony mountain sides, gazing at the misshapen masses of rock. We stopped to watch their curious behavior. Said I to the soldiers, "These fellows are a band of philosophers who are exploring the wilderness for the love of science. Seen how curiously they inspect everything, from the grim exposure of the ravines to the lonely pebble on the waste. These be the ways of philosophers. They are probably getting up a cosmogony of their own, with which when they return to the plains, they will astonish the learned brethren. And dissertations and counter-dissertations will follow, till at length, perplexed and wearied, the brethren will fall back to the old faith."

"That is so," said Jones Johns; "for I always suspects a man to be a fraud that is too smart. He don't believe the half that he tells."

"I'll bet they are a gang of miners," said John Powell; "running the risk of starvation and wolves to hunt for gold."

"They might as well be cosmogromers as anything else," said Jones Johns; "for if they stay here they'll soon get so poor they'll not be fitten for anything else."

But, in serious earnest, what brought these festive creatures hither? It was real enjoyment of the unaccustomed scenes. Having touched the border and spied the oddity, a spirit of curiosity and inquiry impelled them to proceed to the center and explore it—like a gang

of truant schoolboys on a holiday, wandering into all sorts of odd places, and gathering fun from every object. Go on, festive fellows! I sympathize with you in your love of nature; and were I as hungry as a wolf, I would not shoot one of you for a league of land. There is more of God in His humblest creatures than the world is willing to admit.

SEAT OF DESOLATION—THE SKELETONS IN BATTLE ARRAY

At last, after mid-day, when all were weary, a long a tolerably smooth ascent rose before us, beyond whose crest no loftier region appeared. I said to myself, "That surely is the end. From that crest I shall behold the glorious prospect of verdant plain, and pleasing hill and vale." Our horses seemed equally inspired by that crest with no pinnacle beyond. They seemed to say to themselves: "There be good grass and water beyond that." They urged briskly ahead, growing more and more impatient as they drew near the crest.

We reached it; and horse and rider turned pale or felt pale at the hideous spectacle that spread out interminably. It is a plain, it is true, but such a plain!—barren, arid, horrid: occupied by gigantic castles of prickly pear around which an army of grinning skeletons, with nodding withered plumes, and armed with huge bayonets, is standing sentinel! Our poor horses looked as if they were pierced with grief as they beheld this scene, and, lately so spirited, became all at once dull and lethargic. They viewed the grizzly castles and grinning skeletons with profound disgust and aversion.

Do not imagine that it is a mere fancy—these grinning skeletons with withered plume and bayonet! It is an army of Spanish Daggers, and so exact is the similitude that fancy is not needed to fill the picture. They stand six to eight and ten feet high, their summits capped with withered plumes of white flowers; and fearful two-edged blades, pointed as keenly as needles, project outward from the scaly trunk in every direction. These withered plumes look like the heads of soldiers with flowing helmets. One not accustomed to them, riding suddenly upon them on a moonlight night, could hardly fail to be struck with amazement, under the hallucination that he has ridden upon an army in battle array, with guns leveled at his breast. They bear no foliage—nothing save these terrible swords or daggers, which are as terrible as any weapon of steel ever manufactured by the murderous art of man. They are stout enough and sharp enough to be thrust easily through a man's body, and their slightly serrated edges, finished with a coat of glittering silica, are sharp as a razor. There is certainly no plant in nature of more forbidding aspect, unless it be its dread cogener, the Floral Fiend, which here erects its great buildings twenty and thirty feet in height, with ugly archways beneath, through which a man could ride on horseback. Not a blade of grass is visible. The bare, pale-red earth is everywhere exposed, save where the black or grey rocks spread over the surface. Aridity! he knows thee not who has not seen this! Whence to these gigantic plants and castles, full of moisture, obtain their subsistence? They are the true vegetable chameleons that grow fat on light and air.

"Well, well," said John Powell, who had fallen into a melancholy; "what did the Almighty make such a country as this for?"

“Ah,” said I, “John Powell, this is the country where we shall make our fortunes. This is even better than the sand-prairie. Those grim skeletons are a mint of gold to those who will work them skillfully and industriously, as we will. See those great swords that they point up at us? They are a mass of strong hempen cords, from which we may manufacture ropes and sacks without end. See those great heads and plumes! From them we may distil an ardent spirit so strong that it shall make drunk even those who shall smell it. There on that stony surface, we can erect our factory and distillery; and though in a wilderness, we can pursue our industry in security. Those terrible thorns and blades, and this wild desolation, will protect us better than a thousand cannons.”

“But what shall we do for water to drink and to make steam to run our machinery?” said John Powell.

“We have but to drill a hole into the caverns beneath us. Listen to the hollow sound they give forth to our horses’ feet. There we shall find shady grottoes and bubbling fountains.”

“And rattlesnakes by the wagon load,” interposed Jones Johns.

“Never mind the rattlesnakes if we can make a fortune,” said John Powell. “We can smoke them out.”

“The plan will be to issue stock or shares and appoint a financial agent in New York and London. We shall call it the Great American Rope, Sack and Mescal Company. The shares will sell like hot cakes.”

“It is grand!” said John Powell.

“It is grand!” said Jones Johns.

OF HIM THAT ATE RED-RIDING HOOD’S GRANDMAMMA

Now I know that I shall have some little boy and girl readers, and I should do wrong if I did not tell them what I did with the old wolf that ate Little Red-Riding Hood’s grandmamma. We had been riding an hour through this ugly forest, over the hard clay and rocks, without seeing a living creature, save two or three lonely molly-cotton-tails that dwelt under the great cactus castles, when we suddenly beheld, about a hundred yards before us, that identical, bad old wolf. Although his head was pointing toward us, he was so intently engaged in smelling something on a rock, that he did not notice our approach. When within forty yards of him I levelled my rifle upon him, intending to shoot a ball through his head, but I missed my mark and shattered one of his fore-paws just above the joint. The old fellow rose on his hind-legs and raved and bit at his foot, as if he thought something had caught hold of him—not yet having seen us. We rode right upon him before he saw us, and what a glare of wicked fury he then cast upon us! He tried to run away, but the soldiers drew their pistols, and before he had gone two steps, he fell pierced with bullets. In his dying moments he growled fiercely, and would no doubt have torn us to pieces, if he could have laid his strong jaws upon us. And thus died the wicked old wolf who ate up the sweet little Red-Riding Hood’s grandmamma. Do you not think we served him right?

After he had eaten up the little Red-Riding Hood's grandmamma, he fled to this grim and distant region, where he thought he would be safe from avengers of his sin; but vengeance pursued him even here, as it will catch all who commit evil deeds. Thus every time the evil-doer does an evil thing, God at that very moment plants a switch to whip his back; and that switch will grow, and wherever the evil-doer may go after that, that switch will follow him, and at last find his back and whip it well. The old wolf didn't think of this when he ate up the good little grandmother; but don't you suppose he did think of it when he lay pierced with bullets, growling his dying growl?

The Mexicans call these big wolves "lobos," and the Texans call them "loafers," which is a corruption of the Mexican word. Their backs are arched, somewhat like the hyena, and they generally carry their heads close to the ground, as if smelling for something; they are as big as a large, stout dog, and their hair is shaggy and brindled, though sometimes it is quite black. They are terrible on calves and colts, and when in force they will attack a grown animal, if they happen to catch one alone. I have never heard of their attacking a man in Texas, and this is probably because they are never driven to desperation by hunger. We left him to dry up on the bleak stones; for there does not seem to be even a buzzard to eat him in this cheerless region.

WHAT IT HAS BEEN—A JURASSIC SEA

At three P.M. the fantastic forest and castles thinned out, and grassy lawns appeared, though there is no water. We dismounted, and stripping our horses and hobbling them, gave them liberty. The soldiers reclined on the grass and slept.

The conformation of this great region seems to show unmistakably that it was once an inland sea, whose southern shore was probably at first along the Azoic hills below the San Saba, contracting gradually to the great backbone between McKavett and Kickapoo Springs; and whose western shore extended at least thus far, and whose northern shore many have reached the Red River. Its eastern shore probably crossed the Colorado above the mouth of the Concho, extending northward to the limit of Texas, and perhaps beyond. This immense basin slopes inward from every direction, but its deepest parts are probably along the valleys of the Concho, not far from its southern border. The altitude of Fort Concho is only one thousand nine hundred feet above the sea, while that of the great ridge below Kickapoo Springs, and this on which I stand, must be quite a thousand feet higher. This sea in drying up left enormous deposits of gypsum, great beds and areas of salt and other alkalies, with which all the streams that flow through this ancient bed are more or less impregnated. This sea, as I believe, existed during the Jurassic Age. The geologists who have written of this region, from observations at telescopic distances, or no observation at all, have all assigned it to the Cretaceous; but my judgement is that there is little or no Cretaceous in it. I have seen no fossils to confirm this judgement; but this great basin in its general outlines is totally unlike the Cretaceous as developed in other portions of

Texas, or elsewhere. Nor has that formation in any other part of the globe, if this be Cretaceous, developed such enormous deposits of gypsum and salt. If then it is Cretaceous, it is anomalous and without precedent. But it is not all Jurassic. There are frequent wide scopes of Permian, to the north and west, rich in copper; and occasional spurs of Carboniferous penetrate it from the east and northeast, like that in which true coal is found some miles above Fort Concho.⁵⁷

PLAINS

He who has seen the treeless expanses, dead level, or apparently so, over which the Pacific Railroad runs, must remember that the Texas plains are an entirely different thing. They are generally rolling, like the billows of a mighty sea; or varied with beautiful table-lands, or lofty solitary mounds, or chains of mountains. There is no monotony here. The mind has no chance to grow weary. It has perpetual occupation, mostly beautiful and always interesting. The occasional barren and dismal spots only serve to increase the beauty of the rest.

A VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

After I aroused my cavalry we journeyed on, and soon rode into a starlight night, which sometimes softened the asperity of the grim-visaged region, and sometimes veiled it in most hideous mystery. After a few hours a long, low, black line rose against the western horizon, growing higher and higher as we drew nearer. "That," said I, "must be another of those strange and sudden elevations of the territory—another round in Jacob's Ladder; either that or a great wall of stone."

"If we do not find water there," said Jones Johns, "what will our poor horses do? They can now hardly stagger along."

"They can sip dew from the grass. The cool night will be kind to them."

"And what if there be no grass?" said John Powell. "If we are put afoot in this region, it is death, and it stares us in the face now."

"Never mind; our time is not yet, boys. We will reach the haven."

The position was undoubtedly an ugly one. We knew not whither we were going, or how long the way; for we had seen enough of the maps of Texas to know that they are totally unreliable in their delineation of this Terra Incognita.

The great black line now seemed to have a gentle swaying motion at its apex, at times concealing and then revealing the white stars that rested upon it. The wind brought an aromatic odor to our nostrils. "That, comrades," said I, "is a great belt of forest. There we shall find water and rest."

When quite near it, it seemed an enormous mass of black foliage. What manner of gigantic trees are these, wrapped in dense foliage from base to summit?

We stood under their limbs, on the brink of a precipice which sloped downward into

an apparently bottomless gulf. We now observed, first from the fragrance, then from plucking the boughs, that it was a forest of cedars, which seemed to be marching out of the gulf, and yet had not planted feet upon the firm ground above. Where we stood on the edge of the bluff, these great trees towered a hundred feet above our heads, and half their length appeared limbless. We felt our way cautiously down the bluff in utter darkness, completely obscured from each other, and our horses' feet making no sound on the surface, which was strewn thick with the fallen leaves of the cedars. At last, we suddenly emerged into the starlight on a broad open plain, without tree or brush. The great cedars, the grandest I ever saw—the grandest that even the eternal angels ever beheld—stopped short at the foot of the declivity, not passing an inch beyond. I turned to look up on them; they appeared as a solid wall of forest, extending north and south beyond the vision, and with trunks as straight as the line of a plumb, without a branch from fifty to seventy-five feet above the ground. Can I be mistaken that this is the grandest forest in the world? And to scorn the fertile soil, hugging only the stony cliffs of a precipice! Is not that odd, especially in view of their rich, resinous wood?

The grass, cool and dripping with dew, reached up to our saddles; and as our poor horses were greatly jaded, we unbridled them and gave them rope. We in the meantime were reclining under the great cedars, inhaling their aromatic fragrance.

"Where will we turn up next?" said John Powell.

"On the banks of a mighty, silent river, whose waves once beat upon the top of this cliff; a river that hurried to the ocean, itself an ocean—thrice grander than the Mississippi."

"How far?" said John Powell.

"This is the valley!"

"Joyful! Joyful!" exclaimed Jones Johns; "then we shall soon drink. Not a drop in my canteen since Skeleton Plain, and I have been chewing a bullet these two hours past."

In less than half an hour, our horses had garnered their granaries full, and fell to nibbling tid-bits. "It is time to move on, comrades!" We had bridled them and were coiling up the ropes.

"Blazes! what is that?" said Jones Johns.

"A deep, tremendous roar from the cliff resounded through the valley, unlike anything I had heard before. Again it broke upon the silence, with modulations or waves of sound, as if the object that made it was swaying to and fro. It was deep, guttural and hoarse, and seemed to tell of strength and ferocity. This came from the cliff just above us. Another responded, deeper and hoarser, a few hundred yards below. Our horses were no less moved than we. "Boys," said I, "it is time to go."

We rode away into the valley as silently as skulking wolves, speaking not a word, and often looking back through the darkness. Twice again in quick succession the air trembled with the deep roars, apparently as near as when we first heard it.

"Buffalo bulls!" said John Powell in a suppressed voice.

“Never!” said I. “That is the voice of some ferocious beast of prey that is on our tracks. Keep watch to the rear.”

Passing rapidly on, we were stopped at length on the very brink of the silent river, on the verge of its waters before we saw it. It was of inky blackness and seemed a dead sea river. Shall we plunge and cross, or shall we stay here and take our chances with those beasts? I dropped a line in the water and found it ten feet deep at the bank, which is six feet perpendicular above the water. We could not distinctly see the opposite shore, but there also was the appearance of a steep bluff. We concluded we would rather risk the roarers than plunge into such a river in the darkness.

We soon found a slope or cut in the bank which admitted our horses to the water. They drank and snorted, and snorted and drank, greatly to our disgust, as we desired things to be as quiet as possible. We staked them on the tall grass, but instead of eating, they immediately lay down and slept. Lighting a match and viewing my watch, I saw that it was near midnight. We had traveled over fifty miles since sunrise.

We spread our blankets close to the bank, intending to be safe from attack on one side at least. We deemed it no good policy to fall asleep at once, but as the weary moments passed on, and nothing remarkable occurred, we entered the land of Nod. Once during the night we were disturbed by a splash in the water, as if some heavy body had leaped or fallen into it, followed for some moments by a struggling sound; but nothing came of it. We slept on the bank of the mighty Pecos.

DIVISION VI

CHAPTER I

A MORNING BATH

When we awoke, the sun was discharging his glory from a lofty altitude. It was a bright, sparkling morning, the "sweet south" whispering to us long life and good cheer. How the radiant grasses glistened like a field of diamonds, with their myriads of dew-drops! I had slept gloriously, and felt like a young lion, as I shook the dew-drops from my flanks. Now compare me here with one who has waked from a debauched night in the cities, languid and feverish; and which does Nature, who made us, love the more? If she had a crown to bestow, upon whose brow would she bestow it? Nature! make me pure as thou art pure, and immerse all my heart in love of thee! Then I know that the crown will await me, and like the humming-bird, I shall taste only of the beautiful, and linger along labyrinths of flowers!

"I feel that I could eat a wolf," said Jones Johns.

"I feel that I could get away with half a buffalo;" said John Powell.

"Wouldn't a fat steak in a bowl of gravy, and a pile of hot biscuits, and a pot of hot coffee, and a dish of bacon and beans, and a plate of ham and eggs, and a dish of fried ing-ons (onions), and a bunch of fresh celery be good this morning—and a plate of broiled mutton chops and a stewed mackerel swimming in butter?" said Jones Johns.

And his mouth watered, and he spat copiously while he spake. "Never mind, boys, we shall have all of these when we get to the next post. In the meantime, for breakfast we shall fare well."

What a funny river, if it be not a perversion to say "funny" of what is so great! Not a tree, nor a twig along its banks; nothing but grass—grass, which musters in heavy force upon the brink of the steep bank and leans over to kiss the water, so that the presence of the river cannot be suspected until the voyager is on the verge of tumbling into it.

I said it was silent. So it is; but still? Never! It sweeps by like a courier race-horse on an errand. Toss a stem of grass into it, and it disappears almost as quickly "as snow-flakes on the river." And all this without the sound of a ripple, or a murmur. The motion of the winged messengers of the deep is described as "smooth gliding without step;" and so of the mighty Pecos as he sweeps by to pay his tribute to the Bravo. He seems bewitched. I said—"Boys, let us cross the river, and then we shall eat!"

Revisiting the narrow passage which led to the water, I saw a similar passage on the other shore, but across it was lodged a huge cedar log; its ends resting against the bank of the river, above and below. "Unless we dislodge that log we cannot get our horses across, owing to the steepness of the bank elsewhere and the depth of the water," I said, "I will go and dislodge that log."

Disrobing myself, I lit into the river and sank out of sight. When I returned to the surface, I had been swept many feet out of the line, but being a strong swimmer I shot over the water as freely as a duck. And sure it was cold, like a snow-julep! Nevertheless, I dropped my line leisurely a hundred feet from shore, and it measured thirty feet in depth! Crawling over the log, I thought I would stand on the bottom and shove it off from shore; so letting go all hold, I slid downward far over my head, without finding anything to stand upon. Rising again to the surface, I grasped the log with both hands, and throwing my body prone on the flood, endeavored to put the mass in motion by vigorously kicking with my heels. At last it moved slowly, then more rapidly, till swaying out in the stream, it glided rapidly away. I swung around with the butt end till it reached the point for my departure, when a few vigorous strokes landed me in fine humor on the eastern shore. I thought of the youth who nightly swam the Hellespont to bask in the sunlight, and the moonlight, and the starlight of his sweetheart's eyes; with this difference, that while he crossed to dally with love, I crossed to dislodge a log. I wonder how Leander transported his clothes on that trip; or did he leave them on shore and interview Hero, naked?

We now saddled up, and while thus engaged, I observed that my companions had fallen quite sedate and contemplative; they were saying nothing, but now and then were curiously eyeing the great rapid river, as if mentally saying to it—"You big, ugly thing!" They clearly had a dread of it, akin to superstition. The soldiers then stripped, and we fastened our clothing securely to horns of our saddles, and rolling our guns and ammunition up in blankets, tied them behind the saddles.

"Now, boys," said I, "let us cross one at a time. If we all go together, some confusion may result. I will go first."

I took my horse to the river, spurring him gently; he smelt the water, trembled and snorted. He reared back to the right and left several times, refusing to take the plunge; but at last, seeing that he had to do so, he stuck out his left fore foot into the water, cautiously, as if feeling for bottom; but not finding any, he lost his balance and tumbled headlong into the current. We sank under the surface, and for a moment everything was confusion. I believe we rolled over, but of this I am not sure, for the position was not favorable for taking observations. I was conscious of a very great uproar, and clasped my heels about the horse with all my strength. Recovering himself, he rose into daylight, and struck out splendidly to the opposite shore, describing a great curve before he reached the landing. He bounded to the high land, and at once shook his skin so prodigiously that my seat was extremely disagreeable, and I bounded off as quick as possible.

"Now, Jones Johns!" I exclaimed across the water.

His horse slipped in at once, like a turtle sliding off a rock; sank out of sight a moment, all save his nose and tail, and bore the soldier bravely across, almost in a direct line. "Oo-wee! she is cold though, I tell you," said he as he leaped to the turf. "I tell you, comrade, you'd better wrap your wool close around you!"

"Now, John Powell!"

His horse commenced acting foolishly at once, smelling and snorting as if he imagined the devil was in the water. Urged by the spur, he reared and flung himself to the right so violently that the soldier was nearly displaced from the saddle. Again he attempted this when brought to the brink, rearing high in the air; but this time he made a miscalculation. His left hind foot slipped over the precipice, and his body came tumbling after, falling into the river apparently with back down and heels up. For a moment I thought we should have a funeral; but when the horse righted himself, the soldier was still sticking bravely to his back, with both arms around his neck, his mouth full and his eyes blinded with water. Had there not been a sense of danger, the picture would have been extremely ludicrous as the soldier emerged to the surface. By this time, they were swept fifty feet down stream, the horse behaving well, but apparently in confusion. The soldier, recovering his sight and faculties, gently guided him with the rein, and he came rapidly across, but struck the bank far below the landing. Up along the bank they navigated, the tall grass wiping the soldier's face, until he was deposited safely on shore.

"Drat your blasted hide of you!" said he, as he leapt off and looked at his excited and snorting steed; "That's what you git by being a d—d lunacy. It's the last time I'll venture in a river on your back!"

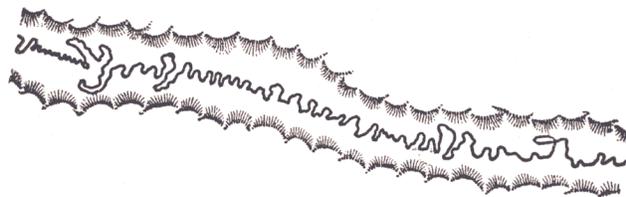
Our first care was to examine our ammunition, which to our great satisfaction we found uninjured. Then spreading our clothing on the tall grass to dry, we proceeded, in primitive nakedness, to prepare breakfast. Procuring branches of drifted cedar, we soon had a roaring fire, on which we cooked coffee and buffalo meat. It was eleven o'clock before our clothing was dry enough to put on; and then we rode up the valley some twenty miles, and again halted.

THE MOST REMARKABLE RIVER IN THE WORLD

This is the most remarkable river in the world, and flows through the most remarkable country. It rises about latitude 36°, and empties into the Rio Grande about 20° 40'. Thus, its direct course is about four hundred and fifty miles, but so great is its sinuosity that it traverses not less than eighteen hundred miles before reaching its debouchment. In this eccentricity, there is no other river that is its fellow. "Meander" is a straight line by the side of my Pecos. I drew this picture of its course, which I protest is accurate, or as nearly so as I

could make it without the aid of engineer's tools.

And while this is a marvel of crookedness, I believe from others who have traveled along its banks a much greater distance, that it does not tell the story. And yet, as the picture



shows, with all this unprecedented tortuosity of the stream itself, its valley is so straight that one can scarcely perceive that it has a curvature. Another remarkable feature is that it seldom touches the wall of the valley, but pursues its rapid career as near the center as possible, one to three miles from either side. Its tremendous current and the soft, melting soil of the valley, make this the more singular.

The rapidity of this river is very strange to one who rides upon its banks. He sees a channel without a stone, and a wide valley as level as a floor, and yet the silent river rushes by him like a charger. The Mississippi, that travels forty-one hundred miles, has no such current as this; not the half of it; not the fourth of it. The Pecos bowls along over the smooth bed at the speed of six or seven miles an hour; which is swifter far than any other deep river in the world, except Niagara, after it has been tortured into the chasm between the Falls and Lewiston; and if it were not so tortuous, it would nearly match that seething, arrowy river. Its tortuosity impedes its impetuosity at least one-half, as I estimate; so that if its channel were straight, it would dash along at the rate of twelve to fourteen miles an hour; a force sufficient to tear up the solid strata and cut its way into the fiery nucleus at last.

THE CAUSE OF IT—THE HAND OF THE ARCHITECT

The Pecos rises on the Llano Estacado, and flows over it along its whole course. This is a vast table-land, tilted over toward the south-east. It is said to be five thousand feet above the sea at its upper rim, and one thousand feet at its lower. I can now perceive that the first altitude is probably under-estimated. My Pecos rises near the upper rim and flows more than four hundred miles over the great tilted table. This would give it a fall of about ten feet to the mile; and when it is considered that the average fall of the Mississippi is only about three inches to the mile, it can be readily perceived what an extraordinary creature my Pecos must be, and how vastly more furious he would be, were he not held in check by the extraordinary sinuosities through which nature has compelled him to grope his way.

This unmatched and unmatchable sinuosity, in so straight a valley, is unaccountable by any natural law of which I can think. The course of an arrow through the air is straight, and water flows in straight lines over smooth surfaces. In this strange land nature works in mysterious ways; and I can only perceive in this apparent eccentricity, the hand of the Architect compelling my Pecos to do his full duty. Were he not restrained by the sinuosities he would shoot over the great tilted table so rapidly that his volume would not be half of what it is. The sinuosities are great natural locks that hold him in check and utilize his waters and their fertilizing sediments. The thirsty soil needs all the drink and food he can give it, and therefore the Architect compels him to wander through labyrinths, offering his cooling draughts to millions of acres that would not enjoy him if he dashed over the great table in a straight line.

The banks are as perpendicular as the walls of an edifice, rising six feet above the water,

to the level of a valley, composed of mud, which on drying, falls into an impalpable powder. An animal may wander along the banks half a day without finding a point where he may drink. Indeed, in my twenty miles ride along the Pecos I saw but one point on either side where he could do so; and these were the artificial excavations where we crossed.

HIS WATER

The water is a very remarkable fluviatile compound. Jones Johns was very thirsty when we reached the river. He took a rapid and heavy draught, and smacking his lips a moment, said, "My God! all them buffaloes and wild horses is camped on this river, and their dreengage has pisened it!" The first sensation in the mouth is a slimy saltiness, as if salt had been melted in soapy water; next a faint sweetness, followed by a distinct bitter, finally winding up with a distinct taste of lye. It is cool and inodorous, and its disagreeable taste is quite vanquished by holding the nose as you drink. Coffee boiled in it is a villainous concoction. The physician who compounded this great river of physic probably wrote the prescription about thus:

1,000,000 tons Mu. Sod.
 400,000 tons Sulph.
 1,000,000 tons Cin. Lig.
 4,000,000 gallons Tinct. amarg.
 Auga Plux. quant. suf.
 Shake well till dissolved and repeat ad infin.

This shows the remarkable region through which it flows: a great natural laboratory, composed mainly of beds and mountains of salt and gypsum.

THE NILE AND MY PECOS

The Nile, through all ages, has been considered one of the wonders of the world, in that it flows a thousand miles without tributary. But my Pecos beats it. I question if during its career of one thousand eight hundred miles, over a region which often does not receive a drop of rain for six months at a time, it has a single tributary that constantly discharges into it. On the maps there are several long, crooked black marks, called Rio so-and-so, which would lead the unwary to suppose that they are rivers emptying into the Pecos; but let him visit them, and he will surely find that these black marks with sounding names, are desolate ravines with abysmal pools here and there, or perhaps enormous channels with feeble rills, sinking after a short distance into burning sands, or disappearing under a yawning chasm.

The Nile bursts from a grand mountain lake, lifted above the continent, starting on his

proud course a warrior full-armed at birth, refreshed as he goes by the melting snows of the Lunar Mountains; but my Pecos, more worth renown, emerges a puny, sickly infant from a poor ravine, gathers strength as he goes, and cuts his way unaided through one thousand eight hundred miles of desert; and not a snow-clad mountain on his line to offer him an iced julep as he plunges along. Let the Nile strip off his laurels and place them on the brow of my Pecos. The Nile has his periods of swell, after which he collapses for ten or eleven months into a common thing; my Pecos rolls so grandly at all times that he is hardly conscious of a swell when he takes one. The Nile has enriched a nation that gave letters and civilization to the world, and my Pecos has enriched a nation that has yet to be!

THE SOIL—IRRIGATION AND NAVIGATION

The soil of this great valley, composed of the lime, sulphur and salt sediments of the river, with the accumulated rotted mater of the rank grasses, is of course, of amazing fertility. There is not one foot of it that is not fertility itself. All the crops of Texas would here luxuriate, if supplied with regular moisture, and I know of no valley more easily irrigated. Inasmuch as this valley is as smooth as a floor, and falls regularly ten feet or more to the mile, there are probably few points on the river from which a ditch would not bring the fertilizing water to the surface three-quarters of a mile below. A ditch ten miles in length and eight feet in depth would flood the valley to a great distance. How easy to construct ditches with locks so as to irrigate every foot! Thus, this great valley, now without an inhabitant save vagabond savages, is, in itself, capable of supporting a nation; its products might be borne on the Rio Grande on boats, thence to the navigable water of that river by rafts of teams. But a railroad to this valley would make it at once a garden of wealth, and would receive in turn a trade which would soon enrich itself. The river is two hundred feet in width, and at no point where I saw it, less than ten to thirty feet in depth. On account of its rapid curves it would require a peculiar steamer to navigate it, but human ingenuity would soon build such a craft. The water is dark and turbid, bearing an immense amount of sediment. I estimate the rich agricultural lands of this remarkable valley at not less than two million acres.

CHAPTER II

ADAM'S CURSE—FANTASTIC SHAPES

Turning west, from the seat of the unborn giant, we rode into a region of disheartening aspect. We had stepped out of Eden into Gehenna. As far as I could sweep with my glass, I saw scarcely a blade of grass, but a dead expanse of naked ground with Spanish daggers scattered like skirmishers in advance of a battle, fantastic castles of the Floral Fiend, and numerous thickets of sage brush, almost impenetrable from their myriads of spines. Everything is armed with points keener than needles. Surely, Adam's curse has fallen heavily upon this abandoned tract: "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee."

And yet this melancholy scene is not devoid of a certain sort of interest. Solitary granitic and porphyritic cones rise fifty to two hundred feet above the plain, some of them polished smoothly as glass; then, here and there a great wall of massive basalt rises abruptly, extending hundreds of yards north and south or north-east and south-west. One of these looked so like a giant fortress that we rode out of our way to stand under its shadow. We supposed it to be two hundred feet high—its walls perfectly perpendicular, and not an atom of soil upon it. It is safe to say that no human being ever trod on this thing's back. The walls of this also were in places polished so smoothly that a fly could scarcely crawl up them. If this is not glacial action, I am not able to comprehend it. I believe, therefore, that this region has been the scene of great glaciers. Under the walls of this monstrous fortress, a colony of prairie-dogs had built their city, in the barren, waterless waste.

Toward sunset we rode upon the wide, desolate channel of a dried up creek, filled with fractured limestone and mounds of white glittering sand. Following it up a few miles, we found a bright clear pool, into which ran a smart brook. It here met its death, and sank in the depths of sand. There was a little valley of excellent grass, and we took up quarters for the night. With fagots of sage-brush we cooked some coffee, and ate cheese and crackers.

CHAPTER III

THE ROSE IN THE WILDERNESS—WHAT IT WOULD BE

At daylight we resumed our journey, arriving at Fort Stockton after noon, fifty-two miles from the Pecos. It was like stepping out of Gehenna again into Eden. Behind us was all aridity, abhorrence and desolation; before us, green fields, rich gardens, bubbling fountains and all efflorescence. A sweeter surprise it is impossible to conceive. We felt like a caravan entering a sweet oasis in the desert, and I never before fully comprehended what these bright oases are. They are life and joy in the midst of death; they are the glimpses of heaven; and I suspect that the eastern poets drew from them their rich pictures of the Abode of the Blest.

This is a military post of the United States, where six companies of negro cavalry are quartered. The post, three thousand feet above the sea, sits on a majestic hill, from the base of which probably a hundred springs burst forth, some of them so large that they are used for baths. These springs unite and run down a valley as fertile as that of the Pecos; the water is led through a number of ditches, irrigating three thousand acres whose crops are enriching the farmers. One of these farmers is said to receive an annual income of ten thousand dollars from his wheat, barley and corn. The El Paso grape, than which there is none richer, here flourishes abundantly. As I looked upon this magnificent garden in the desert, I said to myself, "This is what the Pecos valley would be if it were irrigated; this is what all the wilderness and desert would be if they had Artesian wells. Who will take the first step to erect the great wilderness into a garden of luxuriance? Hear it, ye statesmen and law-makers of Texas!"

But bold as this beautiful creek is, it flags and at last fails utterly a few miles from Stockton—drunk up by the arid land and clime, leaving a lorn chasm of desolation. Suppose it were encouraged and assisted by an artesian well here and there along its course, and trees planted on its banks to shade it from the devouring sun; it would sing and sparkle along the whole line, ever fresh and abundant, bringing beauty to the land and wealth and happiness to thousands.

The population, outside of the military, appears to be about two hundred, all Mexican laborers, except the few American proprietors. The houses are all adobe, except the quarters of the officers, which are of stone. But one tree grows at the post—a cotton-wood fifty feet in height, planted by the officers some years ago. It seems to be saying to every one who beholds it: "Bring me companions—you see that we will thrive here." Fruit trees have been lately introduced, and there can be no question that the Stocktonians will soon enjoy the peach and pear at their boards as well as the luscious grape.

The annual rainfall here is about fifteen inches, sometimes as high as twenty-five, near-

ly all of which comes during August and September. These showers are attended with almost unprecedented discharges of lightning; and frequently the clouds are said to hang over the land for hours at a time, doing nothing whatever but manoeuvring and discharging peal after peal of thunder; finally, near the close of day, they separate and leave a brilliant sunset. The mean winter temperature is about fifty-five, and the summer seventy to seventy-five. The post surgeon declared this location and clime to be so healthy that no one ever dies except from "old age, stupidity or violence, and we are so good a family here that the last rarely occurs." They obtain their fuel from the roots of the mesquite, as they do at Concho, and it is abundant.

We bought a bushel of corn from the sutler for four dollars; this was an abominable extortion, for we learned afterwards that we might have obtained it from the farmers at two dollars and fifty cents. We bought a ham and some coffee from the same worthy, paying fifty cents a pound for each. If that worthy has constituency enough, surely he will grow rich. An old Mexican woman was much more reasonable. She supplied us an excellent dinner of soup, sweet potatoes, onions, eggs, venison, hash and bread, for fifty cents each. The soup and hash were red-hot with red-pepper, but they were fine nevertheless. I was so much pleased with my meal, that I could scarcely forbear kissing the old lady's pretty daughter, who assisted her in preparing it.

CHAPTER IV

We rode to Leon Springs, eight miles, over a cactus and sage brush desolation. This is a stage stand of the El Paso mail line, and its only remarkable feature is a marsh of several hundred acres, filled with salty water, and covered with a coarse, rank, reedy-looking growth. This is a sudden depression of the earth from eight to ten feet below the level. The water is so salty that it is extremely disagreeable to drink, and made villainous coffee, and yet it is all we had. Encamped for the night feasting on fried ham and buffalo meat.

CHAPTER V

REMARKABLE REGION

A DOLOROUS DAY

Filling our canteens with the salty water, at three A.M. we were on the march, riding south. When day dawned, we saw a most unaccountable country, which steadily grew more unaccountable as we moved on: a lofty, smooth plain, treeless as an ocean, but with innumerable varieties of cactus and thickets of sage brush; ground for the most part without a wisp of grass; isolated mounds of rocks in every direction, shaped like a sugar-loaf, many of them two hundred feet or more in height, and all smooth or polished. These were ejections under the primitive sea, around which sedimentary deposits have settled, till only their peaks are exposed. But the most peculiar feature is occasional mounds of glittering white sand, sometimes piled up forty or fifty feet high, and covering an acre or more. These things glittered in the sun like snow-banks, and looked so strange that we rode some distance out of the way to examine the first one. It was composed of pure quartz sand, unmixed with any other substance. So far as we could observe, there was very little of this in the soil, and its appearance here is very perplexing. The only way that I can explain it is on the supposition that they may be the remnants of mounds of solid quartz rock that once rose above the plain, similar to the cones of granite and porphyry that still stand.

"Ah," said Jones Johns, contemplating one of the biggest of these things, "that would be worth fifty thousand dollars in San Antonio. Here it is worth nothing. It is like a great man out of his element. For instance, what would I amount to, turned loose among the heathen niggers of Africa? And what would Gen. Grant have come to among them niggers? Great men should live where folks appreciate 'em; and there's no sense in this sand being here."

No life in this region except prairie-dogs, and they have built under the shadow of the cones, as if seeking shade. Where is the grass that these fellows feed on here, and where the water they drink? Does not this confirm their subsistence on subterranean forests, and quiet lakes therein?

We rode on, on, and on, over this marvellous country, without a drop of water on it, or even a ravine to tell where water had been. We had been greatly persecuted with thirst all day, the salty stuff in our canteens exciting instead of allaying it; and when the last drop was gone our sufferings became great. Our mouths became thick and gummy, and finally feverish. We tried to mend this by chewing bullets, and it did help considerably. Our poor horses suffered terribly, and toward nightfall were so far gone that they moved as heavily as chunks of lead, and reeled like drunken men. It looked as if death was in our faces; but at ten o'clock a chain of mountains rose out of the darkness close beside us. Our horses im-

mediately freshened up, actually forcing us to go their own way. At last we heard the babbling of waters, and the next moment our horses had their heads deep in the dear liquid. We dismounted, and it was delicious! Do not talk of champagne, iced, in goblets of gold; it is nothing to this heaven-born liquid. As I drank, the satisfaction I felt was heavenly. I knew this was Willow Springs, as marked on the maps, fifty-six miles from Leon Springs. The grass was fine. Having hobbled our horses upon it, and eaten heartily of jerked beef and crackers, we stretched ourselves on the ground to sleep.

THE NIGHT OF WOLVES

We had not time to close our eyes before plain and mountain began to resound with the howl of lobos, or the big wolves. They gathered nearer and nearer, until we could hear them tripping in the grass all around us. We became alarmed lest they might attack our horses. With pistol in hand, we stealthily neared our horses, and with ropes staked them very close to us; then again fell to our blankets. The wolves now seemed to sit on their hunkers and circle about us, and proceeded to deliver a great serenade. I endeavored to interpret their language, and their song was this, as near as I could make it:

Oh strangers, have you any meat to spare,
 From your sacks so large and strong?
 We smell a good smell on the cool night air,
 As it comes—as it comes along.
 It is incense sweet, the smell of that meat;
 It is juicy and tender, we know:
 A buffalo's hump, or a heifer's rump,
 Or a good fat buck, we trow,
 We trow—
 Or a good fat buck, we trow,
 Oh, bow wow wow, bow wow wow;
 Oh, bow, wow, wow, wow, wow!

Behold in us a hungry crew,
 Who have wandered night and day
 O'er hill and dale, through ravine and vale,
 In pursuit of the flying prey.
 But the buffalo moves ten thousand strong,
 In fierce and terrible array;
 And when we dash that herd among,
 He drives the poor wolf away,
 Away—

He drives the poor wolf away!
 Oh, bow wow wow, bow wow wow;
 Oh, bow, wow, wow, wow, wow!

And the buck he speeds with the speed of the wind—
 Jehu! how he can run!
 We pursue for miles, with guiles and wiles,
 Only to be outdone!
 The antelope dwells on the prairies wide,
 And his eyes like the eagle's are;
 The wolf he sees, or he smells us on the breeze,
 And he bounds o'er the prairies afar,
 Afar—
 He bounds o'er the prairies afar!
 Oh, bow wow wow, bow wow wow;
 Oh, bow, wow, wow, wow, wow!

But, strangers, you have your rifle true,
 With the deadly slug and ball;
 At whose fiery crack, they halt in their track,
 And reel, and die, and fall.
 You have wealth of meat, juicy and sweet,
 You are happy and fat always;
 You know not the sorrows of the poor lorn wolf,
 As he howls, as he howls by the way,
 By the way—
 As he howls, as he howls by the way,
 Oh, bow wow wow, bow wow wow;
 Oh, bow, wow, wow, we say!

Ye favored ones, be kind to the wolf,
 And he'll be kind unto you;
 And the Father above Who made us all,
 He will mark the good that ye do.
 From His hands came we, from His hands came ye;
 We are brothers in His glorious reign;
 So share the blessings He has showered on you,
 With your poor, lost friend of the plain.
 Of the plain—
 Of your poor, lost friend of the plain.

Oh, bow wow wow, bow wow wow;
Of your poor, lost friend of the plain.

“Good gracious!” said John Powell; “let’s give them poor things a bone. They sings like their hearts was a-busting.” At length they dropped their serenade and went away one by one; but their distant cries were in our ears as long as we lay awake. They were probably not half as hungry as they pretended to be, and doubtless much of their vaunted misery was mere put-on.

CHAPTER VI

AMONG THE MINERALS

“THERE THEY ARE, FOR A FACT!”

We slept profoundly until three o'clock, when we journeyed a little west of south under the moonlight. The small brook formed by Willow Springs ran a short distance and sank in the earth. The country as we rode along was exceedingly beautiful: fertile vales and swelling tumuli, all dressed in a carpet of grass as smooth and luxuriant as it was possible to conceive. We thought that something of this was due to the soft moonlight; but when the sun rose it only disclosed a wider prospect of gracefulness, beauty and fertility. Feeding in every direction were flocks of deer which raised their heads and gazed at us with more curiosity than fear. Athwart our path in the distance lay a chain of lofty and rugged mountains, some of which disclosed to the fieldglass bright, white lines running over them, as if they were decked in ribbons. At ten o'clock we approached these mountains, and finding a splendid spring of pure, cold water, we dismounted and turned our horses to the grass, having ridden, as we supposed, about twenty-eight miles.

Here were plenty of mesquite brush and wild cherry. After a feast in which the last of our buffalo meat disappeared, Jones Johns and myself went on a prospecting tour among the mountains, leaving John Powell with the horses. In the narrow valleys and gorges of the mountains, and reaching as high up their flanks as the soil extended, grew forests of cedar trees, which even excelled those on the bank of the Pecos Valley. Thousands of these were a hundred feet in height, three to four feet in diameter, without a limb until near the top, and as straight as the mast of a ship. A grateful aromatic odor pervaded the forest. They are, perhaps, the most superb of all cedars, and here is enough of them to build a great city. How grand, solemn and silent they are as we walk on the sleek carpet of fallen leaves—not a sound coming to our ears, save the wind sighing in the boughs far overhead! Said I, “Jones Johns, if you had these forests in Houston, you would be worth a million; you would scorn your sand-prairies and your sand-banks. You would take to putting on airs, Jones Johns, and your severe republican simplicity would be corrupted and lost. You would want an empire, Jones Johns, that you might dance attendance around the Emperor, as His Grace, the Duke of Cedars.”

“I 'speck I would for a fact,” said he, eyeing the grand forest. “I would want a grand lady for a Duke-ess, and I reckon I would entirely forget poor, honest, good Ailsie, the fat washer-girl of Thompson street.”

These mountains are of granitic and basaltic rocks, and some are masses of white quartz, presenting the appearance of being wrapped in snow. They are literally charged with min-

erals; there is hardly one, as far as we saw, that is not traversed with veins of iron, copper, and silver-lead. These veins are from a few inches to thirty feet in width, and are true metallic veins that have been shot up from the central fires. They penetrate granite, basalt, and quartz alike, and no doubt came up with these at the time of their upheaval, but they are most common in the granite and quartz. The silver-lead appears to be very abundant, and masses of it lie scattered along the flanks of the mountains, and all of it appears to me rich in silver and lead. If this chain of mountains, which I take to be the Sierra Santiago, does not prove rich in these metals when explored by the mineralogists, I shall be greatly disappointed. There are numerous veins of quartz, so frothy and porous as to resemble pumicestone, but in these I could detect no metal.⁵⁸

Our pleasant occupation of searching for the precious metals, was brought to an untimely close. We had reached the top of a mountain, commanding a wide view, when I saw a party of fifteen or twenty men on horseback, riding slowly across a plain in a course which would bring them near Powell and our horses. Drawing my glass, I could not distinctly make out what they were, but they presented a suspicious appearance. I handed the glass to Johns, telling him to look carefully. In a moment he broke out, as he took the glass from his eyes, "There they are for a fact: them's Injuns!" Believing they might be a party of explorers, I again levelled the glass up just as they had risen in a favorable position on a little eminence. There was no mistake about it this time. They had no dress but blankets or skins thrown across them; some had guns, and the bows and quivers of others were distinctly visible. I said, "You are right. Let us hasten to John Powell. They will almost surely come to that spring for water." We travelled down the mountain much faster than we went up. A few minutes brought us to our horses, which having filled themselves, were lying in the grass. John Powell was not visible. We called him in a low voice, but got no response. Hurrying around we found him snoring in a little thicket, where he had gone to hide, in case any evil-disposed person should pass. Johns seized him by the foot, and giving him a smart jerk, exclaimed, "Bounce up—the Injuns are right on us, thick!" He sprang up like a buck aroused from his lair, grasping his rifle and staring wildly around. We did not stop to explain particulars, but saddled our horses as quickly as we could, struck out into the first opening we saw, and soon buried ourselves in the shadow of the mountains. Suspecting that the Indians might trail us, we moved as fast as the nature of the ground would permit, keeping a sharp look-out behind. We were soon involved in terrible confusion: stumbling painfully over heaps of boulders, under precipices that hung far above us, in depths that no sun-ray ever penetrated; squeezing through fissures and chasms so narrow that our knees received many a wound. One of these led into a field of volcanic glass,⁵⁹ swollen into numerous bumps by the boulders below, on which our horses' feet slipped and clanked at a great rate. At last we stopped in a dark forest of cedar, jammed in a deep depression which seemed to have no outlet except the fissure or rent by which we had entered it. We threw ourselves on the carpet of cedar leaves, to rest our horses and determine what next to do. We were on a spot which doubtless no soul had ever seen before—not even an Indian.

“Blast them Injuns,” said Jones Johns. “They have run us into a bear’s den at last, and maybe we’ll never git outen it. We’d better stayed right there and died game, than to starve to death in this black witch-hole.” Truly, it did look like a witch-hole, with the solid, perpendicular walls of basalt rising in every direction around us, their shadows increased by the dark cedar-boughs above our heads. We could scarcely get a glimpse of the sky, and only so much as that by bending our heads far back and looking straight up.

Before our flight from the springs we had not filled our canteens, which were without a drop of water. It was now after four o’clock. Knowing that if we would get out of this black hole before morning—and thus escape great suffering for both ourselves and horses—that we must do so at once, we mounted and rode down the narrow forest. It terminated at the entrance to a stony chasm, which seemed to come to an abrupt end a few yards ahead; but, entering it, we found that it zig-zagged a long distance, bringing us out at last into another forest of cedar. This terminated in a deep canyon, running to the south-west, enclosed between walls of basaltic rock, five or six hundred feet in perpendicular height. It was about a half-mile in width, its floor level and thick with grass. It is a grand natural pass for a railway, and perhaps the only one through the mountains. We emerged from the canyon into a beautiful rolling country green as summer, just as night fell on us. There was no water, but our horses being greatly worried, we stripped them and threw ourselves upon the soft carpet, eating nothing for fear of exciting thirst. We judged we had traveled forty miles since morning.

The Indians who had driven us on this terrible jaunt through the recesses of the metallic mountain, were doubtless a thieving set from Mexico, entering Texas to steal and murder. Had we allowed them to attack us under shelter, I have no doubt we would have punished them severely, and whipped them; but I was not on a fighting expedition. Had I been I would have behaved in a very different manner. The wolves made music as usual, and we heard some strange, unexplained voices during the night; but we slept grandly.

CHAPTER VII

THE LOST CREEK—SILVER—THE LIONS OF THE MOUNTAINS

At four A.M. we were in the saddle, without breakfast, journeying southwest—the country a picture of beauty: serene vales, smooth-flowing hills, and occasionally solitary rounded mountains, or a group of three or four together—the vales and hills asleep under a green mantle. This is a limestone region, exposing, with the prevailing rock wherever the strata are broken, red or black shales, with iron or copper pyrites, and masses of selenite transparent as glass. This combination sometimes appears in layers, two or three feet in thickness, between the limestones, and is also scattered on the surface in the vales. I judge the formation to be Permian. At nine o'clock we reached a pretty creek, flowing south, bordered on the west by immense rounded tumuli of granite and basaltic crags and precipices—all bare and presenting an extremely bleak and desolate scene. We stopped an hour and ate ham and crackers—all that our commissary now had. As we moved down the creek we observed that the bare rocks rose into bare mountains, grey and black, very rugged, and suggestive of witches and “hell-broth.” At last one of these erected its black front across the valley, making a natural dam of solid rock, several hundred feet in height and apparently a mile or more in thickness. The smart brook, which had been singing and bounding all the way over its stony bottom, here hushed its merry voice in a dark, silent pool against the mountain. The banks of this pool were steep and without a depression on either side. What became of the laughing brook? Engulfed, perhaps forever, in the cavernous depths of the rock.

“Men may come and men may go, but I go on forever,” cannot be sung of this brook, stranded, cut off and lost in the midst of its singing laughter. It may be that on the opposite side of the mountain it burst forth afresh and ran along under the dark precipices, but we did not go to see.

We here saw many veins of silver and lead, and detached masses were frequent under the mountains. Veins of different colors traversed the mountains in every direction. Our richest specimens of silver were obtained here. Of iron there is practically no end. We saw blocks of it that looked like masses of encrinites compacted together and converted into solid iron. We also saw copper ore. Indeed, it seems to me that there is no important mineral except gold, which these gigantic masses of barren rocks may not furnish in paying quantities; but it would be a terrible country to the miner.

While inspecting the minerals we saw a company of deer entering the valley a half mile above us. As we pined for fresh meat, I walked up the bluff to get a shot. When nearly opposite the deer, I saw a fine buck coming toward me down a ravine into which I was about to descend. Concealing myself behind a rock, I waited for him, and just as he had brought

his flank to bear I pulled trigger upon him at a distance of about eighty yards. He sprang into the air, staggered a few steps and dropped dead. Taking his hams, I walked up the ravine to look at an immense mass of rock ribboned with veins, which had attracted my attention. It was almost as sleek as glass, and I clambered to the top with difficulty, leaving the hams at the base. While pecking at the scoriaceous veins of quartz, thinking I might have discovered a gold mine, I was aroused from my dream of wealth by hearing a quick guttural roar, which seemed to come from some object very near me. There was a depression on the top of the rock, and into this I sank, slightly projecting my head over the rim to take observations. The roar was repeated two or three times in quick succession, and immediately there seemed to be several objects roaring all together. The roaring was precisely like that which I heard on the Pecos bluff, and I sat still, chock-full of curiosity, mingled with some dread. I had not long to wait. Five splendid animals leaped into the open ravine about two hundred yards above me and walked leisurely along, smelling the ground, and then stood still a moment, their heads erect, gazing to the front and right and left. One of them opened with a roar to which the others immediately responded in concert. "Lions!" said I to myself; "regular African lions, and here will be a battle—five to one!" They resumed their march down the ravine in open view, till, reaching a large rounded rock about seventy-five yards from me, they leaped nimbly upon it, and there stood gazing in every direction, roaring at times deeply and lashing the air with their tails. The roaring was invariably begun by one, to which the others immediately responded, repeated by each several times in succession. I shrank as deeply as I could into the depression, leaving only my forehead and eyes above the rim and lying quiet as a mouse. I might have killed one at least easily, but as I had not started out on a fighting expedition, I concluded that I would let them alone, if they would do the same with me. Moreover, I desired to study their manners. What magnificent and powerful beasts they were—so precisely like lions that I could distinguish no important difference! They were tawny like the lion, but of a slightly lighter color, and though with locks long enough, the heads of the males were less shaggy; the same big head and stiff ears; the same lordly and leonine aspect; the same long tail with the tuft at the end.

Their roar, no one could distinguish from that of the true lion. There were two males and three females, the latter with no mane, and much more fussy and restless than their lordly companions. While their lords stood quietly looking around, they were uneasily stepping hither and thither, as if inciting them on, and eager for adventure and blood. They did not see me, for no other reason, I suppose, than that I was considerably elevated above them, but they evidently suspected that there was something uncommon in the vicinity. Presently they leaped from the rock and walked slowly down the ravine. When they reached the point where I had crossed it, they stopped, smelled the ground, and roared at a prodigious rate, with a multitude of short, quick, deep grunts, at the same time lashing the air with their tails. I now expected that they would return on my track, and made up my mind for a battle; but instead of doing so, after a moment or two they continued down

the ravine and disappeared behind a ledge of stone. I descended at once from the stone, walked rapidly up the ravine, and clambered out of it at the point where they had leaped into it. Just as I did so I heard a great roaring, which caused me to think that they had seen me and were in pursuit, but nothing further followed. I concluded that they had found the carcass of the deer, and were congratulating themselves on the discovery.

I hurried toward the point where the soldiers were, but becoming involved in the mazes of stones, I spent quite an hour before I reached it. While I related my adventure, we saddled up and rode up the valley with the intention of trying the mettle of these powerful animals. Coming to the spot where I had slain the deer, we saw not a vestige of him except his horns, hoofs and a few fragments of bone. For sometime we looked around but discovered nothing; we hallooed, but received no response. The beasts had retired to their recesses or quietly watched us from the inaccessible crags.

The zoologists say that the lion is not native outside of Asian and African wilds; but if this is not a lion, pray tell me, ye scientists, what is it? It is said in the terse Latin that “no like is the same;”⁶⁰ but it cannot easily be disputed that two “sames” are at least of the same stock. Say what ye choose, I write this down as a true American lion; for my eyes have carefully seen, and my ears have carefully heard. He is not uncommon in the deep mountainous wilds of Western Texas, but is rarely seen, because he does not venture out of them except at night, when like his African and Asiatic kinsman, he goes abroad on his prowling and destructive expeditions. They call him the Mountain or Mexican lion, and he is held as the most dangerous and terrible of all American beasts; but I have seen none who have ever encountered him in battle. They say that his is fond of horse-flesh and often descends upon the plains, four or five in company, and makes terrible slaughter among the herds.⁶¹

THE PASS—THE ABYSMAL CREEK AND FALL OF BRUIN

We rode back to the place of the death of the brook; thence turned west, and soon entered a smooth pass that opened a long way through the otherwise impracticable mountains, which on either side grew constantly more lofty, desolate and jagged as we rode on. So perfect a roadway is this, that it is impossible not to see in it design of the Architect. He maketh the way smooth into these terrible stones that are rich with His precious metals. In this vale He has walked—the sublime, omnipresent Personal God—and the great hills danced for joy at His presence! Sublime Inconceivable! How can we address Thee, when in contemplation of Thee, the mind is overwhelmed and lost in a glory of wonder and unspeakable thought?

After two hours, the pass brought us to a creek, with water as bright as dewdrops and so cold that it seemed to issue from iced fountains.

Bright, singing little creek, are there snow-clad mountains on your border which repay you with iced juleps for the song you sing them as you go?

Precipitous walls and black crags, insurmountable to all without wings, here made

our further advance westward impossible; and we turned south down the sparkling creek, which now sang along green vales, and now hushed its voice in chasms so dark and deep that we could neither hear nor see it. Sometimes the jutting stones of the mountains pressed us so near the chasms that there was barely passage for our horses, and we dismounted and led the steeds cautiously along the brink. At the mouth of one of the chasms I entered on foot, and walked some distance on the stone floor of the creek. The steep walls towered two hundred feet or more above me, and the chasm was so narrow that I could easily touch both walls at once. The solid rock had been rent in twain to give passage to the creek. Even in this deep pit were numerous metallic veins, from which ores of silver, lead and copper stuck out in chunks.

Emerging from the chasm we entered a black gorge into which the chasm opened; we had made but little headway, when a black bear, startled by the ringing of our horses' feet upon the stones, sprang out of the creek bed and clambered hastily, but in a lubberly way up the mountain, disappearing in an overhanging thicket of cedar. I threw my bridle to one of the soldiers, and leaping to the ground, crept stealthily in pursuit. I sprang from a projecting rock into the cedars, and there lay Bruin, crouched before me, not ten feet away. Taken by surprise, he reared on his hind legs, stared at me a second with a strange, intelligent look, and then turned for flight. As he did so, I fired with my rifle, the ball giving him a severe wound on the left shoulder. As if conscious now that there was no safety in flight, he turned abruptly upon me and began a rapid advance. I stepped back to balance myself, and the next moment crushed his skull with a ball, and he fell dead within an arm's length of me. Suppose my gun had missed fire! I shudder to think of it. Probably with one effort he would have hurled me over the precipice two hundred feet into the stony gorge below, or crushed my head in his mouth. Feeling him and seeing that he was gloriously fat, I called to the soldiers for help, and soon Jones Johns stood beside me. "Golly! he is a rouser," said he. We judged him to be about five hundred pounds weight. Cutting off a good supply of his choicest parts, we descended into the gorge, leaving the rest for the lions of the mountains.

Down black gorges, down verdant vales, along dizzy precipices and dark chasms, through somber forests of cedar, under the shadow of the mountains, we rode and rode; until, while the sun was yet glancing over the flanks and between the crags of the mountains, we came suddenly to a halt on the banks of a great yellow river rolling rapidly and silently below us. It was the Rio Bravo del Norte, and we stood upon the uttermost soil of Uncle Sam, the rolling plains and mountains of Mexico rising beyond it. We dismounted, hobbled our horses on a little plot of rich grass, kindled a rousing fire of cedar, and soon ate a great bait of delicious, dripping bear-meat and venison, reinforced by hard-tack and washed down with strong, black coffee. When night fell and we slept profoundly, paying no attention to the hungry wolves, who came to solicit a share of our stores. Charles Hall-ock, Esq., editor of *Forest and Stream*, in his admirable work on the game birds, fishes and animals of America, "The Sportsman's Gazetteer," ridicules the flesh of the bear—saying

bears pamper on grasshoppers, grubs and beetles, and are unfit to be eaten. Had he been with me on this trip, he would erase that passage, or at all events, make an exception of the Texas bear.⁶² I judge he has never eaten a Texas bear. In Texas they feed mostly on pecans, rich acorns, and golden honey which they gather in the caves. Texas bear meat is simply glorious, whether fresh or baconed. At least, that is the testimony of one who has eaten many a pot of it, and always with relish. As Texas surpasses every other land, why should not its bears surpass all other bears?

CHAPTER VIII

PERPLEXITY THAT IS PROVIDENTIALLY RELIEVED

A RIDE IN MEXICO

In the morning while we ate breakfast we watched sunrise in the mountains. First, a flood of light, like a pyramid of fire came streaming upward from the east, then poured through the crevices and fissures; and at last when the great orb rose to the crest of the mountain, and seemed to rest upon it, a grand outburst of glory fell all about us. Then we sat on the bank of the river and smoked our pipes, and watched the crystal waters of the creek fading away in the golden-colored Bravo. The air was laden with the fragrance of the cedars. A wilder, more secluded nook than this was never seen.

A great perplexity now fell upon us; we were utterly confused and lost, and knew not which way to turn. We desired to reach the Mexican town of Presidio del Norte, but with the lights before us, it was impossible to tell whether it lay below or above us. At last while debating the perplexing question, we heard the tramp of horses' feet above us on the river, and turning, we saw a horse coming toward us, with a black, ragged object on his back bearing a long gun across the saddle. Neither rider nor horse had yet perceived us. "Boys, that is an Indian," said I. "No," said Jones Johns, "that is a black Mexican. Injuns wears no hats." "Then," said I, "let us capture that fellow and make him show us the way." We concealed ourselves under the bank, and the object rode within thirty feet of us, halting when he perceived our smouldering fire, and looking around in a suspicious way. "Now, boys," said I, "is our time."

With that we sprang to our feet and made a dash for the Aztec. He turned his horse to fly, but I brought my gun down upon him and called to him to halt. At the same time the soldiers, who could talk a little Mexican, leveled their guns upon him also, crying "amigos!" and adding that if he did not stop he would be shot. He evidently believed the threat was in earnest, and seeing little hope of escape with so many rifles upon him, turned and surrendered. His lips were white, and he shook with excitement from head to foot. The soldiers explaining to him what we wanted, he grew calm, but shook his head and said he would not take us to Presidio. I told the soldiers to tell him he must do it or be shot—that we were in no mood to be denied so reasonable a request. When he heard this he looked much distressed, as if we had interfered with some prior arrangement; but finally "Bueno!" said he. "Yo lo haré." He then pointed up the river, and we mounted our horses and followed him.

This old fellow was probably sixty years of age, but there was that about him which indicated infinite toughness. He was tall and lean, sharp visaged, had a nose like an eagle's

beak, and was of a dark copper color. His eye looked sly and wicked. His dress was entirely of buckskin, except that he had a very dirty, ragged blanket thrown over his shoulders. His shoes were moccasins, and his hat was the common Mexican sombrero, with an enormous rattlesnake in effigy coiled around it. From his hard and weather-beaten appearance I judged he had not slept in a house for years. We asked him what he was doing in this lonely country. "Hunting," said he, in Spanish. He then asked what we were doing. We told him we were also hunting—hunting Indians, and Jones Johns added that we had encountered a flock of them the day before and killed six. At this I observed a nervous shrug of the old fellow's shoulders, and this, in connection with his wild and sinister expression and appearance, left little doubt in my mind that he was a brigand, who lived principally among the Indians and piloted them on their raids into Texas. I thought it likely that he belonged to the party we had lately seen.⁶³

He led us up the river several miles, and then rode into it, we following in file. The bottom was sandy, the current strong, and the water sometimes nearly up to our seats. The Bravo, or Rio Grande, as it is usually called by the Americans, averages where we rode along it about three hundred feet in breadth, and looks inflamed like the Red, the Canadian and the Arkansas Rivers, which rise nearly in the same region. I tasted its water and found it sweet and decidedly cold. The old Mexican told us there were many places where it could be forded, but in the mountains there was difficulty in getting out, on account of the steepness of the banks. It is a grand river, and with dredging could be made navigable many hundred miles above its mouth—at least as high up as the mouth of the Pecos.

On the Mexican side it was rough and mountainous, the same as on the Texan, with little or no valley, and uninhabited. Our guide led us ten or twelve miles over a high rolling prairie of many mesquite trees and rich grass. At last we reached a large road, coming from the heart of Mexico, leading north-east. Here the old Mexican halted and said, "This will take you to Presidio before sunset. I can go no further." I gave him a ten-dollar gold piece, at which he smiled and said, "Muchas gracias, senior; Dios téngalos a usted en sus manos."⁶⁴ He turned and rode away over the prairie in the direction whence we had come.

As we rode on, this country was so like West Texas that it would be quite impossible to distinguish them apart, and we could hardly feel ourselves in a foreign land. In the evening, however, we rode into an army of diminutive jackasses with huge piles of mesquite wood, bigger than themselves, fastened to their backs and flanks with cords. By the side of each walked a Mexican boy, frequently pounding him with a club, and yelling—"burro carajo!" This scene was totally strange, and only then did I appreciate, that I was in a country over which our flag does not float. We asked the little fellows how far to Presidio, and about a dozen responded, with much sweetness of voice, "Tres millas, senores." They ceased their gabbling and carajos, and tried to behave like little gentlemen while we were among them. They were all quite handsome, though illy clad and not shod at all, and were from a reddish-white to a bright yellow color. None of them were black; this causes me to believe that the blackness of many of the Mexicans is a slow growth and is the effect of climate. About

sunset we rode into the city and asked for a hotel, and were told that there was none in the place. At last, however, we secured a room with no furniture except two long benches, and a yard for our horses. We bought provender for our horses, and did our own cooking. At night we spread our blankets on the floor, which was the naked, but clean-swept earth.

DIVISION VII

CHAPTER I

PRESIDIO DEL NORTE. ASSES AND GOATS

After breakfast I walked abroad, leaving the soldiers to their liberty. Presidio has a population of three thousand or less, and is built entirely of one-story adobe houses, all so much alike that they seem to have dropped from the same mould. It is impossible for a place to be more of a oneness than this; and yet, to the American stranger, it is a place in which he can pass a day or two with interest. It seemed to me as I walked along its streets, that I had slid back into the past at least a thousand years. There is nothing whatever of the city of the present age here, either in the architecture or the people; no bustling commerce, no whirr of machinery, no rattling carriages or rumbling wagons. The diminutive and patient jack-ass, that can neither be coaxed nor driven out of a slow walk, supplies all the transportation that is needed; and the people walk leisurely about—not with the appearance of having nothing to do, but rather that they have ample time to do it in, and that it were as well done a month hence as to-day. They appear contented and even happy, as if well pleased with what the gods have given, and perfectly willing to leave to them the morrow. I doubt if they have any distinct idea of a verb in the future tense. If to be happy be the aim of our life, I see no reason why any one should complain of the Mexicans; for they seem to fill that condition as completely as any people I ever saw—at least, they do in Presidio. Perhaps they ridicule the restless bustling and aspirations of the Americans, as much as we do their indolent and careless sleepy-head.

There are a great many shops here, perhaps more than in an American town of the same population, but the stocks of a great majority of them are so inconsiderable that to supply one jackass load would deplete a whole block. Yet on these small stocks, averaging not more than fifty to one hundred dollars in value, the Mexican merchant will support himself, a large wife and a host of children, and at the same time sustain an excellent credit. Goats are more numerous here than the people, and the air is redolent with their strange, coolish smell. These animals are a very important part of the community; indeed, without them Presidio would probably dissolve and fall to pieces. It costs nothing to feed them, and they supply the Mexican merchant with abundance of rich milk, and a tender kid for meat whenever desired; thus they save him from touching his capital invested in commerce. Next to the goat the ass is very numerous, insomuch that one can hardly meet a lady promenading the street, but that one or more asses will be found walking by her side. These creatures are also very important factors in society here, costing nothing to take care of them, and performing all the duties that are performed by horse and wagon in American communities. If a Mexican merchant has a few goats and a wife to milk them, and an ass and a six-year-old boy to drive him, and fifty dollars in capital in merchandise, with his

frugal habits he should grow rich; for to the free gifts of the goats, the ass and the boy add fuel without cost, and if perchance more is gathered than is needed in the household, the merchant can rapidly increase his capital merchandise by selling fuel to his neighbors who have not an ass and a boy. Thus it may be said that the whole fabric of Presidio rests on goats and asses, and if they were taken away, total disintegration would result. That this is no bad basis to rest upon, is shown by the fact that all are contented and happy. And since people are apt to resemble in many respects the animals they have most to do with, or are most dependent upon, I am unable to decide whether the Mexicans are more like the ass or the goat; but they are as thorough a mixture of the two as it is possible to conceive. The Mexicans even say of themselves that they are *muy caprote*,⁶⁵ and in Presidio they have a distinct odor of goat.

HOW THE VINE FLOURISHES

There are two or three stores here of some size, one kept by a young American who buried himself in this remote place to make money; and has succeeded in doing so. He says money is plentiful, and I could hardly comprehend it until I took a short ride in the valley of the Rio Grande, above the city. It is a field of wealth, two to three miles in breadth, extending many miles, all irrigated by the rich waters of the river. Here are grown great crops of corn, wheat and barley, which are sold at high prices, mostly to the contractors who supply the Mexican and U.S. military posts on either side of the river. Here also are great vineyards, as rich as those of old Spain, and the making of wine and brandy is a principal industry. These products find their way all over Mexico, and are not uncommon on the boards of gentlemen of Western Texas. This wine, which is sold at a dollar a gallon or less, is much like still Catawba; and as for the brandy, it is infinitely preferable to that which is usually sold in the United States as French brandy. It is very strong, but there is a peculiar fruity flavor about it that is pleasant, and one can drink it with full confidence that there is nothing in it that is spurious. The finest onions in the world also grow here. They are so excellent that one can eat them almost as we do an apple in the United States. There are pear trees here that are two to three feet in circumference. The rain-fall does not exceed twelve inches a year, and nearly all of it falls in one or two showers; and yet with irrigation all these blessings are produced in abundance! What surpassing glory would be that of Western Texas, if the inhabitants only had the enterprise of the Mexican to irrigate their valleys, by building a few dams and digging a few ditches!

These people cultivate the ground precisely as the first inhabitants of the world did. They merely scratch the surface with a wooden plow, and sometimes they work whole fields with no other instrument than a hand-hoe. The American merchant at Presidio tells me that he has tried in vain to introduce American implements of tillage, but the absurd Mexicans simply laughed at the heavy American weapons. Fortunately the soil is a soft, sandy loam, very docile even to their poor implements.

They tell me that this city is over two thousand years old and that its history is romantic. It sits in the midst of a vast solitude in every direction, except a narrow strip running a considerable distance up the river. All else is Indians, lions, jaguars, cougars, wolves, et cetera.

THE MEXICAN SNOB—HOW GREATNESS FEELS

After dinner, while I was smoking my puro, a neatly dressed Mexican gentleman, with something of a sprightly and even distinguished air, entered my apartment. He could speak English tolerably, and asked me if he had the honor to address so-and-so, calling my name. I assured him that he had my name right; then he gave me his own and immediately proceeded to address me, in what sounded like a set speech. He said that he had long been acquainted with my fame as a soldier, statesman and scholar, and was proud to pay his respects in person. He gave me a warm welcome to Mexico; assured me that all Mexicans would do the same, wherever I should go in their territory, and expressed the hope that I was pleased with the country as far as I had seen it. The gentlemen of Presidio were anxious to pay their respects to me in public, and if I would do him the honor to appoint the time, he would only be too proud to introduce them to me in the rooms of the Alcalde. He begged that I would accord him that honor and pleasure.

I at first thought the man was a lunatic, and was about to cut him short in his oratory, when, regarding him more closely, I thought I observed in him a Mexican snob upon whom some one had played a trick. As I had often seen such fellows and had been amused at their laughable ways around great men, I concluded to humor the joke, and therefore made a speech to him with considerable dignity, putting on, too, an air of great sapience. I assured him that I felt infinite pleasure in receiving his call. "To him who has labored for his country and mankind, there is nothing so sweet as the evidences that his labors have received recognition; and it is indeed very sweet to me to know that I have made friends even in foreign lands. It is a great incentive to other work, and the recollection of this recognition and visit from you to-day, sir, will sweeten my future labors. (He bowed with humility.) Horace, in his assurance of immortality, says that even he that drinks of the Danube shall read and praise him. How sweet it must be to him, in the abode of the great spirits whither he has gone, to know that even his imagination could not measure the boundary of his fame; for he that drinks of the Rio Grande and the Conchos also reads and praises him! I fancy, sir, that I feel to-day something of this pleasure which Horace must feel, when I receive the assurance that he who drinks of the Rio Grande and Conchos knows and esteems me. (Another bow, accompanied with a smile of approbation.) But I should be too vain to receive his honor as entirely personal. No small part of it, I know, sir, is intended for the great republic from which I come. It is an evidence of the mutual friendship that should characterize the relations of the two great American republics. Side by side, in the closest amity, let them be the example by which tyrants shall tremble, and the oppressed of all nations be made happy." (A very low bow.) I then stated that while I had a high appre-

ciation of the honor, I must decline the public reception in the halls of the Alcalde; that I had particular reasons for desiring to travel incognito and in an exceedingly private way. It would afford me great pleasure to take every citizen of Presidio by the hand, but under the circumstances, which he would appreciate, I must deny myself the pleasure.

We then took each other by the hand, with great cordiality, he receiving "beatitude past utterance." and I feeling no little ashamed of myself, but suppressing it well. He begged that he might at least have the honor of attending me through the city, to show me the points of interest, and give me such insight as he could into the industries of the people. To this I consented, and we walked out together; he talking incessantly and appearing the happiest man I had ever seen. I felt myself somewhat distended with pride at being able to bestow such exquisite happiness; but more than once my pride came near being lost in the sense of the ridiculous. For the first time in my life I felt how greatness feels, and was not displeased with the sensation. He led me everywhere, and I could not fail to notice that wherever he saw an unusual assemblage of men or women, he would find some excuse to take me in the midst of it, and his attentions at such places were quite overwhelming. I went round with him a long time, until I grew tired; but he showed no tendency to leave me to my peace. At last his company became irksome, and yet I could not make him see it in any genteel or oblique way. His perception of decency was utterly lost in the happiness of being allowed to pay me attentions and show off around me. I had made up my mind to tell him that he had been deceived, and that I was simply a very plain citizen, unknown to fame; but on reflection I thought this would be cruel and hurt his feelings too severely. Finally I got rid of him under the pretense that I had some very important writing to do, and would be happy to see him on another occasion. Thus I felt the annoyance, also, to which great men are subject, and thought it was of the most poignant sort. It is distressing not to be left to one's privacy when one desires it.

This man did some writing for the great man of the city, the Alcalde, and had formerly, as he told me, been connected in some way with the Governor of Chihuahua. He had thus had some inkling of greatness, and having no light of his own, was happy to shine by the light of others. He was said to be the happiest of all men when allowed to put on airs at the feet of the great, and be the usher by whom others approached them. He was not without intelligence, and very inoffensive, though sometimes when around great men, he was said to be supercilious to those whom he considered not rich, and extremely patronizing to those known to be so. His attentions to me originated from my soldiers, who, probably to raise their own importance, had spread it around that I was a great ex-general and scholar, travelling privately for my health, and that the Commander-in-Chief of the United States had detailed them to accompany me, as a special guard of honor.

PRESIDIO AT NIGHT—A FANDANGO

At night Presidio resounded with the thrumming of guitars, the screeching of accordions,

the braying of asses and the bleating of goats. The whole population seemed bent on "music." I was told by an American trader who also was on a visit to the city, that there would be a great fandango, and if I felt curious to see one he would go with me. I felt curious, and at ten o'clock we walked together into the chaparral, a half mile from the city, and there found a large number of men and women dancing in the open air, to harps and violins. At intervals they would suspend the dancing and give themselves up to eating chile con carne—a hash of dried beef, furiously hot with red-pepper—at the numerous booths erected about the lights, or promenade in the chaparral. The men were attired but little better than usual, but the women were dressed in pretty costumes of bright red or white, which barely reached their knees, with tight-fitting stockings and slippers. When the dress was red, the stockings were usually white, and vice versa. They invariably wore ornaments of flowers about their heads, and many of them were very pretty. Sometimes they would join in little groups and sing to the guitar, the music being ballads or melting songs of love. The country fandangoes are said to be innocent as much so as rustic amusements generally are; but in the cities they have apparently been corrupted, and seem to me but a mere convenience for sin, and said often to end in drunkenness, debauchery, and sometimes in murder. They are universal throughout Mexico, and wherever the Mexicans are numerous. In cities they are not attended by the better class of either males or females. There was nothing boisterous in this one as long as I remained to see it.

CHAPTER II

AMONG THE PROSPECTORS

THE CHINATI MOUNTAINS

At this point my westward journey terminated, and at early morning I was in the saddle, accompanied by two gentlemen—a government contractor whose business was to furnish the troops at Fort Davis with flour, and a gentleman from St. Louis who was interested in some wines, and was establishing a smelting works in Presidio. We crossed into Texas and rode north over a fine stock country, but uninhabited, until we reached the Chinati Mountains, the loftiest and most rugged group I had yet encountered. Their altitude is five thousand feet, and they consist mostly of basaltic rocks, but many of them are capped and partly flanked with Cretaceous rocks, showing that they were upheaved at the close of that formation, or during the Tertiary. Wherever a spot with soil can be found in these mountains, there is a magnificent growth of cedar; enough to tie all the railroads in Texas. After resting at a large spring at the foot of the mountains, we walked into the mountains to see the metallic veins. They were very numerous. Iron seemed without end, copper was very abundant; and we visited several veins of silver lead, some of them twenty feet wide, of length and depth unknown. The St. Louis gentleman had opened some of these a few feet, and sending the ores to St. Louis for analysis, had received the following returns:

No. 1. 13 oz. value per ton of ore-----\$16.80
 No. 7. 15 oz. value per ton of ore-----\$19.30
 No. 8. 59 oz. value per ton of ore-----\$76.28
 No. 9. 20 oz. value per ton of ore-----\$25.85

This is the value of the silver alone, for in this remote region, lead cannot pay for its transportation, and no account is taken of it. Another specimen of ore from a vein which I did not see, was reported by the same chemists, as follows:

Silver per ton of ore-----\$144.80
 Lead from same ore-----\$34.25

Specimens of the copper ore were reported by these chemists to yield twenty per cent of metallic copper. All these ores are greatly abundant, yet not more so than I saw in other mountains of Presidio County; and the seeing of them only confirmed the conviction that I had before, that this region must inevitably develop one of the greatest mineral wealths in

the world. The very same rocks in Mexico, just across the Rio Grande in Chihuahua, pour out millions in silver and copper annually, and there is no doubt in my mind that these will do the same.

The sole occupants of these mountains, besides the occasional miners, are a few shepherds who herd their flocks along the flanks, and stand guard over them night and day to save them from the wolves and lions of the mountains. From the latter particularly, the faithful shepherd-dog would be slim protection.

Leaving the two gentlemen, I, with my soldiers, bore again northwestward over a rolling treeless plain, with ranges of mountains in sight in every direction. A little before night-fall we reached a fine creek whose valley is noble and irrigable. This is Providence Creek; and so rich are its lands and beautiful its water that it well deserves its name. Here we have willow and cotton-wood. The grass is rich, and we lodged upon it for the night.

CHAPTER III

Did not sleep well; wolves exceedingly clamorous and bold; rose twice during the night to discharge a shot at them and drive them off. Heard the roar of the lion or black jaguar from the cliffs that overlooked our encampment. In the saddle at early dawn. Rode thirty-five miles up the beautiful valley and encamped. Saw many veins of iron and copper crossing the creek bed; also veins of quartz with indications of gold. Agates and opals abundant; gathered several of the most beautiful I have ever seen.

CHAPTER IV

A SUPPER LOST

THE BOAST OF THE COWARD

Although we had seen many deer during the day, we had not killed any, and were without fresh meat. After our horses were turned on the grass, I walked up the creek, hoping for a successful shot. About a mile up I reached a point where the creek forks, and saw a number of deer feeding on the plot between the two streams. I crept unobserved up the bed of one of these, and leisurely selecting the one that seemed the best, I brought him down at two hundred yards. The others were so astonished that they merely jumped at the crack of the rifle, and then stopped to stare around. When they saw me, however, they bounded away post-haste. I took the hams and part of the ribs of the fallen one, and was moving straight down the valley when something impelled me to look back. As I did so I saw two black objects suddenly dip behind the cliff that looked over the valley from the north. I stood still a moment, watching, but saw them no more. I felt at once that I had been watched by Indians who were trying to surround me by stealing down the beds of the two streams. They had left the two on the cliff to watch and signal to them my movements. With this conviction I hurried to the nearest creek, to avoid exposing myself on the narrow tongue between the two, and bounded across it almost with the speed of a buck, expecting every second to receive a shower of arrows. When in the open valley where nothing could steal upon me unseen, and too far from either cliff or creek-bed to be killed by an arrow, I stopped to observe, but saw nothing. Still I believed Indians were about, and when in camp told the soldiers what I had seen and my suspicions. As we already had fire blazing and coffee boiling, we concluded we would cook some of our meat and then steal away in the dark, which was coming upon us as each of us sat down to roast a big chunk of venison.

Ten minutes after this, while I was enjoying a strong cup of black coffee, one of our horses snorted violently. "There they are, boys," said I, "trying to set us afoot. Let's to the rescue!" Each seized his rifle and ran for the horses, which, with heads erect, were staring toward the hills that came down to the valley from the west. As I reached my horse I saw something indistinctly slipping along rapidly toward the shadow of the hills. It might be Indian or it might be wolf—so I raised my gun and fired upon it. John Powell saw the same object or a similar one, and also let fly with his rifle. A few moments afterward we heard a cry or squall—like that of a cougar, from the hills in the direction we had fired—to which a similar voice immediately responded from a point a little lower down.

"Thar now!" said Jones Johns with a laugh; "nothing but a squalling painter to kick up all this muss."

“Perhaps so,” said I; “but let us be on our guard. These painters are sometimes dangerous.”

“Ef that was a painter,” said John Powell, “that I shot at—ef he didn’t walk straight up like a man you may get my good eye. Injuns can play painter, but painters can’t play Injun.”

I thought John Powell’s reasoning was good, and besides, if the object I shot at had not looked alarmingly suspicious I would not have shot at it. It did not seem to me prone enough for wolf or “painter.” I therefore ordered that we take our horses and stake them within a few feet of us, with saddles on; this was done.

We then sat by the fire watching our fat venison, which dripped gravy and sent forth a delicious odor, occasionally turning it on the sticks. “What is that? Didn’t you hear something say ‘ker-flip?’” said Jones Johns. I became attentive, and the next moment heard a distinct whirr through the air, as of some diminutive feathered creature passing rapidly overhead. “It is some small night-bird,” said I. A second later—

“Ah!” said Jones Johns jumping up; “here’s your night-bird! Here it is for a fact!”

An arrow, feathered and painted, has stuck into the ground immediately in front of him, which, had it been aimed a single point higher, would have struck him square in the belly. We all jumped up at the sight of this fearful apparition, and as we did so, others dropped around us in quick succession, all coming from the opposite side of the creek. There was a long stone three or four feet high, lying a few paces from the fire, and I told the soldiers to gather their horses quickly, and let us conceal ourselves behind it. We did so in a moment, and there we sat as still as mice. The arrows continued to drop around the fire a few seconds, but ceased when the lurking Indians saw that we had left. We had the mortification of seeing our venison take fire and burn to soot. Everything was silent, and I hoped that the Indians, thinking that they had frightened us away, would venture within the light of the fire and give us a chance to return their compliment with our rifles. But they were too sharp for that.

Fully half an hour passed, and we heard nothing, not even a stealthy tread, and were debating in a low voice the propriety of mounting and moving on, when an owl broke loose with his wild hoot apparently just across the creek. This was followed by another owl and another, until there was a regular uproar of owl-laughter. This ceased, and then a lonesome wolf projected over the valley a melancholy wail which was answered by another and another until we had a regular wolf serenade again. This ceased, and then a distressed panther began to cry, as if suffering the most terrible misery—responded to at once by another and another, till the air seemed literally burdened with the singular notes. When this ceased, after a short interval of quiet, turkeys gobbled, owls hooted, wolves howled, and panthers squealed and screamed all together, making the most infernal melody I had ever heard. This was followed by several tremendous whoops and noises that seemed to be made by slapping the mouth rapidly with the hand while hallooing. I thought that we could creep on these rascals and give them a volley with our Winchesters, but knowing their wily

habits, I was afraid they might steal our horses while we were trying to shoot them. But feeling somewhat insulted as well as amused by their infernal noises, which they made in derision of us, I told Jones Johns, who had the chest of a bull and the lungs of a steamboat, to break out as loud as he could, with the most unearthly voice that he could make, and that Powell and I would assist him. He did so, raising undoubtedly the most ungodly sound that ever came from a human throat; to this Powell and I responded with the best that we could do, as soon as he had finished. We continued this for some time, and if there was less method in our medly, I am satisfied that we raised a greater fuss than did the Indians. I have no doubt that for a time at least, they hung their heads in chagrin. From their report it seemed to us that there were about six or seven of them.

After we had suspended, all was silent for a while, as if the Indians were considering what sort of noise to make next. Finally, a lusty fellow yelled out in a loud voice, "Americanos!—Carajos!—Cobardes!" which he repeated two or three times. I told Jones Johns to call him a gut in Spanish, and to invite him to call over to see us, as we had something good for him. Jones did so, in an exceedingly braggart and provoking style.

The Indians responded with some words of very beastly signification, and as I thought that we could tolerably well make out where they stood on the prairie, I ordered a volley, and we all fired at once, two or three times in rapid succession.

Profound peace now reigned for a few moments, while the Indians were rapidly changing their base; for when they again reported themselves, there were evidently about three hundred yards further away, and apparently on the bluff of the valley. They opened with another medly of gobbler and wolf and panther, mixed with carajos and other dirty Spanish words; but we paid them no attention. "Now, boys," said I, "it is time for us to go off and get some sleep, since we can't get a battle out of those cowards." We went to the fire and contemplated with sorrow the soot of our fine venison, but there was a pot of coffee, and we had a great enjoyment of it. By the light of a live coal, I was that it was after eleven o'clock. We rode up the valley two hours, and then went into a dark nook and slept. The stars were gloriously brilliant, and ere we closed our eyes an extraordinary meteor passed above us, going south, with a great light and a hissing and crackling sound. It seemed not very high overhead, and was sloping downward; so that I have no doubt that another remarkable mass of rock was added to this remarkable region. Its apparent magnitude was many times that of the full moon, and it seemed a great ball of fire with little appearance of a streamer behind it.⁶⁶

CHAPTER V

DEPARTURE FROM FRIENDS

We arrived at Van Horn's Well, which is a station of the El Paso and San Antonio Stage Company, inhabited by one or two drivers and their families, a dozen or so mules, and guarded by a small detail of soldiers. I had intended to visit the briny lakes in the great forests of pine at the base of its mountains, thence east to the Pecos; but I saw that my horse was no longer fit for such a journey. A thousand miles of almost constant travel, much of it under severe thirst and hunger, had reduced him to a gaunt, skinny frame, with feeble, lack-lustre eyes. He had been failing fast the last few days. He seemed to beg me as I stroked his forehead: "Pray stop your wanderings, and give me food and rest." The soldier's horses were not in much better plight than my own. I therefore looked around and succeeded in selling for forty dollars my horse and equipment which had cost me one hundred and four. The purchaser immediately gave him a tub of barley and treated him to a thorough rubbing; during the treatment he looked at me reproachfully, as if he would say: "Well, sir, this is better than anything you gave me among those rocks, and I would rather stay with this man than you." When the time approached for my departure I went to the soldiers and gave them each fifty dollars. They seemed loth to leave me, to make their way back to Fort Concho alone, and said, if I should come this way again and want an escort, "please call for us, and we will follow you to the jumping-off place." I believe both had formed a strong attachment for me; and certainly, should I again ride over dangerous ground with only two attendants, I would choose none before them. Had we become involved in a scrape, they would have fought like tigers, and with the coolness of icebergs. As the stage drove furiously up I took them warmly by the hands and bade them adieu.

This point is four thousand feet above the sea—a gradual ascent of one thousand eight hundred feet from Presidio.

THE BRONCHOS—THE GREAT PLAIN

These active, agitated mules, that draw the stage coaches, are from Mexico. They are so restless that when the stage coach stops to take on or let off passengers, men must hold the mules by their bits. The moment the bits are released, these animals dash away with a spring and a lope, sweeping on at the rate of eight miles per hour. They are called bronchos; and are headstrong, furious and ungovernable; when once under headway, they cannot be stopped until they reach their regular stations. If a passenger has occasion to stop by the roadside, the best the driver can do is to rein the mules out of the road and keep the coach whirling in a circle. The passenger must get out and back again at imminent risk of

breaking his bones. Should some of the machinery become disabled by the way, as there could be no stop for repairs, total destruction would most surely follow. Four to six mules are driven to each coach.

I sat in front with the driver, in order to enjoy a wider prospect. We bowled over a great rolling plain, that seems as boundless as the ocean, with distant mountains in sight; and so we continued to bowl and bowl for hour after hour, the bronchos showing no signs of weariness. The road is stoneless and delightfully smooth. This is the great Llano Estacado, or Staked Plain, from which all of the great rivers of Texas except the Trinity, Neches, Sabine and San Antonio, derive their waters. It is a singular looking country, with table-lands resembling great fortifications sitting here and there upon it. There are no trees but some thinly scattered brush of mesquite, and the grass is generally abundant, crisp and sweet. This is reputed to be a great desert, inhospitable and deadly; but the truth is, the soil is rich, filled with marl and gypsum, and it needs nothing but water at the surface to make it a mighty land. How can it be waterless, as is said, when such billions of tons of water flow from its strata every day? Beneath it undoubtedly lies a great fountain, which the artesian wells would cause to burst to the top and pour over the fertile expanse. There is no region in the world more shamefully misrepresented. It is capable of sustaining millions of cattle and performing as much for the general good as any equal expanse of territory—not as it now is, but as the hands of man could easily make it. There are some stretches of arid sands, but they are not deep, and the plow would soon mingle them with the marly clays beneath, converting them into lawns of verdure.

We stopped at Muerto Springs, thirty miles from Van Horn's Well, where we changed broncos. This place is buried amid rugged mountains, at an elevation of five thousand, one hundred and eighty feet above the sea. It means the springs "of the Dead," and was formerly called Dead Man's Hole. Here I was shown a specimen of gold-bearing ore rich in gold, and was told that it was abundant in the neighborhood. The mountains are filled with quartz veins, which may be seen from the stage-stand, running up their sides like white lines. If the specimen that I saw be truly from this region, there is gold here undoubtedly.

ARRAYED IN WHITE—THE MONARCH

A few miles from Muerto a group of remarkable mountains appears, whose lofty tops I had beheld from afar. At a distance they looked like great cones of white clouds resting upon the horizon. These mountains are seven thousand feet high, and are composed of pure white quartz, which gives them the appearance of being always wrapped in snow. They are beautiful, and to my knowledge their like does not exist in the world, except in other ranges in this same region. They are unnamed and should have beautiful names. The stage-driver called them "the White Ladies;" but they are too tremendously big to be called ladies. I had an ardent desire to visit these mountains, but of course could not. The driver said, "They are full of gold, just like that you saw at Muerto." Why is it that Texas will not ap-

propriate some money, and employ some distinguished scientists to make an exploration of this remarkable and wonderful region?⁶⁷

And yet a few miles further, the monarch of all the region lifts his head high above all the visible mountains, and grows higher and broader as we approach him: blue in the distance and grey or black as we draw nearer. He is seven thousand, five hundred feet high, or more than a thousand feet higher than the vaunted Mount Washington of New Hampshire. He is the loftiest elevation known east of the Rocky Mountains. From his appearance I judge him to be granitic, and doubt not that it is one of the original foot-stools. "They crowned him long ago." He, too, is unnamed. Let he be named after that Texan who shall first teach the Texans to love Nature in Texas, and appreciate their grand State as they should; and there can be no appreciation of this State by those who do not love Nature within it.

The range or group of mountains in which this giant sits, is really but one gigantic mountain with a multitude of peaks whose apparent base is an elevation which rises at least a thousand feet above the subjacent plains. The mountains are well-timbered with cedar, oaks and some pines.

CHAPTER VI

FORT DAVIS

MAN'S INHUMANITY

I arrived at Fort Davis, and here found myself in an evil plight, which for a while greatly stirred up my feelings. I had performed, at each county-seat that I visited on my route, a very important service for a certain corporation, which service the said corporation had vainly tried, even for a high consideration, to get some one else to perform. All who had been approached refused it, saying it was worth a man's life to attempt it, unless under escort of a company of soldiers. As it would not much inconvenience me, I agreed to perform the service for a part of my expenses and a right to draw upon the president for this if I should run short of cash on the trip. At Concho I saw that I should need more money, and drew for the modest sum of three hundred dollars, making the draft returnable to Fort Davis. After paying the costs of this service and settling with my soldiers, I arrived at Fort Davis with hardly a dollar. My first care, therefore, after a night's rest was to visit the party to whom the draft had been made returnable. I introduced myself and inquired about the draft. "Yes, sir," said he. He then took the draft from a letter and handed it to me without another word, and across the face was written, "Not accepted," signed by the president of the corporation. There is no language that can express the indignation I felt at that moment. I had performed the dangerous service faithfully, paying the cost of putting upon record at every county-seat I visited, a long document of some fifty pages or legal cap, and here were my thanks and reward! Here I was left, in a "howling wilderness," hundreds of miles from "nowhere," in a small community utterly strange to me, without a dollar to buy bread, or even a horse to bear me out of it, and my credit rendered hopeless by the return upon me of dishonored paper! I thought it the ghastliest deed within my experience of men, and so I shall always think. What concern had they for me, after I had performed their work and paid for it? "He is an orange that hath been sucked! Ah, he will be killed; he will never return from this tour, and this will be so much money saved. 'A penny saved is a penny got.'" Ye spirits, who vex those whose consciences are dead, and whose souls are lost in Mammon, remember not this thing against them when the day of account commeth, and your work begins! They are ignorant and know not what they do. They damn themselves when they think to make themselves. At that moment I became convinced that the project in which they are engaged must come to an ignominious failure upon their hands; for there is but one monument which such sublime notions of integrity and honor as this can erect, and that is a monument of shame and failure.

But my position seemed so disastrous that I had little heart even to moralize. What

must I do now? The only thing is to stay here until I can draw upon my own funds, and it will take three weeks to do this. But who will feed and lodge me, a stranger, so long a time, when I am without a dollar? I resolved to visit the commandant of the post, tell him my awkward position, and ask him to put me in good standing with the inn-keeper till such a time. While sitting in the inn, contemplating the probable effect of this appeal to a total stranger, I heard the name of a certain lieutenant mentioned in a group of men who were talking near me. I remembered that I had a slight acquaintance with a lieutenant of that name, and asked if his initials were not so and so? "Yes, sir," said the man; "that is his name, and he is stationed at this post." I determined to see this officer first, and, calling upon him I was recognized at once. I told him my distress and asked for a loan of two hundred dollars. "I will supply you, sir, with pleasure," said he. I felt a mountain lift off my heart. He not only gave me the money, but introduced me to some ladies of the post and did all he could to make my stay agreeable. Thus did this accomplished officer do for the sake of humanity and a very slight personal acquaintance, that which those for whom I had performed an arduous and dangerous service, would not do for the sake of honor and in payment of a just debt; but so far as they could, they had turned me out to starvation. "Look upon this picture, and then upon that."

I said to the officer, "Well, sir, had I not been so fortunate as to meet you here, would not my position have been a dreadful one?"

"Oh, no," said he; "you would have nothing to do but to call upon the commandant as you did upon me, and state your case. Do you suppose the officers would have allowed you to be cast adrift in this wilderness and reduced to extremities, right under the shadow of the flag? No, indeed, sir; they would have come to your relief as readily as I have done."

Fort Davis is the county-seat of Presidio county, as well as a military post of the United States. The long document in my possession was to be recorded here also, and I debated within myself a moment as to whether I should use a part of the money I had borrowed from the lieutenant, to pay for this, or leave it undone, and thus put the considerate corporation to the expense of sending here to have it done. I made up my mind to return good for evil, and had the big document recorded, paying for it out of the lieutenant's money. "Now look upon this picture, then upon that!" Would they have done the same for me? Even the credulous Apella would not believe it.

The position of Fort Davis is extremely picturesque and peculiar. It has borrowed nothing from any other scenery, but is its own original. It sits in a deep green valley wherein fountains bubble, and the vine, the flowers and the fruits of the field flourish by irrigation. It is a green spot in the wilderness, and ever a green spot in the memory of all who see it. Mountains in fantastic shapes, like towers and minarets and domes, look upon it from all sides, and in the distance the Monarch and the White Ladies lift their brows into the clouds. The most wonderful scenery in Texas is here displayed, and the mountains contain minerals and gems. It sits at an elevation of five thousand feet, and the air is all sweetness, purity and elasticity. He that breathes it rejoices, and seems to feel new life. To those

who are sick with the lungs, what place can match this? The elevation is sufficient to give all that is best, and not so high as to create that rarity that is hurtful. One must be poor in resources who cannot find abundant amusement in so grand and strange a country as this. The necessity of carrying arms and the suspicion that Comanches and Apaches may be about, are only a sort of seasoning that give zest and vigor to the limbs and courage to the heart. The population is perhaps a hundred, exclusive of the military, and one can find pleasant society.

The annual rainfall here is from twelve to twenty inches, most of which falls during July and August. It has been observed that the rainfall has constantly increased for a series of years. The summer temperature is from seventy to seventy-five, and rarely exceeds the latter figure. How delightful for summer residence!

In winter it is sometimes severely cold, during the electrical northers. Once the mercury was known to sink to 15° below zero; but comfortable quarters are readily secured, and mesquite roots are abundant for fuel. The usual winter temperature I can hardly distinguish from other portions of Texas; for though it is dead winter, I greatly enjoy walks after sunset with the ladies.

There is a steam flouring-mill here, and considerable quantities of very fine wheat are raised in the Toyah valley, a few miles north of this.⁶⁸

CHAPTER VII

LIMPIA CANYON

At noon of the third day, I took the first down-stage and traveled eastward through Limpia Canyon. This is a natural pass through the Apache Mountains, and is the only one that is practical to carriages and horsemen. The canyon derives its name from Limpia Creek which passes through it. In length, the Canyon is fifteen miles; its greatest breadth is about five hundred feet, and it sometimes narrows to fifty feet. On each side rises a black, precipitous wall of basalt, often a thousand feet or more in height. Sometimes the creek passes through a canyon within the canyon, so deep, dark and narrow that one may look from the brink and see no bottom below. The stage sometimes passes on the very edges of these abysses, and the slightest false step would precipitate all to destruction. While riding along these, I felt that my life hung by an exceedingly slender thread; and often I shivered. It is an exceedingly wild-looking-place, and there is no exit or entrance save by the road. No lizard could climb these dark, glassy walls. I said to the driver, "This is certainly a dangerous place. If one should be attacked here, what possible chance of escape?" "It is the safest place," said he, "this side of San Antonio. No Indians were ever known to enter this canyon. They want a chance to retreat and slip out, like other warriors, and you'll never catch them coming into this trap."

These walls, though perpendicular and composed of the same material, are never columnar like the Palisades, but are solid, massive stone, without seam or rent.

It is one of the greatest outpourings of igneous matter in the world. The canyon is nearly as straight as a bee-line, and is a most singular freak of nature. Why should this great mass of molten, volcanic matter have separated into two long perpendicular walls, leaving the deep, smooth vale between? Did the Almighty command the great hissing, fiery mass to separate and stand apart, to make a road for coming man through the mountains, as He commanded the waters of the Dead Sea to open and make a road for Moses? This little babbling stream could never have cut this vast chasm through the infinitely compacted stone. If it has taken the tremendous Niagara seventy thousand years to pound its way seven miles through seam and stratified limestone, how long would it take this brook to wear this great chasm, fifteen miles long and over a thousand feet deep, through solid basalt? I estimate thundering Niagara to be at least a million times greater than Limpia, and this basalt at least four times harder than the Niagara limestone; thus, if these estimates are correct, and Limpia Canyon has been cut by Limpia Creek, it has taken it two thousand eight hundred millions of years to do the job! *Reductio ad absurdum!*

BARILLA SPRINGS—A NORTHER ON THE STAKED PLAIN

The Pass opened on a great plain, which I recognized at once as my old familiar friend, the Llano Estacado. At a short distance we stopped at Barilla Springs to change broncos and get supper. This place has a singularly lonesome and dejected look as if it had lost its mother. Looking around, I perceived that it had an unusually large cemetery for so diminutive a population. It is accounted as a sort of dead-hole, a place of danger, and these graves mark the resting place of travelers or employees of the stage company who were slain by Indians. It sits under the shadow of the impenetrable mountains, from whose cliffs the savages may spy out a long way over the plain; they attack and destroy weak parties, and hide from strong ones. It was with a feeling of relief that we departed from this place, riding out on the great plain in the falling darkness.

At eleven o'clock a furious norther suddenly leaped in the window of the stage-coach, and saluted us with a whiff of its frozen breath. Instantly the windows were closed, and I wrapped myself up in overcoat and blankets, but notwithstanding all the weight of wool, I shivered and suffered terribly. The norther here had full force: it swept hundreds of miles down an inclined plane, without an obstacle to retard its impetuous career. I judged its descent to be between forty and fifty miles an hour—an incessant, pitiless, frozen torrent of wind. For much of the way we rode athwart this torrent; and it shrieked and howled among the iron and leather fixtures of the coach. The broncos, stung with cold, became furious, and dashed over the plain at a break-neck speed, which would have insured our destruction had it been elsewhere than on the plain. Reached Leon Springs at three P.M. where we entered an adobe house and warmed, and drank villainous coffee made of water from the salty lake.

CHAPTER VIII

Slept none. Passed Fort Stockton; passed Escondido Springs—fountains that rise on the great plain and send away a beautiful stream, which wanders a little way and is lost. Reached the lordly, silent Pecos, rolling his turbid flood impetuously as of old. Crossed on a pontoon bridge. This is many miles above where I crossed it west-ward bound. Near here is a salt lake on the plain, where shores and bottom are said to be pure granulated salt.

CHAPTER IX

Bowled onward and bowled onward, sleeping little or none. It takes one who has toughness of a light-wood knot to stand this. Passed Fort Concho; stopped at Ben Ficklen. This is the county-seat of Tom Green county—a single county larger than some entire States. Here Ben Ficklen of the ante-bellum California Overland Mail Line built his great company-shops at a cost of over one hundred thousand dollars. They stand quite untenanted on the prairie. Here is the great barley farm of Texas, embracing several hundred acres, irrigated from the Concho. Yield said to be from fifty to seventy-five bushels per acre. This is sold to the government for use of the cavalry at Fort Concho.

CHAPTER X

Bowled on and bowled on, night after night and day after day, at last reaching San Antonio after five days and five nights of continual travel, prostrated, collapsed, and used up; felt that I had been dragged through briars and beaten with soot bags; felt miserable, intolerable; felt worse than he who cometh off a drunk. Took lodging at a delightful hotel, and occupied my bed thirty-nine hours in succession. Got enough of good sleep for once.⁶⁹

CHAPTER XI

Took stage and rattled eighty miles north-west; passed New Braunfels; passed sparkling Comal, fairy San Marcos, proud-rolling Guadalupe, majestic Colorado, and entered Austin, the capital of Texas. Had a mind to call on Governor Coke, of whom I heard people speak in the most extravagant praise. If this gentleman does not become President of the United States he will disappoint thousands of admirers. Austin is pretty—built on more hills than Rome, and they are all picturesque. North of here is a wild, romantic country of cedar-covered hills and mountains; in other directions, is a prairie that rolls in gigantic undulations. But the Capitol, or State House, is unworthy of this beauty. It looks like an old stone box, and the noble hill on which it stands renders its ugliness the more conspicuous and deformed. The grand State of Texas should have a better thing than that.⁷⁰

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION

Did not visit the Governor, as my clothes were too travel-worn and ragged. But jumped on the Texas Central and whirled southward at thirty miles an hour. Arrived in Houston, bronzed and begrimed, and was warmly greeted by many friends, and by none so warmly and cordially as those who had dishonored my draft and turned me out to starve; so warm were they that I could hardly comprehend that they had dishonored my draft. "Ha! ha! ha! old fellow, are you back at last? Ha! ha! ha! that was a wonderful trip." And though my hands had grown tough, they could scarcely stand that squeeze.

And now, with some regret, I bid adieu to him that hath followed me. If it has been as pleasant a task to him to read, as it has been to me to write these wanderings, it is reward enough for me. I have ridden on horseback all over Texas, and have written of the State from a stand-point of knowledge thus obtained; and therefore the title of these presents is not a misnomer. See how unwillingly I bid you adieu; and judge therefrom how glad I shall be to see you again, "if he that writeth now, may scribble more."

THE END

ADDENDA

ADDENDA

The following articles by Nathaniel Taylor did not appear in the 1876 edition of *Two Thousand Miles in Texas on Horseback* but were appended to the revised edition of 1936.

GEOLOGY OF THE PANHANDLE AND PROF. BOLL

(From the *Galveston News*, July 11, 1881.)

Note.—Considering that his discovery in 1860 was at the age of 25–26, it is clean “satisfaction,” as the author states—and not egotism—that impels him to the expression when he learns that the results of his first, youthful efforts is identical with that of seasoned and experienced geologists of national fame.

In Burke’s Texas Almanac for 1880 I wrote an article on my geological examinations of the Panhandle, and feel some satisfaction in comparing my article with the recent reports of Prof. Cope and Prof. Boll, nationally famed geologists. They have spent six months in the Panhandle and their report is identical with mine in minutest detail, although I spent only one-half the time they used, and I was not equipped with the latest facilities and equipment with which they were provided.

My first explorations in the Panhandle occurred when I was a Texas Ranger. I greatly entertained myself with studying the rocks as I went hither and thither; and like Prof. Boll, I left few stones unturned. My article was copied in the selective edition of the *Galveston News*, of Jan., 1880. In part it said: “Just north of the primitive region of Llano County there is a large development of carboniferous, extending northeast toward the Indian Territory embracing about 30,000 square miles of coal-bearing strata. It no doubt is a continuation of the Arkansas or Ozark system. The Permian formation, here and there, crosses this coal territory, and probably flanks it all around. The Permian also, undoubtedly, is developed further north and west; not far from Fort Concho it terminates; and here, closely connected with it is a narrow stratum of coal in which excellent coal is found. As in England, so in Texas, wherever this formation is found, it indicates unerringly the near presence of coal. In my opinion the Permian may be found almost anywhere near the foot of the Staked Plains. The Permian in Archer and several other counties is heavily stored with copper.”

Now comes a recording of Prof. Boll’s that is a mistake. He “discovers fossils revealing a new petrified, extinct animal and vegetable world hitherto unknown in America.”

My own records show that as far back as 1860, I found many fossils which I classed as belonging to the transition period, as also does Prof. Boll, so it stands that I “discovered” these fossils twenty-one years ahead of his explorations. Fossils are adequate only to decide the definite geological character of the region. But I have never before heard that any of the transition rocks are wanting in America. I think I have seen all the great divisions of that series well represented in Texas. As to minerals that I found in the Wichita country, I subjected them to accurate analytical tests, both physical and chemical, and found practically inexhaustible quantities of copper and iron in the Permian.

While on this subject I may as well mention a discovery of my own in Texas that I have never before stated in print. It was a fine layer of anthracite. The territory in which I found it is as totally unlike the anthracite regions of Pennsylvania and Rhode Island as could possibly be. Anthracite, ordinarily, is coal which has been coked by volcanic heat and afterward solidified by pressure. We, therefore, expect to find it only in very rough, volcanic regions; but here it is on a smooth, flowing, undulating prairie of great extent, without sign of volcanic disturbance. The anthracite is there and time will prove it. It has not been subjected to as great heat and pressure as has the Pennsylvania anthracite, but it is true anthracite, notwithstanding.

A TEXAS NORTHER—HONESTY

(From *Forest and Stream*, November 1883.)

We are having such a furious spell of weather that I can do no mischief outdoors, and am therefore driven to indoor occupation. For several days we have been “enjoying” one of those singular Texas North winds, undoubtedly shot from caverns of icebergs somewhere, and accompanied by pelting rains.

Of all winds that blow, this is assuredly the most villainous—a Texas “wet norther.” To walk or ride against it is excruciating torture. The drops of rain strike square in the face like bullets; and I doubt not that as they flit past our ears, we could hear them sing like rifle balls on a skirmish line, were it not for the continual whizzing and howling of the wind. When such weather comes, there is nothing to do except “snook” around one’s fire-side and engage in whatever mischief may come to hand. And yet this is the very weather when one who loves his gun and dog can find most sport, if he can withstand the pelting, whizzing cold.

Ducks and geese leave the bays and bayous and swarm on the prairies, reinforcing the curlew, grouse, sandhill cranes and jacksnipes. Black birds, or grackle, come by the literal millions, though none but the small boy ever shoots them.

I take up my shooting irons and look upon them with melancholy as I gaze out the window at the scudding mists, and cedar boughs tossing about as if frantic, and hear the howling of the tempest. With a sigh, I lay my gun aside. This sort of weather would make men crazy had they not some resources for mischief within themselves. Well, my pipe never fails to give me solace under afflictions; and I have a plentiful supply of books, paper and pencils. With these for company, I can from my heart say: “Howl, howl, ye breezes!”

But let none suppose that this norther is really Arctic, although it does come from caverns of icebergs, or from the regions of perpetual snows. This one has been piping about a hundred hours, yet the thermometer on my porch, exposed to its full fury, points five degrees above freezing. But, this is cold enough—when driven into a fellow with a forty horse-power. And how brilliantly the skies will sparkle when this norther is gone! The air will literally dance with delight. Nothing can exceed the beauty of these Texas days which succeed a norther. It makes a fellow feel ten years younger; he could jump a fence, turn somersaults, and ride a wild mustang. All nature, animate and inanimate, laughs electrically. Indeed, these Texas northers are admirable institutions, and nothing could induce me to live in any country where they do not blow; and they blow nowhere on earth except in Texas.

Let no one suppose that they are usually accompanied by rain. They are not. Usually, the skies are as clear as a silver bell; but then they are cold, I tell you, for a fact! They make a

fellow who gets caught out in them jump Jim Crow. They pinch him blue, they buffet him; they wallop him; and if he doesn't go to shelter, they'll turn the marrow in his bones to icicles! They are snorters; they are terrific! There is nothing like them in this world, to one who rides on a vast uninhabited prairie; and there never will be anything like them. And yet I would not give one of them for all the sweet, perfumed zephyrs of Araby the Blest.

Having to engage in some "indoor mischief" during this embargo on outdoor locomotion, I fell to reading Horace, as I often do when the weather is inclement or the nights are long. I chanced upon that celebrated ode, "Intiger vitae celerisque purus," the 22nd of the First Book, and it amused me so much that I made a translation of it, literally where I could, and paraphrastically where the spirit strongly urged me. Here it is:

The man who leads an honest life,
 Free from crime and not some strife,
 Needs not the ponderous, Moorish spear,
 And naught beneath the skies need fear;
 E'en though his wandering footsteps turn
 To where the Syrtes deserts burn;
 Where Albanian mountains lift the snows,
 Or famed Hydospes' current flows,
 For late, as carelessly I strayed,
 Unarmed, beyond my rural shade—
 My Lalage's sweet name repeating
 To th' amorous breezes round me fleeting,
 A wolf—and such ne'er Afric bore,
 Or howled upon the Apulian shore—
 Fled from me in the Sabine wood,
 And sought the deepest solitude.
 Place me in those dread regions where
 No tree withstands the icy air—
 Where endless night and vapors dwell,
 And storms the scudding clouds impel;
 Place me in realms where the blazing sun
 Withers all that he glares upon.
 In silent deserts, waste and wide,
 To human residence denied,
 And still with my thoughts serene and free,
 The flying hours beguiling,
 I'll love and sing my Lalage,
 Sweet speaking, sweetly smiling!

Now, I do protest that this little poem, as Horace wrote it, is beautiful and the sentiment delicious. It is (as Scaliger said of one of Horace's poems which I may translate for you during the next "wet norther") "all ambrosia," but in translating it I had to laugh several times; and could scarcely restrain myself from making a burlesque of it.

I pictured myself, Horace wandering among the ice floes of the Polar regions with a pitiless tempest beating upon his head, and I do not believe that under such circumstances he would think of Lalage, much less sing of her!

The I pictured him cornered against an iceberg by a grim Polar bear, and thought to myself, "What will his honesty avail him now?" We mustn't trust these poets too much, however prettily they may write. I account myself passably honest, but I have been in several scrapes with Indians and such like, where I would have been, undoubtedly "chawed up" had I not been heavily armed. And several times, in spite of being heavily armed, I owed my escape solely to the fleetness of my horse. Honesty is an excellent attribute, but no man will catch me risking all I have upon it.

THE SONG OF THE MOCKING BIRD

(From *Forest and Stream*, October 1881.)

There is a discussion as to whether the Mocking Bird is a mere imitator of the songs of other birds, catching his notes from them by repeated hearings, or whether his notes spring spontaneously in his throat, without education from other birds. This bird has been my very intimate friend from the cradle to the present time. I have always lived in a country where he is decidedly in numbers; and he is more numerous in Texas than in any country I have seen. Our whole state is vocal with him, excepting those portions which are not inhabited by man. He doesn't like to live too far from man; whether this is because he likes to "show off" his musical talent to an audience, or because he believes man will protect him from hawks, I am unable to tell; but I believe that he is controlled by both reasons—the fear of hawks and the natural desire of all gifted creatures, to "show off" their gifts before an appreciative public. Let him perceive in his free, wild strolls that he has an audience of goodlooking ladies and gentlemen, and he will almost burst himself with melody. He will plant himself in the most conspicuous place he can find, so that all can see that he is the singer, and then he simply "turns loose!"

In the ecstasy of song he cannot hold still a moment. He will jump up and down, keep time with his feet, and when he gets a grand burst upon him, will rise up and soar around and around until the "burst" is over. In the way of song, he is tremendous, indeed, and none is better acquainted with this fact than he himself.

As to the point in dispute, I agree with both sides; more particularly, however, with those who hold that the bird is an imitator. Nature has stuffed him so full of musical genius that he would sing, regardlessly—couldn't help singing something; but with all my extended knowledge of this bird, I never heard one sing a song or make a note that I have not heard from other birds in the same locality. With this thought in mind, often have I listened half the night while mocking birds sang within a few feet of my open window. And I am convinced that in order to sing a song, they must first hear it and learn it. In this respect they do not differ from Adelina Patti or other prima donnas. Had Patti never heard anyone else sing, I question very much if she would have sung at all. I would not say the same of the mocking bird, for I believe that with his burst of musical genius, he would have sung something, any way; but his repertoire would be confoundingly slim—like that of all birds in the world, excepting himself.

Here is a hint which, to me, settles the matter. In North Carolina, where I was born and reared, one of the most common notes of the mocking bird is the plaintive, wailing note of the cat-bird. Now the cat-bird does not exist at all in Texas, according to my observation, and I have never heard a mocking bird in Texas utter the note of the cat-bird.

We have in Texas the Blue-Jay, which some call "cat-bird," but they are different birds and make different notes. I doubt if any one has ever heard the mocking bird sing notes not heard from other birds in the same district.

As to his imitating faculty, or his genius to learn songs by hearing them, I was very well acquainted with a mocking bird in Houston, Texas, that learned to sing perfectly the songs of my wife's canary bird, whose cage hung just inside the window. This mocking bird, and perhaps others, also sang perfectly a popular song called "Scandal" that was heard daily from boys on the street. The melody seemed to take his ear and he sang it with a naïveté that was refreshing. No one could sing or whistle "Scandal" half so well as he. I also knew another one that could sing passages of several old familiar songs which he had heard often; but I never knew a mocking bird such as "Roy of Detroit" owns, that imitates the sound made by filing a saw, or the crow of a cock, or the cackle of a hen. And I never knew one that could sing an operatic aria entirely through. There never has been a mocking bird that could sing the "Miserere" from "Trovatore," or the Drinking Song from "Traviata;" and there never will be. Furthermore, there never will be one that can sing the "Last Rose of Summer" and "Home, Sweet Home."

“N.A.T.” TELLS HOW NORTH CAROLINIAN HUNTS IN TEXAS

(From *Forest and Stream*, February 1883.)

I am tremendously amused at a letter of Feb. 16, in the *Forest and Stream* from “Wells,” of Pine Woods, N.C. He travels more than a thousand miles to have some sport with his gun, in Texas. He stops a few days at Dallas, and find no game; he proceeds to Fort Worth, queen of that great populous prairie country; there he remains a few days and, of course, finds no game. He returns to North Carolina and declares Texas be a “mighty poor place for game!”

From his report it appears that he expected to find game in the streets of Dallas and Fort Worth, two populous cities! He expected to stroll down the streets of these cities and meet bears, deer, buffalo, wild turkey, prairie chickens, cougars, hyenas, etc. Naturally, he did not meet with them either prowling about or feeding in the streets; neither did he find them on the outskirts of these cities.

Fort Worth is the “capital” of a great, rolling prairie, pierced by railroads in every direction, and populous with farmers. There is very little timber except along streams; there is no covert in which game may hide; for this reason there is very little game, and that little haunts not the city streets nor its outskirts; but this is a very beautiful and fertile country. For going a-gunning, it is the last place I would select. Indeed, I know no portion of Texas that would offer less encouragement to the sportsman.

When Texas is so great in size, and so plentiful in game, the thought of one travelling so far for gunning, and choosing such a locality is very funny to Texans. Game is very abundant in Texas. If “Wells” had staid on the train that brought him to Fort Worth, and travelled a few hundred miles further west, on the Texas and Pacific Railroad, he would have found a magnificent supply of game, where he could have had his surfeit on short order: deer, antelope, turkeys in season, geese, ducks, swans. I often have seen the Colorado River covered with the fowls as far as the eye could see. The geese are not confined to the streams, however, but waddle over the prairies in great flocks. Sandhill cranes, in great battalions and brigades stalk over the prairies; cougars, bears and wolves are also numerous, and jaguars—dangerous fellows when they get their danders up—are by no means infrequent. And to my thinking, there is no finer game country in the world than the great alluvial plain lying along the Gulf in Texas, extending from twenty to sixty miles into the interior. It is, indeed, a sportsman’s Paradise. In abundance are squirrel, partridge, plover, ducks, and what not. In the rough hills are peccaries (wild hogs), ever ready to take issue, in battle, with the adventurous sportsman. Ah, when he suddenly comes upon these creatures, it stirs his blood! Particularly if he be not perched on a fleet footed horse, or have not a convenient tree to climb. “Wells” need not have returned from Texas with disappoint-

ment. It makes Texans wonder if his trip was a completely silent one; did he talk to no one, and not even hear others talk? Truly, there is every facility in Texas to have afforded him a lively adventure.”

PRODIGIOUS LEMONS

(From the *Galveston News*, October 1883)

Yesterday a prodigious lemon was sent to the office of the Galveston News, as a gift from Mr. W. S. Deats, of Dickinson Bayou. They are grown upon his farm in that locality. For size, they have never been surpassed, even if equalled. The largest one weighed 1 pound, 1 1/2 ounces, and was almost as large as a small cantaloupe. This shows what Texas can do in lemon culture.

We have learned that the tide water district of Texas is unsurpassed for growing lemons and oranges. Ladies planted them for curiosities, and the fruits grew right on, producing enormous crops. Houston now has a great many trees, some so heavily laden with the ripening fruits that branches have to be propped to prevent them from splitting off. In point of quality they are the best I have ever tasted. I have several trees in my yard in Houston, planted with no thought of them producing; and now, I deeply regret that I did not plant a hundred. I have never known our trees to be injured by cold, but doubtless, until they are three years old, they should have some protection during cold snaps.

"N.A.T." COMPARES ST. LOUIS AND CHICAGO
ALSO COMPARES GREAT JOURNALISTS

(From the *Galveston News*, April 16, 1882.)

St. Louis impresses me as a good, solid city without pretense or "put-on." We might class St. Louis as a rosy cheeked, fat-bellied old farmer dressed in home-spun, and possessing a large bank account, and with plenty of well filled stables and barns. In point of showiness Chicago leaves St. Louis far behind. I conceive Chicago to be a brilliant, handsome young fellow, full of daring and adventure, dressed in the top of fashion, yet neat and tasty, and backed by an unlimited credit. These two cities are very unlike in outside appearance, and, I suspect, equally so in "internal suggestion." If Chicago has a purpose to accomplish, her program probably would be to advance upon it with a brilliant, irresistible charge, not stopping to count the costs. St. Louis, however, would accomplish the same point by slow steps and regular methods, fortifying both flanks and to the rear and front. Chicago would outstrip her, but St. Louis would get there after a while, as sure as fate; she would "keep pegging away." Perhaps St. Louis has the German method, and Chicago the American method. The German, while pursuing the hare, must occasionally sit in the shade, drink his pot of lager and smoke his pipe; but the Chicago American first catches his hare and gets drunk afterward. To a great extent St. Louis has a dingy and unwashed appearance, but also has its attractive quarters; Chateau Avenue and a few other residence streets are more pleasing than the famous Fifth Avenue of New York City. St. Louis residences are not so costly, but they sit apart on beautiful lawns, rich in stately trees, with plats of shrubbery and flowers. Fifth Avenue, with its immense and monotonous reach of gaudy palaces, is totally without this loveliness. Then St. Louis has Shaw's Gardens which, in its way, is not equalled on earth. As a botanical garden it surpasses all. No American city has anything that compares with it; and well informed foreigners report the same of the old countries. Shaw's Garden is laid out with exquisite art, and embraces about one hundred acres in which the botanist can find numerous specimens of any tree, plant or flower that grows on earth; and plants are so arranged that he may find what he wishes to see almost as easily as he may find a word in the dictionary. He may wander for hours in the tropics, half drunk with rich odors inhaled from foliage, flowers and fruits; he may roam in the temperate zone and lose himself in the dark and sombre forests of the hyperboreans. These one hundred acres of Shaw's Garden are a complete microcosm to the botanist; to perfect his botanical knowledge he need not go beyond its walls.

One thought, one engrossing idea seems to have been running continually through the mind of him who planned, adorned and filled these grounds; and that is well expressed in the large, gold letters under the bust of Linnaeus on the principal glen house in which the

tropical plants are clustered: "Glory to God in the highest; on Earth, peace and good will to men." The grounds picture an adoration of the Most High. He who wanders through these labyrinths of beautiful creations without having his mind continually lifted toward the Great Creator, must be, indeed, a beastly fellow!

The owner of this garden is Henry Shaw, an English bachelor, who came to St. Louis in the early days, and has lived here ever since. In his recorded will he bequeaths this garden to St. Louis.

A short distance from this is Tower Grove Park: 810 acres laid out in full trim by Mr. Shaw; adorned with statues, artificial lakes, fountains, plantations of trees, shrubs and flowers, beautiful Summer houses, the which in its entirety, is an enchanting fairy land. I doubt if any other city in the world can boast of such a citizen as Henry Shaw.

When first I saw him, and before I knew that it was he, I instinctively felt myself to be in the presence of a remarkably pure and excellent man. I had the pleasure of meeting him. There is that about his eyes, his countenance and his entire demeanor which impresses the beholder. His general expression is that of exceeding purity, benignity and contentedness. In conversation and manner he is as sweet as Summer; to the ladies he is charming. My wife fell much in love with him; and I, not less so. His fine, open, benign face and brilliant beaming eyes will always form a beautiful picture in my memory. I judge him to be seventy to seventy-five years of age, apparently in perfect health and preservation. It is great to have lived a life so devoted to his fellowmen as is that of Henry Shaw's. For such a man there is—there must be—Eternal Life. The vital part of him is too near akin to God to be extinguished by death.

There is one thought I will throw in here. It is this: If one has a lofty and honorable ambition, not clouded with selfishness, whose fulfillment would be for the good of his fellowmen and for the glory of the Maker, he shall scarcely depart from this world until that ambition is accomplished. This achievement may be long in coming, but it will come most surely, for such ambition is of God. The ambition to achieve what Henry Shaw has done, has been with him from early youth; and he does not leave this world until he sees its fulfillment and fruition. May he live long, and enjoy the fruits of his noble ambition to bless his fellowmen! And when he dies, no doubt, St. Louis will erect to him, both in the garden and in the park, as noble a monument as human genius can conceive and execute.

I shall not comment on the great bridge over the Mississippi, and the Zoological garden. The first is too well known and the latter is well worth visiting, but does not compare with Central Park Zoo of New York City, nor with the Zoo of Philadelphia.

I visited "Mac" (J. B. McCullagh), the famous editor of the *Globe Democrat*. He is another of the "institutions" of St. Louis. Wherever I go I make it a rule to become acquainted; and with prominent journalists I can do so without being obtrusive. They are the greatest men of the world; they exercise the greatest influence and are well worth knowing. "Mac" is a stumpy, chunky, round-headed, round-faced man, about fifty; dresses illy, or in very plain clothes, apparently the plainest he can find; does not seem to shave more

often than three times a month. In point of dry goods he has little or no advantage over my old friend of the *Houston Age*, Dan McGary. But I forgot to notice if he wore “Bro-gans,” as does Dan McGary, and as did Horace Greeley. This matter of ill dressing is so marked among great journalists that I suspect it to be a professional affectation; or it may be that having such constant use of the intellect these men come to regard wisdom as the only worthwhile consideration, and look upon mere dress with unfeigned contempt, excepting its use to keep off cold and to hide nakedness! It may be, too, that they consider the mocking bird, which, though the most musically gifted of all birds, is about the plainest in dress. Seems to me that editors well might be styled “The Ill-Dressed Fraternity.” This would leave out many who are of small importance in the profession.

“Mac” is one of the most eminent journalists in America, and has pushed himself to the top of his profession since the war between the States. As a correspondent he was full of human nature and bon ami; even in his satire these traits are marked, as they are in the characters of all great editors whom I have known, except Charles A. Dana, of the *New York Sun*, who seems to be at his best when throwing bombshells into the castle of some prominent fellow whom he hates. Dana is a born satirist and hater—hating a great many and loving but few.

“Mac” is a very lovable man; loving to love and bearing no hate.

NOTES

- 1 Date of this writing is 1876 as compared with Montaigne's trip in 1580.
- 2 Galveston
- 3 In 1935 Houston's population is about 380,000—while Galveston's is around 53,000
- 4 The author of the *Vestiges of Creation* seems to have been convinced that the life of the herdsman leads to barbarism. He says in his chapter on the Early History of Mankind: "Even men who have been civilized, when transferred to a wide wilderness, where each has to work hard and isolated for the first requisite of life, soon show a retrogression to barbarism; witness the plains of Australia, as well as the backwoods of Canada and the prairies of Texas."
- 5 I have never seen any beds of salt, or rock salt, in the region of the Salt Fork, but have no doubt that they exist, and that the brine of the river is derived from them. Along its borders I saw native crystal salt, as clear as ice. Its waters are considerably more briny than the ocean. I saw also a small clear pond near the river, very salty, which was filled with fish resembling the sheeps-head. I saw no fish in the river, though doubtless they are there. I thought of finding of these salt-water fish was remarkable, as they were separated from the ocean at least five hundred miles. How did they get there? Does a peculiar form of life come, when the peculiar conditions suited to its existence arrives?
- 6 Earth
- 7 The first American explorers have filled the country, particularly the Southwest, with ugly and abominable names, frequently for the most beautiful natural objects. One of the prettiest streams I ever saw, in southern Missouri, is entitled with the name of "Cow-skin," which has a rival in "Cow-house Creek," one of the prettiest tributaries of the Rasque. The map of Arkansas is sadly defaced with such wretched names. How poor must have been the vocabulary of these people!
- 8 I am reminded here of a singular geological occurrence. About the same distance from Houston, and the same from Galveston in Brazoria County, there is a great deposit of Eocene limestone of superior quality, in a mound covering many acres, rising in the midst of a region of the latest geological formation. There is enough of this limestone to furnish Houston and Galveston with building lime for ages, if it only had railroad transportation. It is the only limestone within my knowledge anywhere near the Texas coast. With this abundant limestone so near, and yet so far, Houston and Galveston have until lately been getting their lime from Rockland in Maine! They now get it from Austin, one hundred and seventy-eight miles north of Houston.
- 9 These sparkling pools might disappear in a long, dry summer, but one Artesian well, which might easily be obtained here, would furnish a whole community with abun-

dance of living water.

- 10 One of the most abundant of the wild grapes of Texas is the Mustang or Cut-Throat, as the Texans sometimes call it. It is a great bearer, hardy as a Polar bear, is universal throughout the State, and is confined solely to Texas, as far as I know. It derives the name Cut-Throat from the acrid juice lying between the skin and the pulp—so acrid that it cannot be eaten with much comfort unless the skin is slipped off before the pulp is put in the mouth. I do not doubt that the finest grapes may be raised on this hardy native vine; and this has been proved by a gentleman of Waco, who has succeeded in producing probably the handsomest grape in cultivation by impregnating its blossoms with the White Hungarian. The grape thus produced has the sweetness of the Hungarian with the game flavor of the Texan. I have little doubt that from this cross will come one of the best sparkling wine grapes of the world—a wine as lively as champagne, but with more heft and strength of body. Of the juice of the Mustang without hybridization, a very fair claret is made
- 11 When Houston and Galveston can sell bacon and lard nearly as cheap as St. Louis, how will it affect South America and West Indian trade?
- 12 And still I did not marry her. The last time I saw her she had grown large and fat, and was the mother of three bouncing boys, of whom I was not the father.
- 13 The red Permian, rich in copper and ochres, is largely developed above the mouth of the Concho, and the Colorado has doubtless obtained its coloring matter from these deposits mostly.
- 14 One of the most remarkable deposits of marble in the world occurs on this river, at what is known as the Marble Falls, about forty miles above Austin. The river for several miles has cut its way through a bed of marble of several varieties, including black, and all of the finest quality. The whole region round about abounds with marble, so accessible that some of the farmers have built their fences of it, and the chimneys of the cabins are of the same magnificent material! The locality is remarkable for its picturesque beauty, and the river here has an immense water-power, sufficient to turn all the machinery in Texas, and more.
- 15 It has always appeared to me that the history of Eve and the serpent is the severest satire ever written or spoken of the fair sex; and after that they should look with charity upon the little uncharitable flings of the sterner sex at some of their peculiarities. Juvenal, who was a merciless, almost brutal, satirist of the womankind, never wrote anything half so severe. From the Mosaic standpoint, Eve was the most perfect as well as the fairest of her sex. She came into the world sinless by the direct act of God, and differed from the pure angels only in that she had no wings, and was not of ethereal or spiritual substance; and yet this most superior woman allowed herself to be led from her allegiance to her husband and her God, and utterly perverted and ruined by the seduction of a hideous high-land moccasin or a cobra di capello—a creature which no woman since has ever been able to behold without an involuntary shudder or scream!

The idea of a lady accepting a gift from one of these hideous creatures, particularly when presented from his mouth, seems utterly out of the question.

Two gentlemen, residing near San Antonio, who had been bitten by rattlesnakes, told me that no sooner had the reptiles struck than they scampered away with every manifestation of delight over the deed they'd done. Said one of these gentlemen, "Snakes, you know, glide away smoothly, with the entire body prone to the ground, but this fellow who had bitten me, scampered away with an up-and-down, or wave-like motion of the body, as if he was thrilled with delight. Getting under a large rock where he was safe from pursuit, he turned and raising his head aloft waved it to and fro, as if he were saying to himself, 'Ah, old fellow, I have got you now! Don't you feel good, though?' It would require but little stretch of the imagination to conceive that snake the veritable old devil himself!"

"Be as wise as serpents."—The particular sort of wisdom here meant is probably that which holds that everyone will bear watching, and will harm you if he can. Be ever on the alert to take care of yourself! Trust not at all, unless that ye be "deceived and likewise sucked in."

- 16 The state geologist in his last report, states that this is the case, also, with the upper Cross Timbers, in the northern portion of the state, in which the surface development is Tertiary, while all the region about them is Cretaceous or older.
- 17 The mesquite has three other valuable properties; it exudes a gum, equal to gun-arabic for every purpose for which that gum is used; it is rich in tannin, and as a fuel wood is not surpassed. It would no doubt, when large enough, prove a beautiful timber for cabinet work.
- 18 Since my visit, Lockhart, in confirmation of these good impressions, has refused by a large majority of the vote of her citizens, to allow tippling shops on her streets. When I heard of it I could but exclaim, "It is like her!"
- 19 These great unoccupied spaces belong mostly to the State and railroad companies to whom they have been donated by the State. The State holds all her lands at \$1.25 per acre, but the railroads and private persons will generally sell these lands for much less.
- 20 The writer is thinking of Mr. Lindhimer, long the editor of the *New Braunfels Zeitung*—an accomplished writer and sweet poet in his own tongue, and an enthusiastic botanist. He has done more for the Texas Flora than any one else, and many of its prettiest gems bear his name.
- 21 The exceeding, sparkling purity of the Comal water makes it unequalled for the calico and paper manufacture.
- 22 The country between the Guadalupe and Comal is really one continuous valley. After the streams have united, the valley is narrower.
- 23 Famous for its splendid appearance at a distance, and for dogs and bones within.
- 24 So-called, but they are simply large hills, putting on mountain airs.
- 25 The Hondo, fifty miles west of the Cibolo, behaves precisely in the same way—fre-

quently disappearing and rising again.

- 26 Such is the story told of him by those who knew him most intimately, and it is just like him.
- 27 Judge William Manifee of Fayette.
- 28 This is also the reason a barrel of Texas flour will make so much more bread than a barrel of Illinois, or other northern flour. A considerable percentage of the latter is water, while the former has very little; and water does not make bread. There is, therefore, more flour in one Texas barrel than one from Illinois, but how much more is not exactly ascertained. An old baker in Houston, Mr. Jno. Kennedy, told the writer that fourteen ounces of flour from North Texas makes more bread than sixteen of the best from Illinois.
- 29 I have known several instances of men in Texas leading the solitary life of the anchorite, and finally emerging with more money than they knew what to do with. Some embarked in trade in cities, but usually went back to solitude after a short venture. A few were killed by Indians and one went crazy. I have not known one yet to get married.
- 30 Not *Salmo fontinalis*, but probably *grystes salmoides*.
- 31 These remarkable fogs may result from the almost thermal waters of the streams that gush up out of the Cretaceous formation of Texas, being so much warmer than the air, which has been chilled during the night.
- 32 Lost rocks may be seen almost anywhere near primitive hills in Texas, streaming out from them in an easterly or south-easterly direction. In Llano County, on the Fredericksburg road, they are particularly numerous.
- 33 This primitive district, of which these hills form the southern boundary, is one full of interest to the mineralogist. Gold and silver have been found at many places, and several mining parties are now at work for these minerals, with what success is not yet known. Magnetic iron ore, that smelts seventy to eighty percent pure iron, exists in quantities apparently inexhaustible. Not far from the road followed by this traveller, in Llano County, is a mass of this ore, nine hundred feet long and five hundred feet wide, rising thirty feet above its visible base. It has been reduced and used to a small extent, and blacksmiths pronounce it the same as the celebrated Swedish iron, which is manufactured from precisely similar ore. This mass of iron lies between granite ridges, is traversed by quartz veins, was evidently upheaved with the granite, and is, therefore, a true metallic vein. In the same locality are other masses or beds of iron of equal if not greater extent. It is a timbered region, offering plenty of charcoal; and limestone for flux abounds in the vicinity. Steatite or soapstone is near at hand in large beds. When this wonderful iron region is penetrated by a railroad, these deposits will become of immense value. The manufacture of railroad iron for the railroads of Texas alone, would make a great business. It is, without much doubt, the richest deposit of iron on the American continent.

A four-foot vein of charcoal has been discovered in the vicinity, in a depression be-

tween the granitic and metamorphic hills; and the carboniferous formation has a wide development a day's journey to the north, in which coal is known to abound. Salt is manufactured from well-water, issuing from Silurian rocks. Indeed, Llano County is a remarkable mineral region, and will no doubt one day be famous for its minerals.

34 Calciferous sandstone.

35 "I do not understand."

36 "I do not speak English, Sir."

37 Mr. J. O. Meusebach.

38 Mason county is now one of the most quiet in the State, and has been for some months. The feud between the cattle-men and farmers has ended, and permanent peace seems to reign.

39 I wish to be understood that this remark is meant only for the lords of those ladies who walk barefooted over rocks.

40 In San Antonio.

41 I have often thought of my first appearance among a frontier people, with considerable amusement to myself. When a boy, almost beardless, just from the schools, I appeared on horseback in San Saba, wearing a nice silk hat, carrying a silver-headed cane, and dressed as young gentlemen generally dressed in the best communities of the older States. The old frontiersmen looked upon me with almost intolerable scorn, and there was some serious talk of hanging me as a suspected horse-thief, for no other reason in the world than that I was well-dressed, well-educated, and decidedly well-behaved, though rather reserved young fellow! One old fellow, rough and hairy, and, to my eye, quite a monster in appearance, with hardly enough clothes on to hide his exceedingly ugly nakedness, actually talked of this within my hearing. The look of scorn that he cast upon me was sublime. I was quick to perceive the drift of things; and as Indians were then stealing and scalping at a rate, I threw off my nice clothes and silver-headed cane, put on a rough suit, and went Indian hunting with the frontiersmen some six months, sleeping with them in their houses, in the woods, and on the prairies. They soon seemed almost to love me, and I never have been in a country where I had such warm friends; though they never ceased to joke me about my "three-story silk hat" and silver-headed cane. I even stopped several nights under the hospitable roof of the rough old fellow who talked in my presence of hanging me, and I felt a malicious sort of pleasure in kissing his plump daughters every chance I could steal. Had I not thrown aside my silk hat and fine cane, it is not at all impossible that I might have been hanged. Since that time San Saba has advanced mightily, and I dare say there are many very nicely dressed young fellows among them; but her people's hearts are no warmer now than they were then.

42 The Catholic priests of Texas believe that this colony was not destroyed by Indians but by Mexicans and European robbers. Some color is given to this by the fact that silver mines were worked in the vicinity, and the robbers may have supposed silver was in

the possession of the priests. And yet it is hard to believe that those in search of silver alone, would have imbrued their hands in such wholesale slaughter, allowing not one to survive.

43 The war between the states—1861–1865.

44 One of the best accounts I ever heard of a Texas Norther, was that conveyed to me by an old Scotch gentleman, who was then new in Texas. We were riding out together, and the atmosphere was as usual, oppressively close. He bared his bosom to catch some fresh air. I knew what was coming, and said nothing. Presently the norther came. The old gentleman said: "What a cool pleasant breeze!" In about two minutes he commenced buttoning up his clothing, and broke out: "What a d____d cold wind!" The severest northers in the lower portions of the State are unaccompanied by rain, but usually by long white or leaden clouds, near the horizon.

See Texas Norther, page 273.

45 These stinging lizards are small creatures, from an inch to two inches long exactly resembling the picture of the Scorpion in the almanacs, with a turned up tail, in which they have a stinging apparatus which can sting an indefinite number of times in very rapid succession. When they get between one's flesh and his clothes, which they sometimes do, they create a great sensation by the rapidity of their fire. Their sting is sharper than that of a wasp, attended with a strange sensation of heat and a faint, peculiar odor of fire, but the pain quickly departs, and there is little or no swelling. They are very fond of Mexican houses and all wooden houses that have cracks in which they may enter.

46 I understand that they keep two classes of bottles: one class, filled with excellent liquor, for the officers and strangers who look like gentlemen, and another class, filled with very villainous stuff, for the common soldiers, and strangers who do not look like gentlemen; but they all have to pay a quarter of a dollar.

47 The city of the Holy Angels has improved very much since that time. The buffalo hunters made it their headquarters, where they prepared their skins and meat for market, expelling the worst characters. Tom Green County, in which it is situated, has also received a considerable population since, whose presence was a continual menace to the Angels, compelling them either to mend their manners or depart.

48 The writer has seen the swan in thousands on the Colorado, above the settlements; this river flows by the door of the gentleman who wrote the article in the Texas Almanac.

49 Unios.

50 There is the bed of a large lake above Marble Falls on the Colorado, which was drained off by the Colorado slowly cutting its way through a mountain of marble. This was also in the present Geological Day—shells of the Unio being very numerous in the ancient bed.

51 Anyone who has much hunted buffaloes has doubtless often witnessed similar scenes.

52 I stated that Buffaloes bring forth two calves at a birth. I gave this on the authority of

one who has seen much more of the buffalo than I have—not without much doubt of its correctness. If the statement is correct, all who have written of the buffalo, as far as I have observed, are wrong, and it would be a remarkable exception to the rule of the bos family. It is probable my informant was let into his very firm belief by encountering a phenomenal pair of buffalo twins. Still I will not positively contradict him. His statement may go for what it is worth, with these doubts thrown around it.

But even if the buffaloes always produced twins, it would not long delay their inevitable doom. While I write (December 5, 1877) there are not less than five hundred strangers slaughtering the buffalo in Texas, besides the frontiersman and Indian. There is a continual fusillade upon them, and the great plains are red with their blood. A large part of this slaughter is a mere wantonness. It is to be hoped that the next Texas legislature will pass a law to stop these destroyers. The buffalo must go anyhow, but let us keep him with us as long as we can.

- 53 Since the trip of our traveller, the buffalo has covered the plains of Northwest Texas in such herds as have not been known before, at least by the white man. They broke into the Post gardens at Fort McKavett, the officers shooting them from the windows of their quarters. During the winter of 1876–77, hundreds of thousands were slaughtered for their hides and tongues alone, and many from wantonness.
- 54 Neither are they now.
- 55 This surmise is correct. La Salle found the Indians on the Neches well supplied with horses. They received him kindly and generously gave him horses to mount his company of twenty men, who were trying to find their way on foot from the coast of Texas to the French missionary posts in the north.
- 56 The jaguar is quite common in the uninhabited wilds of Western Texas, and is a very destructive beast, attacking and slaying full-grown horses and cattle. He is said to be a dangerous animal to tamper with, and certainly his aspect would indicate it. He has a brutal, bull-dog head, short, heavy neck, and his power of spring is tremendous. It is not safe to hunt him except in companies. He often roars very like a lion, and has more resemblance to that animal than to either the cougar or tiger.
- 57 This portion of Texas has never been geologically examined, except in a most cursory way; and as it is not always easy to distinguish Jurassic from Cretaceous fossils—many of them being similar—it is not strange that this region has been written Cretaceous. The late State Geologist, Prof. Buckley, rode over it in an ambulance, not deviating from the El Paso stage road. In his report, he seems to support the general view, yet seems to have little confidence in his own opinion. In a letter to the writer of this note, who inquired as to the age of the rocks about Kickapoo Springs, he says: “They may be Lower Silurian.” There is probably little reason to doubt that our traveller’s view in regard to the predominance of Jurassic in this region will be confirmed by careful observations. Gen. Egbert F. Viele, late of the U.S. Army, a thorough geologist, who has seen much of this country, sustained this view in a conversation with the writer in New

York.

- 58 I brought back several specimens of silver-lead and copper from these mountains, which competent parties in Austin and St. Louis, who examined them, pronounced highly valuable. The lands belong to the State, and there is plenty of water and game. Prospecting parties, taking a little salt and flour along, would fare well.
- 59 Obsidian.
- 60 Nullum simile est idem.
- 61 After my arrival in Presidio del Norte, I made particular enquiry about these animals and was told that they are the Black Tiger— better known in Mexico as the American Lion. Their zoological name is probably *Felis discolor*. They are much larger than the Jaguar or *Felis onca*, generally known as the Mexican Lion in Texas, and are also much more ferocious. It is said to be an exceedingly easy matter to get a battle with them, they putting themselves to little or no trouble to avoid it. They have no true mane like the lion, but the hair about the head and neck of the males is long and bristly, and this is always erected when they are excited, producing much of the appearance of a true leonine mane. They are much less common in the Western Texas wilds than the *Felis onca*, but I was told that they are fast multiplying. The Mexicans say they are migrating northward from Central America, following the mountain chains, and are never seen out of them. It is probable that it was fortunate for me that I did not fire upon them.
- 62 Charles Hallock spent a winter in Texas, in the writer's home and became an enthusiastic devotee of Texas.
- 63 When I spoke of this old fellow at Presidio, they said my impression of him was doubtless correct.
- 64 "Many thanks, senor; may God hold you in his hands."
- 65 Very goaty.
- 66 Some of the most remarkable meteoric stones known in the United States, have fallen in Texas. One in Yale College, weighing one thousand six hundred and twenty-five pounds, came from the Staked Plains, as did one, weighing several hundred pounds which is in the Geological Rooms in Austin.
- 67 It is held that under the present State constitution it is unlawful to appropriate money for a geological survey. One of the leading members of the convention that formed the constitution declared in that body: "Geology is a humbug, and I know it to be so!" It is most remarkable that the people of Texas can be imposed upon by such conceited ignoramuses. But the convention agreed with him, and the result of it is that probably as rich a mineral region as there is on earth, must remain idle and unknown until explored by private enterprise. It seems to be the pride and policy of other communities to make their resources known, but these latter-day statesmen seem to desire to hide the resources of Texas.
- 68 Since my visit two years ago Fort Davis has increased in attraction greatly, and now enjoys a weekly newspaper. (1878).

- 69 When I made this trip on the El Paso stage, the coaches were furnished by Government with a military guard. Afterwards this guard was withdrawn for a time, and the quick result was that the stage was attacked near Mustang Water Holes, the driver killed, and the mails robbed. There were no passengers. All the money in the mails was taken, but checks were let alone. Indians were seen the day previous on the Pecos. This leaves little doubt that they were from Mexico, and they knew the value of green-backs, or that they were attended by white American rascals; this is not unfrequently the case with these Indians raids into Texas.
- 70 At this writing, December, 1877, the old capitol building was not creditable; and the comments of this author did much to arouse the planning for a new structure. In 1883 the new capitol was begun, and finished in 1887. It is built of magnificent, polished, Texas granite and flashes radiantly beneath the sun's rays. It is an ornament to the beautiful hills among which it stands.



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