The Kanzas region: forest, prairie, desert, mountain, vale, and river

Section 5, Pages 121 - 150

The title page for this volume continued with "Descriptions of scenery, climate, wild productions, capabilities of soil, and commercial resources; interspersed with incidents of travel, and anecdotes illustrative of the character of the traders and red men; to which are added directions as to routes, outfit for the pioneer, and sketches of desirable localities for present settlement." A small map is opposite the title page. The "Addenda" included several "Laws Governing Kanzas," a section on the objects and plans of an Emigrant Aid Company, information about the American Settlement Company, and prices for various items in Lawrence. Also included in the "Addenda" was the text of the Kansas Nebraska Act, which was not scanned as it is available elsewhere on this site.

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the mastiff to the cur. The first I ever saw was at Cow Creek. It had been shot by some one preceding us; and as the huge brute lay extended athwart the track, with spikes of teeth gnashed together, and the foam of the death-anguish clinging to them, I paused in doubt as to what it could be. Since then I have seen thousands, and learned that they are not to be feared. They are so timid that a child can frighten them with the slightest menace; yet so tame, they follow in the wake of caravans, in herds. The desperation of hunger alone renders them fierce; and where the buffalo is, the wolf has seldom need to lick hungry chops. They even serve a valuable purpose in devouring the carcases wantonly slain by traders and Indian hunters, merely for the hide and a few choice tit-bits. But, where the supply is insufficient, the wolf becomes his own butcher. Hundreds of them close in upon a herd quietly grazing, until the serried ring startles and puts the unwieldy animals to rout, all of whom they permit to escape but one, and he is doomed. Run where he may, snarling mouths gape their trenchant welcome. There is no getting out of that scrape. Wolf after wolf, as many as can find room, leap upon his back, his breast, his throat, his legs, wherever they can impede progress or inflict pain; and when one is tired or shaken off, a fresh tormentor fastens his fangs in the same gash; until at last overspent, his hamstrings cut, his lolling tongue snapt out, and bleeding at the throat, the noble victim staggers and falls.

The Kanzas range of the buffalo is mainly along the Arkansas, where they may be seen grouped like cattle in a meadow, spotting the plain for miles around. No other country has so grand a park, with such lordly animals to pasture. They were made for each other, the Grand Prairie and the bison. Buffalo they ought not to be called; for with their lion-like mane, of dusk color, and short horns, almost hid under frightful frontlets of tangled wooly hair, they bear little resemblance to the buffalo of India; no title can be more descriptive than the backwoodman's term, "prairie cattle."

The cow is as heavy as a stall-fed ox; the bull weighs twice as much; and the calf is a Titanic infant—as you see him trotting along with his dam, it is difficult to persuade yourself that he is not "of age."

The buffalo chase is the sparkle of excitement, which Di. Vernon only could describe, and Nimrod have a heart big enough to enjoy. I once saw an Irishman thus animated. The first glimpse he had of the game, he dashed off with speed and energy of horsemanship that would have done a centaur credit; but, after describing many indescribable evolutions, when he rode cheek by jowl with his antagonist, where he could fire most effectively, he suddenly "remimbered" that he had flung his rifle from him in the first heat of the onset—and that was to be looked for.

The buffalo is not to be caught by sprinkling salt on his tail. As old Captain Bonneville, of intrepid memory says, "The Indians sometimes kill them without guns or arrows, and with only an old spear." The favorite method among us was to steal upon them to windward, on foot, with a rifle; this is apt to be successful, as their scent is nice and vision dull. In shooting them, it must be borne in mind that the heart lies low, and is protected by the shaggy front, which acts as an elastic shield. A dozen bullets may be carried away by the enraged brute, which if he does not survive, retard his escape but little. The death-wound can readily be inflicted with a holster pistol, so aimed that the bullet enters under the fore-leg and, passing laterally forward, penetrates the heart. This is easily effected from the gait of the animal, which is a clumsy gallop; and it is ludicrous to see a score or hundred in flight, with broad breast, distended nostrils, head, hump, and tail to the tip, projected in a straight line, like galvanized castings of bronze, driving on with terrible force, one after another—as locomotives will over the Pacific Railroad—hereafter.

The approved process of butchering is by turning over the carcass on the belly, and commencing work down the back. The tender loins, hump, ribs, heart and tongue are appropriated,

and the rest left to the wolves. The meat is cured by being cut into slices, and exposed in the dry air; it is sometimes jerked by being placed on frame-work over a slow fire; when fresh, it is juicy and tender, of easy digestion, and possessing every aperient quality; no inconvenience is suffered from over-eating; teamsters gorge themselves, like the ogre with the hundred loaves, and grow fat without pain.

The commercial value to Kanzas of the prairie cattle may be inferred from the simple statement of the item, that one hundred thousand buffalo rugs are now exported annually.

Prairie dogs are found in the vicinity of Cow Creek. Their principal towns are high up on the Arkansas; but, for years, they seem to have been advancing gradually eastward—probably with a view to preëmption when the Indian lands are vacated. They now have an extensive colony near the Little Arkansas. As to the economy, and romance of their customs, most people are enlightened. I have had many personal interviews with this quadrupedal gentry (confidential, of course—went unattended) and can testify to their amiability; though they are home-livers, and do not stand for ceremony when strangers enter their streets; it is only by exercising the greatest precaution that they can be approached within observing distance. Their burrowing mounds in places dot the prairie for miles, interwound with a labyrinth of paths that would have puzzled Theseus. These they have beaten in their social promenades, and tours of police inspection. In motion, and when examined in your hand, they are most like the squirrel; but seen erect upon a burrow, furiously barking, have the very outline of a tiny mastiff. What they have to eat at home, would require the sagacity of Agassiz to find out; and what they drink? seeing they are careless as to whether they settle near a river or inhabit the heart of a desert. There is a town upon the *Jornado* thirty miles from the nearest surface-water. Perhaps they dig wells. It would be a curious study to inspect the interior arrangements of their domicils. Naturalists have stated, that the Coquimbo owl and rattlesnakes live in community with

the prairie convolutions gradually subside into the flat level of the immense plateau known as the Grand Prairie, which, with an average width of five hundred miles, sweeps along the eastern base of the Rocky Mountains for a thousand miles. When in the valley of the Arkansas, I was sometimes tempted to ascend the bluffs that roll up to the river, and then far out in epicycloidal curves. From their brow, to the northward, was an expanse without a single elevation upon which the eye could rest. To look before was to look into the distant sky, which bent around an unbroken hemisphere of azure. Lured by the sublime novelty, I have traveled on that plain for hours, where there was nothing to guide me but the dial of my own shadow. No antelope was in the path, nor bird wing on the air. It was the temple of the solemn and the immense; at whose hoary altar the heart grows still. Dead of soul and creeping and bestial must he be, who can there tread alone, and not feel his spirit awed within his being, until fiery plumes are given it to mount in adoration. When the poetry of America's plains and mountains shall have been written, that will be a glorious volume—an epic, through all time, electrical.

Passing from the Little Arkansas, twenty miles southwestward, the trail crosses Cow Creek, whose little valley with its picturesque grouping of bushes is very lovely. The birds mostly seen here are the crow, turtle-dove, quail, blue jay and kingfisher, with occasional flocks of teal, curlew and wild turkey. The purslane or lamb's-quarter, which grows hereabouts, when cooked with proper seasoning, makes a fine dish of "greens." The yellow lizard, with jetty dots, and common land turtle, begin to present themselves for a share of attention, no longer having the tall grass to roof them from observation; and at the head of the reptile tribe in venom, is the gray rattlesnake, when at maturity about two feet long, and having a row of blackish spots, like eyes, along the back. The dusky wolf from this forward usurps the place of the coyote or prairie wolf, to which in comparison of size it is as

them. That the owl does so, I can not doubt, having often seen it fly out of their holes in the dusk of evening. Rattlesnakes too I have chased in, tail and all, but whether they were expected, is more than I can aver. I had a dog one winter, occupying the same apartment with me. The usual temperature was maintained; nevertheless, his canine-ship, when cold weather came in earnest, took a six weeks' nap, from which neither thumpings nor offers of sustenance could arouse him. When violently used, half conscious for the moment, he would totter a few steps, and then, the sleepiest dog alive, would roll over, completely "knocked up." Having composedly slept out the appointed time, this Van Winkle of quadrupeds rubbed his eyes open one morning, and breakfasted comfortably upon cabbage leaves—which, for ignorance of his native bill of fare, was what I usually gave him. Thereafter, he was sprightly as ever; but whether he slept again, until the next winter, was what I never staid awake long enough to ascertain. It would be unreasonable to suppose he did. My own theory in respect to prairie dogs is, that their peculiarities adapt them to the polar day of six months; and that, originally inhabiting Symmes' Hole, they have inadvertently dug their way out from the cylindrical to the external world, and by a system of subterraneous pipe-laying, best known to their sires, have become citizens of Kanzas in the order of squatter sovereignty and pacific occupancy.

The wild horse (*mostrenco*, without owner, *mesteñas*, or mustang) was formerly a nomad of these prairies; but the murderous process of "creasing" has so reduced their number that they are seldom seen, where in herds of thousands they sported in the pride of native freedom. There is a story current among credulous trappers, of a supernatural roan with jetty ears, the most symmetrical and fleet that ever rang hoof upon flinty sod. When last heard from, he was trotting south, as may be surmised to neigh for Old Whitey's stall, what time "the god of Texas" is our Gno-nuthin President.

Equally mythic is the milk-white buffalo so rare nowadays,

but populous in legendary annals. All these seem but the repeating offspring of that common stock for romancers, the sacred deer of Onota; and such western information may be put in the category of Melville's Moby Dick, until further developments render it essential they should be inquired for.

Elk and deer* are likewise becoming scarce in their old haunts: but the countless antelope of the Cimarron and Ratone will supply the Kanzas market with venison, until railroad conveniences are established, and domestic slaughter-pens are subjected to competition with products of trans-montane parks watered by

"the springs
And pools whose issues swell the Oregon."

Black bears do not stray far from the Ozark and cañons of the Western mountains. One grizzly bear I met as far east as the Upper Spring of Cimarron; or rather, was at some circumlocution not to meet him. The old thane was at open field when descried, where he had not been expected, and no provision made for his reception; but looking so like a hog, it was plain he was a bear, come down from the rocks for "change of scene"; I did not stop to interrogate his inclinations, which tended in a different direction from mine.

From Cow Creek to the Plum Buttes is fourteen miles. The existence of craw-fish in this vicinity attests the approach to damper soil. Winding southward, the road passes through an immense dog city; from the purlieus of which the conical outline of the buttes is revealed, with the Arkansas, the imperial river of the Territory, sweeping near their base. These twin hills are thick set upon each rounded summit with a luxuriant growth of plum bushes; and purpling the sward that spreads down to the river side are beds of the erythronium, a pretty little lilaceous flower, the sight and fragrance of which has many a time sent a warmer throb to my breast in those

* George Walter, Esq., a backwoodsman of renown, says that deer hunt the rattlesnakes and kill them by jumping on them, with their hoofs, thus literally "bruising the serpent's head."

far wilds; for it was this and the wood-violet that stood first in my floral loves, when a child in the groves of Pennsylvania.

The Big Bend of the Arkansas is here a quarter of a mile broad—an isle-gemmed river, not so picturesque as the Susquehanna and Upper Mississippi, but as grandly beautiful. From the adjacent heights the ledges of wave-like yellow sand, along the southern bank, look like wind-driven piles of wheat; beneath which, through a low and wide trench, the majestic waters sweep placid as "the river of a dream." *Rio Napesté*, as the Mexicans name it, will probably measure two thousand miles in length from its sources to the frontier of the State of Arkansas. The channel is wide and shallow, with banks in many places not five feet above low water-mark. It varies from a quarter to three-quarters of a mile in width; and, at certain points, can be forded, except in time of freshet; but care is requisite to avoid quicksands; and the current has velocity and coolness that would not be anticipated from the smoothness of the surface. I have not heard the profoundly wise say it—world-apprehending legislators may remain oblivious of the idea—but it seems to me that the Arkansas might be opened for steamboats to the mountain, for the minimum of what it would cost to span the eastern desert with a single rail-track. In the agitation of utilitarian schemes, so vast a volume of water should not be permitted to roll twice the length of the Ohio, in obscurity. None of its tributaries are navigable, except the Neosho, which has been ascended by small boats for one hundred miles.

Seven miles west of the Bend, the trail crosses Walnut Creek, whose border is prolific with the prairie gourd and wild potato; and ornamented with the bright scarlet malva and silver-edged euphorbia; with, here and there, the blue flower of the cockle burr, and the prairie convolvolus. This latter plant is esculent, the root forming into tubers a foot or more in length, and several inches in diameter. The Indians call it badger's food; among trappers, it is known as the man root,

because it sometimes attains the size and bears a fantastic likeness to the human figure. It has a sweet taste, is nourishing, and is an undoubted remedy for fever. It would repay culture.

From the river, and westward, extends a fine plain of buffalo grass, from which, fourteen miles beyond Walnut Creek, the legended Pawnee Rock stands out prominently. It terminates a lóng prairie swell, four miles from the river's verge, looking boldly out over an unbounded southern expanse. Its front and sides of highly ferruginous sandstone, are carved with names and memorials of hundreds of prairie *voyageurs*. Among these emblems and inscriptions may be noted the sign manual of a Governor of a Western commonwealth and other distinguished gentlemen. Desirous of registering myself in this Saint Nicholas of outsiders, and not finding unoccupied space enough to cut the letters, even by stretching on tiptoe, I hooked myself on from above, and left the incision of my patronymic there, in Runic characters; to be deciphered, perchance, by an admiring scion; even as I have stumbled upon the name of a grandfather of mine, chiseled among the ruined cloisters of an Aztec temple, farther out in the lone wilderness than this. Such ancestral archives are democratic.

Ash Creek is near by, and dry. The ravine is thick wooded, the woof of foliage scarcely showing above the level of the prairie turf. Strolling upon the brink, one evening, and looking intently down to catch the twinkle of a pool, if any were hid among the vines and bushes at the bottom, there came upon me a sudden thrill, which I cannot explain, but which always apprises me of the presence of danger. I paused, thinking there might be a Comanch in ambuscade; but, peering through the tree-tops, could see nothing; not a leaf rustled, nor dry twig crackled to the stealthy tread of wild beast or savage. Becoming conscious of a soft pressure on the thin moccasin, and glancing to my feet, I beheld myself standing in the coil of a monstrous rattlesnake. In a moment, without knowing how, I was a dozen yards distant, making sure the

reptile was not an ocular illusion, and half inclined to laugh at the drollery of the unpremeditated jump. Hastily paying my respects with a revolver, the Saurian was dragged into camp; where his tail peacefully expired at sundown.

Six miles farther is Pawnee Fork, a turbid and rapid stream, which with every rain-fall is swollen to a torrent. Elm is the principal wood, interspersed with ash, cottonwood, box elder, wild cherry and plum. Among the shrubs are the willow brush and toothache tree. The coreopsis and Mexican poppy make their appearance among the splendid flowering plants; and the prickly pear and sand burr give sharp intimations of their presence. Of the cactus family there is a unique species with conical trunk, sending out irregular protuberances, whose terminations are star-form. Asclepias with truncated leaves, and white thistles, lead plant and prairie indigo abound.

The American crane frequents these waters. It attains double the size of the eagle; and is superbly white, the tips of the wings being of raven blackness. Seen flying through the clear sunlight, even the stoic Indian cannot refrain from admiring its dazzling beauty. The turtle-dove, kill-deer plover, oriole and yellow-headed blackbird are numerous; and the rich notes of the sky-lark (*alanda alpertri*), and medley of the mocking-bird, enliven the day. Frogs, large enough for an exhibition, conduct the vocal entertainments of the evening, with their sonorous organ music prolonging the doleful bugle-notes of the wolf; while aloft, the night-hawk bemoans the castigation of indigent William.

The soil is a vegetable mould, mixed with sand, of several feet in depth, and every way adapted to making fine gardens, which may yield enough to support the pastoral community destined to occupy this valley. The air is thin and dry; there are no marshes, nor vapor arising from the river. Everything is clean and sweet and wholesome; and the sense of life is a benediction. Those settling further east may grow richer; but there will be more of the gold of enjoyment here—that

constant blessedness which the Creator, in climes like this, breathes in upon the satisfied spirit through the avenues of the physical senses.

This is the country of the mirage, occasioning every imaginable distortion of common-place realities, and withal as prankish as though creation were in its juvenility, and amusing itself with "airy nothings." In a theatre of such unexplained wonders, the illiterate might be brought to devout belief in the necromancy of the olden ages. This phenomenon is the result of reflection and not refraction, as is proven by the fact that it inverts and metamorphoses objects in the scenery beyond, as well as near at hand.

Thirty-three miles west of Pawnee crossing is a beautiful clear brook of tepid water, full to its grassy margin, running across the road, from north to south, with the speed of a mill race. Its liquid murmurs remind one of the story of Arethusa hurrying from the embraces of the water-god to blithe Sicily; but sadly destructive of classical association is its "plain, unvarnished" name of Coon Creek.

To the north of this passes a "cut-off" much traveled in the spring of the year.

Passing now along the Arkansas bottom, the most marked peculiarity in vegetation is the frequency and variety of swamp grasses. There are fields of scouring rush, intermingled with triangular grass and the pretty liatris; among which flourishes the tiger lily, with cup of delicate crimson dotted with jet; and intertwining its golden tendrils among the surrounding plants, the curious dodder forms a net-work as closely woven as that in which Vulcan entrapped his beauteous queen. In the river, cat-fish and hickory shad principally abound. Here and there are islets of bare sand, or crowned with pendent osier. At intervals, along the banks are groups of cottonwood; but the chief resource for fuel is *bois de vache*.

Leaving behind the ruins of Fort Mann (of *adobe* of blacker mould and poorer quality than that of the Rio Grande); and descending a continuous rolling mound, the crossing of the

Arkansas is reached; beyond which spreads the *Jornado*. The fording has its perils; and when upon the brink, there is somewhat of anxiety and quicker beating of the heart, such as men may feel on the eve of battle. Wagons and their drivers have been borne down and lost in the impetuous current; but in the ordinary stage of water, with judicious management, the passage of a caravan may be effected in entire safety. The teams are doubled, and men armed with long whips, mounted on horses, are distributed in a line from one shore to the other, to keep the bewildered animals from yielding to the swift rush of the flood glaring close beneath their eyes. Then all is excitement and turmoil, from the time the first yoke of oxen or span of mules is forced to take the water, until the last wagon stands dripping in corral on the opposite bank. It is exhilarating to turn in your saddle, when in the middle, with the river sweeping half up the girth, and see the plunging creatures, frightened and breathing hard under the yells and lash of the driver, making slow breast-way, with a plain of dimpling water whirling for a quarter of a mile behind. In freshets, it is usual to wait for a few days until the height and force of the current have subsided; but sometimes, when delay is undesirable or likely to be too long continued, the passage is made, with a temporary rope ferry, in scows of wagon-beds rendered water-tight by being covered with skins.

Threading the way between little conical sand bluffs for a few miles, the river is lost sight of, and a flat desert, without bush or pebble, extends to the horizon. The route now leads out southwestwardly forty-nine miles to the brackish lagoons of Sand Creek. Midway there is a pond which after the occasional showers contains an insufficient supply of water. Near this is the battle-ground where the Pawnees sustained a terrible defeat. Uncoffined bones, scattered about, confirm the tradition. Camping there once in the twilight, with a cooling thunderstorm glooming overhead, feeling round for softer sward on which to repose at supper, I accidentally ran my fingers into the eye-holes of a skull, which, upon holding

up to the feeble fire-light, to rap out the dust from its grim jaws, showed a frontal tablet too broad and bold to have ever surmounted the shoulders of the most intellectual of the red race. It was doubtless the skeleton wreck of some "poor Yorick" who had perished upon the waste. I tossed it into the darkness; but as I ate, at intervals the red lightnings would flare down and reveal its ghastly visage lying there a few yards distant, mutely preaching of life's vanity. From this to the Cimarron, bones of oxen and mules and men grizzle the plain—sad vestiges of scenes of suffering more revolting and fearful than romance has ever pictured.

To this tract of cracked and thirsty soil without any apparent foundation, succeeds a region of milder desolation, where jutting nodules indicate an underlying stratum of friable calcareous rock, commonly known as "rotten lime-stone." To the west are cliffs and huge masses of plaster of Paris, upon which the whole country seems to be based. It is scattered over the surface in immense quantities, ranging from the coarsest compact sulphate of lime or ordinary plaster, to the most transparent gypsum or selenite.

The Cimarron, sixty miles southwest of the Arkansas, is a subterranean stream. It has banks curving gracefully, and bluffs, and creek beds entering it; and all that it lacks is water to make it as good a river as any; and even that may be found, in some places, by piercing the sod three or four feet, and inserting a cask to keep back the shelving sand and hold in the fœtid and dark fluid as it oozes up. It is not pleasant beverage; but is, consolingly, said to be wholesome—which it hardly seems to be as you see the grimaces it occasions and the tar-like gouts of it clinging to the beard of the desert pilgrim. It may suit some constitutions; but had Providence made no better bibulary arrangements for our planet, the Maine law never could become popular. The bed of this putative river is rich with buffalo grass and patches of grama. This latter is the famous bunch grass of New Mexico. It looks as brown and dry as hay, but is exceedingly nutritive;

and as it grows in wisps of a mouthful apiece, at about a step apart, it is eminently adapted to grazing cattle, who like to be on the move when nipping. Some of the flowers are very gorgeous; but for luxuriance of delicate beauty none can rival the euphorbia, which attains four and six feet in height, and for half the summer is clustered over with blossoms, an inch in width, with velvet green heart and rim of glossy and lustrous white. There is a geranium of an almond odor; and a pink sensitive plant of delicious peachy perfume, so powerful that when worn at the button hole it impregnates clothing, leaving its scent for hours after the withered flower has been thrown away. The fruits are plums, grapes, chokeberries, gooseberries, and black, red and white currants. Where the ground is marshy, there are different kinds of wild onions, one of which has the flavor of garlic.

Trooping among the fruit bushes and flowering weeds, the antelope may be seen, nibbling the tender grass, or springing aside with fleet hoof from pursuit or the path of fancied danger. This handsome creature is a species of the gazelle, a link between the deer and goat. Its horns are like those of the latter. It is short-haired, and the ground of its color is that of the deer, variegated on each flank with irregular whitish spots. The large eyes are soft and glorious. It is not much hunted, being of rather coarse flesh, and perhaps the fleetest of all animals. "Two-forty" horses retire in disgust; and the dog, outdistanced, turns back from the chase, ashamed to bark. Curiosity is their destructive weakness. When they encounter such a phenomenon as a man, if there be any scarlet in his dress, they sometimes turn about within rifle-shot, and give so much time to the study of his natural history as to prove prejudicial to their hopes of mortality. Decoys are made of red handkerchiefs and flannel shirts left fluttering from a ramrod, near which the wily hunter can hide and rest his aim.

The Sante Fé caravans traverse the Cimarron for eighty miles. In this extent, there are three springs, designated as the Lower, Middle, and Upper. These send forth strong

spouts of water, which waste away after having flowed a few roods. At the Lower Spring, I have seen some buffalo — one time particularly: Six of us were encamped there with the United States mail. One of the mules, feeling mulish, pulled up his picket pin, and started off for an independent canter. Stuart of corn memory and I, springing into the saddle, gave rein in hasty charge after the recreant. Coming within clutch of his "lariat," over the bluff and right in our trail clattered three buffaloes, apparently as much excited as ourselves. Suddenly diverging on either side, the mammoth brutes unmasked half a dozen Utahs, scouring down upon us, pell-mell. Affairs looked cloudy, considering the reputed unconscientiousness of the other party, and the fact that three mules made us worth capturing. But screwing up a few lax nerves, we manipulated vigorously with the revolvers, according to international law, and soon had a wide berth, and title of co-equality indisputable as that of Robinson Crusoe.* There are emergencies in which the descendant of a long line of Quakers may be impelled to shoot; among which is now quoted the salvation of mule and individual bacon.

The Cimarron Middle Spring is clear, warm water, gushing up in a winsome dell, overlooked by an abrupt bluff. Beyond, there is a sand pull difficult to make, because of the well-nigh impalpable fineness of the grains, in which the wheels cut deep, and it is laborious for even mules to gain steady footing. Hereabouts, the orbicular lizard or horned frog is chief of the live natives, and a specimen of what freakish nature can do. It is of the chameleon family, dusky and gold-specked, having little variability of color. There is an intelligent twinkle in its eye. It keeps quiet; wearing its cinctured crest like a young king; though infant monarchs of most venerable lineage, Romanoff, Bourbon, or Guelpho, are

* I am monarch of all I survey;
My right there is none to dispute;
From the centre all round to the sea,
I am lord of the fowl and the brute.—Cowper.

not born, as this is, with the royal appendant. With all his consequence, the reptile is so tiny that you may cover him with one hand—carefully—for he bites. When caught, he throws himself upon his dignity, having a soul above zöological collections, and refuses food and water. I have seen one after it had been in durance six weeks; and, it is said, they will survive for three months.

Twenty-eight miles west of the Middle Spring is Willow Bar—supposed to be a cataract; with abutments, side-cliffs and banks, according to rule, and quite artistic, but dry as a powder horn. Vegetation here wears a sprightlier look; but the surrounding table land is sterile as it has been for nearly a hundred and fifty miles, in all of which space there is not a solitary tree anywhere within the scope of vision. Here we buried a comrade, a few summers ago; a young consumptive, who had joined our train at the Boundary, in the faint hope that he might woo back the health that had gone from him forever. In far-off wilds, I have seen death in fearful visitation of starting eye-balls and mangled corse. Scenes of violence are the order of mortality there; and almost every prairie and mountain ranger expects, sooner or later, to close his life thus. But it is pitiable to watch the gradual wearing out of the vital powers, when all hope is fled, where there is "lack of woman's nursing," none of home comforts, no cooling beverage to slake the thirst of the dying, no cessation from the wearisome march, and no return. Thus it was with our poor friend. In the first stages of the journey, when the weather was genial, as the wonderful panorama circled by, he would sit in his couch and converse, or muse in silence, until his eye gathered its boyish splendor, and his shrunken cheek flushed with hectic beauty. But as we passed upon the desert, he became helpless, and sank rapidly; until lying in the pallor of the grave, from the chill verge, he tossed his arms entreatingly back to the sunny earth, and feared to take the unfathomed plunge. At last, it was told us that he was no more. In the depth and stillness of midnight, he had died

on his father's breast. He who had nurtured his earliest life, mournfully tended its close. We laid by a day; and dug the grave deep that the prowling wolves might not violate it. With the first sparkle of sunrise the succeding morn, we were on our way. *Requiescat in pace.*

Not far above Willow Bar, the road ascends the southern bank of the river and winds along the bluffs. Here, in a green scroll of hills, and overshadowed with a huge boulder, is a circular lagoon, six feet in depth and about the same width. The water is pure as a page of crystal. It has no apparent outlet; but is peopled with little fishes with red and brown bars along the sides. From this choice tenting spot may be seen, four miles ahead, clear-cut against the sky, a singular butte of pyramidal outline, with flattened summit. On either side, the rocks stand out like big warts. When you clamber half-way up, you find it to be a rocky mass; in which are grottoes stained with smoke, where the Indians have burrowed. The top is a platform of vast tabular upheavals of blue limestone, veined and crusted several inches in depth with white marble. This I named Massa Carrara, after a quarry of Italy. I loitered there half a day, reading the Odyssey and enjoying the serenity of the air; and left it reluctantly.

Near by, in a little dell that opens out to the road, stands a large mezquit—the first tree this side of the Arkansas. This wood has a home-look; and as seen in groups upon the savannas of Texas, so much resembles orchards of olden and gnarled apple trees that the traveler involuntarily expects to see a spiral of smoke go up from the chimney of the hospitable cottage he embowers there in his wayside dream.

To the northwest of the marble hill lapses a tranquil bushy cove, festooned with vines and irrigated with the rivulet from the Upper Spring of the Cimarron. This is a charming retreat; but infested with lurking savages, who are death on a pic-nic. To doze there requires confidence, and one does well upon awaking to feel if his scalp be in the right place.

Next are the Cold Springs, hid away in an angle of the

road, beneath a precipitous bluff, cloven to the north by a singular cañon or rocky chasm. The springs are natural juleps, well iced, bubbling up from a miniature twin-basin. Near to the cañon is a grove of cedar, with alternate shafts of stone, of equal height. This curious alcove, with its tracery of columbines and trumpet flowers, and mossy mosaic, is more like the vagary of an imaginative child than a part of our solid globe, moulded and ornamented by the hand of creative wisdom.

From this the road sweeps out to the south, over an elevated plateau. In the distance, the Rabbit-ear Mounds loom up like soft slaty clouds against the massive blue. We are at the breezy portals of the Rocky Mountains, and the ultimate of the Santa Fé route through Kanzas.

XXII.

Returning eastward, we pass from the flat lands into the undulating region adjacent to the confluence of the Salt Fork or Cimarron with the Arkansas. Here, granite, limestone, flint and sandstone prevail. Of the metals, iron, lead, copper and silver ore have been found; and there is a fabulous narration of gold having been discovered. The most valuable and abundant mineral production is salt. Mountain brooks from the Ratone, pure as their snow-fed rills, flow but a little distance until they are impregnated with saline exudations. Southeast of the Big Bend, there are several salt fountains, curiously wrought into the shape of pots by the calcareous saline concretions. Out on the prairie, there are mines of unmixed salt; and, in places, the surface is covered with a film of crystallized salt, giving it the whiteness of a marble floor, which of fine days is lit up like fields of brilliant snow. I have seen these beds, under some peculiar tricks of the atmosphere, when the crust was shrouded with wavy vapor, sparkle and seemingly undulate into a lake of white fire. The streams which enter the Lower Cimarron are impregnated with salinous qualities;

and, along their banks, the exudations effloresce in a thin scum. This is sometimes pure, but oftener compounded of different salts—of the muriate and sulphate of soda and magnesia, tinctured with nitre. The stagnant pools are so saturated with this compound that animals expiring with thirst have refused to drink from them. In the flats overspread with these saline incrustations, the only vegetation is wiry grass, unpalatable and lacking nutriment. The Salt Plain is near the mouth of the Cimarron, and extends for miles without the slightest irregularity of surface, being so low and level that the bordering streams sometimes overflow. Its springs are so concentrated that, upon breaking from the surface, they immediately commence depositing salt. There is every indication of a solid mass of rock salt, two or three feet in depth, existing throughout the entire plain. In clefts, the water gushes up as clear as crystal, in which everything steeped, upon becoming dry, is mantled with white. Contiguous to this tract, the river cliffs are composed of red clay and gypsum.

XXIII.

North of the Arkansas and east of the Little Arkansas, the soil rests on carboniferous limestone. Veins of coal are frequent; with superincumbent shale, on which is limestone, sometimes silicious and containing fossils. In certain sections, there is a ferruginous sandstone, overlying the limestone, which is tinged with iron and inter-grained with flint. On the surface are pebbles of quartz, porphyry and granite, with occasional large blocks of porphyritic granite. Further west, the rocks are of the silurian age; the character and position of the coal intimating the probable existence of an immense coal basin. The flora of the southeastern district is in counterpart with the descriptions already given of the section of the Santa Fé route traversing its northern border. The wood consists mainly of walnut, sugar tree, burr-oak, mulberry, coffee bean, cottonwood and hickory. On the Verdigris are bottoms of cane. The

tall grass grows luxuriantly; and in the dells there is abundance of winter grass. The hills are perennial with many bold and pure springs. The climate is milder than that of the Kanzas River, and the air more wholesome and invigorating; while it is fully its equal, in some sections, in depth, mellowness and amenity of soil. The streams have dense and wide fringes of timber. The affluents of the Osage are the best wooded The most delightful tract of this country is where the Pottowatomie uniting with *Alaris des Cygnis* forms the Osage River. This is now being occupied by the Osawatomie Settlement.

XXIV.

Passing the Divide and to the north of Council Grove, we are upon a prairie roll of thinner soil than is common in Eastern Kanzas. Where exposed by the burning of grass, the surface is flecked with pebbles of flint and fragmentary limestone. Fifteen miles south of Fort Riley, the trail crosses Clark Creek; a clear stream running through a bottom of fine grain land. Fort Riley stands near the confluence of the Chetolah and Republican Fork of the Kanzas. This district is somewhat inferior, perhaps, in depth and wealth of soil, and redundancy of vegetation, to the banks of the Lower Kanzas; but is preferable for picturesqueness of scene and salubrity of atmosphere. Oak, elm, cottonwood, walnut and sycamore are the principal forest growths. The fort is a handsome pile of buildings, constructed, during the summer of 1854, of limestone hewn from the bluffs near by. The probable distances from this point to the Missouri State line, are here given:

River Route.

	Miles.	Agg.
From Fort Riley to Wild Cat	12	
Big Blue	7	19
Sargent's Creek	3	22
Rock Creek	14	36
Vermillion	4	40

	Miles.	Age.
Lost Creek	5	45
Catholic Mission	7	52
Soldier Creek	20	72
Grasshopper (crossing Bayou Creek)	20	92
Hickory Point	10	102
Stranger Creek	12	114
Salt Creek	9	123
Missouri State line	4	127

XXV.

Pausing from our detour, let us view what is being done toward civilizing Kanzas.

The missionary schools are as follows:

The Catholic Osage Mission, on the Neosho, forty-five miles from Fort Scott, is the most flourishing school in the Territory. It was founded in 1847. Rev. John Schoenmaker has efficiently discharged the duties of Superior since the commencement; assisted by two Jesuit clergymen, and lay teachers.

The Pottowatomie Baptist Mission and Labor School; an excellent institution which has done much to disseminate useful knowledge among the native children.

The Mission at Council Grove, established in 1851, for the benefit of the Kaws. As yet not very successful. The children are not regular in attendance, and cannot be induced to wear clothes. The parents object to having the gospel preached among them.

Saint Mary's, on the Kanzas, fifty-one miles below Fort Riley, is the largest Catholic school in the Territory, and is under admirable regulations. It aims at the evangelization of the Pottowatomies.

The Iowa and Sac Mission School, situated twenty-five miles northwest from Saint Jo., and two miles north of Loup Creek, a tributary of the Missouri; established in 1837, by Reverend William Hamilton and Reverend S. M. Irvin, of the Presbyterian church. Mr. Irvin is still associated with the institution, and Mr. Hamilton remained there until 1853.

The Kanzas region: forest, prairie, desert, mountain, vale, and river

The school was opened in 1846; in 1847, the roll of regular pupils was twenty-four; and in 1854, the number was fifty. The mission house is a spacious edifice, which cost eight thousand dollars. The farm contains one hundred and fifteen acres. A permanent foundation has been laid for the upbuilding of much future good.

The Shawnee Mission is under direction of the Methodist Episcopal church, South. It is situated one mile from the Missouri State line, and three miles from Westport. The buildings are fine, and well adapted to their purpose. This institution fosters a labor school.

The American Baptist Missionary Union has a mission and school at Briggsvale, in the vicinity of Delaware. Organized in 1847.

The Friends' Shawnee Labor School has been in operation for fifty years, dating anterior to the removal of the tribe to Kanzas. It is supported without contributions from the Indians. At present, it numbers thirty pupils who receive instruction in literature, agriculture and domestic matters. There are over two hundred acres under fence belonging to it, and a surplus of produce is sent to market.

The military posts and post offices are:

Fort Leavenworth, on the Missouri, thirty miles above the mouth of the Kanzas, and four miles below Weston, Missouri. This post was established in 1827; and is the frontier depôt for the military on the Oregon and Santa Fé routes; and the rendezvous for forces destined for service further west. The government reservation embraces nine square miles; a pleasant and fertile section rising gradually from the river level to a height of one hundred and fifty feet. The buildings are of stone and well constructed. There is a large farm connected with the fort.

Fort Riley, at the head of Kaw River, has been recently established, for the purpose of operating more effectively against hostile Indians, and for the furtherance of intercourse with frontier posts.

The Kanzas region: forest, prairie, desert, mountain, vale, and river

Walnut Creek post office is on the Santa Fé route along the Arkansas. The New Mexican mail stops there, and has a stable for relays of mules.

Fort Scott, established in 1844, is on the Marmaton, eight miles from the Missouri boundary. The property has been sold this summer (1855), at a greatly depreciated rate.

Council Grove, on the Santa Fé route, one hundred and twenty-seven miles from the Boundary, is a post office, and place where relays are kept for the mail guard.

Council City, on Switzler's Creek, eighty-eight miles west from Missouri on the Santa Fé trail, has a post office.

Delaware is a post office on the Kanzas, ten miles from its mouth. It contains several trading posts, a blacksmith shop, and other civilizing agencies.

Among the prominent settlements to which no allusion has been made, we enumerate as follows:

Pawnee; one mile below the confluence of the Republican and Chetolah. This boasts a stone warehouse, forty by sixty feet and three stories high; also, a hotel of stone, forty by seventy feet, with a wing of a hundred feet in length, designed for a dining room. The prospects for this place are flattering. The country contiguous is being rapidly occupied. Claims have been taken up on Clark's Creek for six miles; up the Republican Fork for eight miles; and along the Chetolah or Smoky Hill for fourteen miles.

Kenilworth; situated on the east bank of the Republican, fifteen miles above its mouth. A large joint stock company of capitalists are engaged in the construction of mills, and in other enterprises important to the interests of a young colony. The surrounding tract is of rich black soil, as good for corn as that of Illinois; the sod is thin and easily broken. There are large bodies of timber land in the vicinity; and springs are numerous. The scenery is diversified and picturesque.

Chetolah; six miles above Fort Riley, on the Smoky Hill Fork, at the entrance of Lyon's Creek, one of the largest

tributaries of the river. The adjacent country is finely wooded and watered. Property is rapidly rising in value.

Montgomery; fourteen miles above Chetolah. Named in honor of the commandant of Fort Riley. Its prospects for trade are good.

Reeder; twenty miles above Montgomery, at the confluence of Solomon's Fork and the Smoky Hill. It bids fair to become a town of commercial importance.

Topeka; on the river, not far below Pawnee; a thriving colony principally of Pennsylvanians. A bed of the best bituminous coal has been found within two miles of the city site. A saw-mill has been erected. The neighborhood wears an aspect of well directed, happy industry.

Around Lawrence, for fifteen miles, all the claims have been taken up.

Waponsa, the Indian for "dawn of day"; seventy-five miles above Lawrence City; located in a delightful region.

Sugar Creek Settlement; forty miles south of Council City, rapidly filling up with anti-slavery Missourians.

Wathene; three miles from Saint Jo., on the edge of the bluffs; has abundance of excellent spring water; is surrounded with fine woodland; and is eligibly situated for a town; the California and Oregon trail passing through it.

Kickapoo; on the bank of the Missouri, nearly opposite Weston; progressing rapidly; steam saw-mills are in operation, and dwelling houses, stores, offices and mechanic shops are being erected.

Rock City; on the military road from Fort Leavenworth tc Fort Riley, between Rock Creek and the Vermillion, ninety miles from the Missouri River; a beautiful spot, and heavily timbered.

Grasshopper Falls; at the Falls of the Grasshopper; a pleasant place, with water power, wood, and fat soil.

Somerville; on Stranger Creek, sixteen miles from Fort Leavenworth, by the government road; combines the usual advantages, with good opportunities for trade.

Alexandria; on Stranger Creek; has rich soil, plenty of timber, and a coal vein of the first quality.

XXVI.

There is a "skeleton at the door" of this rapidly increasing population of Kanzas. There are not here the boundless forests of Northern Michigan. Trees are not so interspersed as to be found upon every quarter section. For enclosures, the Osage orange will, however, remedy this deficiency. Indigenous in Louisiana and Texas, it takes to the soil and clime of Illinois kindly; and must, therefore, thrive in Kanzas. In six years, it attains maturity; and in half that time, has grown so as to form an impervious fence. It would save the timber for building and other useful, as well as ornamental, purposes, were the settlers upon the uplands to adopt the regulations of the *haciendas* and farming villages of Northern Mexico, where the fields are left unfenced and the grazing animals constantly watched in daytime, and required to be housed at night. Novel as this arrangement might be to a community of our countrymen, it is, nevertheless, very practicable, and the most economical plan that could be resolved upon whilst the incipient hedges are attaining the requisite height and thickness.

XXVII.

In corroboration of merely general statements as to amenity of climate in this Territory, we have these tables of thermometric observations made during a summer and winter; the first, by myself; the second copied from the meteorological record at Fort Leavenworth, as also the subjoined exhibit of correspondent quantities of rain during 1854:

The Kanzas region: forest, prairie, desert, mountain, vale, and river

Thermometer.

Place.	Date.	Time.	Mercury.
Fort Leavenworth	June 21, 1850	4.27 P.M.	60°
"	" 22, "	10.15 A.M.	74
"	" 24, "	4.26 P.M.	66
"	" 25, "	10.08 A.M.	74
"	" 26, "	10.12 A.M.	80
"	" 30, "	4.13 P.M.	67
Big John's Spring	July 4, "	3.15 P.M.	88
"	" 5, "	10.15 A.M.	75
Cottonwood Grove	" 6, "	4.49 P.M.	71
"	" 7, "	3.15 P.M.	88
Bend of the Arkansas	" 11, "	3.41 P.M.	71
Pawnee Fork	" 13, "	3.26 P.M.	72
"	" 14, "	4.20 P.M.	71
Arkansas River	" 16, "	3.25 P.M.	72
"	" 25, "	4.25 P.M.	68
"	" 29, "	3.37 P.M.	78
Bendt's Fort	" 38, "	4.34 P.M.	66
"	" 31, "	6.24 P.M.	58
"	August 1, "	3.40 P.M.	78
"	" 3, "	3.42 P.M.	76
"	" 4, "	4.03 P.M.	75
"	" 5, "	4.06 P.M.	68
"	" 6, "	3.30 P.M.	64
"	" 8, "	3.15 P.M.	63
"	" 10, "	4.15 P.M.	59
"	" 12, "	4.20 A.M.	49
"	" 12, "	9.30 A.M.	66
"	" 14, "	3.30 P.M.	60
"	" 15, "	3.25 P.M.	68

FORT LEAVENWORTH, 9 O'CLOCK, P.M., 1853.

Jan.		Feb.		Jan. 18		Feb. 18	
"	1 17°	"	1 43°	"	18 28°	"	18 25°
"	2 16	"	2 23	"	19 26	"	19 20
"	3 1	"	3 32	"	20 29	"	20 37
"	4 15	"	4 1	"	21 39	"	21 41
"	5 20	"	5 5	"	22 22	"	22 30
"	6 37	"	6 12	"	23 45	"	23 15
"	7 37	"	7 17	"	24 33	"	24 37
"	8 36	"	8 5	"	25 33	"	25 34
"	9 31	"	9 19	"	26 10	"	26 54
"	10 34	"	10 42	"	27 36	"	27 50
"	11 32	"	11 42	"	28 37	"	28 31
"	12 33	"	12 32	"	29 42		
"	13 33	"	13 32	"	30 31		
"	14 29	"	14 20	"	31 32		
"	15 23	"	15 41				
"	16 22	"	16 20		28.41		25.07
"	17 24	"	17 40		Monthly Mean.		"

Position of the Thermometer, 160 feet above the Missouri River.

In the winter, the mercury seldom falls to zero; and within the last three years, the highest range of the thermometer, at Fort Leavenworth, has been one hundred and two degrees.

Rain.

Fort Leavenworth, K. T., in 1853.....	30	in. 45-100dths	perp. depth.
Annual mean quantity Cambridge, Mass..	38	"	"
Western Reserve College, Ohio	36	"	"
Fort Crawford, Wisconsin.....	30	"	"
Marietta, Ohio.....	41	"	"
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.....	45	"	"
St. Louis, Missouri.....	32	"	"
British Islands	32	"	"
Western France.....	25	"	"
Eastern France.....	22	"	"
Central and Northern Germany.....	20	"	"
Hungary.....	17	"	"
Mean quantity for the Old World.....	34	"	"
Mean quantity for America	35	"	"

XXVIII.

With these proofs as to climate, and this cursory glance at the progress of civilization that shall make "the solitary places glad," we bid farewell to East Kanzas. From our mental aerie survey the prospect, beautiful and grand,—Uncle Sam's premium farm, of two hundred miles square: a succession of vast meadows, surrounded with colossal forest hedges; greenly reposing beneath clement winds, and the overarching sapphire sky with its gorgeous marbling of clouds.

The clouds
Sweep over with the shadows, and beneath,
The surface rolls and fluctuates to the eye:
Dark hollows seem to glide along and chase
The sunny ridges. Breezes of the south!
Who toss the golden and the flame-like flowers,
And pass the prairie hawk, that, poised on high,
Flaps his broad wings, yet moves not—ye have played
Among the palms of Mexico, and vines
Of Texas, and have crisped the limpid brooks
That from the fountain of Sonora glide
Into the calm Pacific—have ye fanned
A nobler or a lovelier scene than this?

With this questioning of nature's rhythmic interpreter, Bryant, we close the volume of eastern memories, to hurry on to the Alpine limit of Western Kanzas.

The Republican Pawnee Fork of Kaw River rises near the 104th meridian; interlocking with sources of the South Fork of Platte River; receives Sandy Creek, Big Dog Creek, and many lesser tributaries; flowing five hundred miles—half its length through Nebraska.

The Smoky Hill Fork of the Kanzas, as it is now frequently called—though it would be better taste to retain the musical Indian name, Chetolah—has its sources in the prairie; flows one hundred and thirty miles; sinks for an equal distance; reappears, flows twenty-five miles, to near 101st meridian, where it unites with a principal branch, which has flowed one hundred miles; it afterward receives Great Saline Fork and Solomon's Fork; and from thirty miles above Fort Riley, the Nishcoba and four considerable brooks enter it from the north.

The Chetolah is a narrow, deep river of muddier tinge than the Republican, and of strong current. It would be navigable for fifty miles up at nearly all seasons, were it not for the difficulty in rounding the short bends. For the distance the settlements have already overspread, there is more woodland than upon the upper part of the Kanzas, and the soil is better. Underlying the black alluvion in places, as exhibited in the escarpments of bluffs, there is a deep deposit of marl. Forty miles from the mouth, there is an extensive bed of gypsum of superior quality. On the Saline Fork, salt is abundant, encrusting the margins of eddies, and rendering the water quite brackish. Veins of anthracite and bituminous coal have been found in the valley of the Chetolah; also tin, lead and iron ore. The rock is mostly limestone east of the bad lands. The bottoms are of sandy loam; and the vales and uplands of black soil, rich and mellow.

From near the head spring of the Chetolah, flows the Beaver, Bijon and Kioway Creek, northward fifty miles across

the Nebraska line, to where, near the 104th meridian, they enter the Platte.

Westward of the lake fountain of the Republican flows the South Fork of Platte River, along the mountain bases, swollen with many tributaries. This is a romantic agricultural district. Some of the streams are said to be auriferous: but that story is the mirage of the gold-hunter, which, ever since the days of Ponce de Leon and Hernando de Soto, has bewildered the weak intellects, that would be credulous still, were it announced that the veritable calf of Israel had been discovered, with the ear-ring of Pharaoh's daughter in its nose.

Passing southward over table-land of granitic sand, intermixed with vegetable matter and the exuviæ of animals, and carpeted with sparse vegetation, we strike the Upper Arkansas at the Big Timbers, west of the *Jornado* crossing of the Comanch and Santa Fé trading trail. This is a thinly scattered grove of large cottonwood, three-quarters of a mile broad and four miles long. The bed of the river here averages one hundred and fifty yards in width.

One of the cardinal luxuries of this region is sleeping in the open air in summer time. The nights are dewless, and the grassy couch to weary limbs is soft as cygnet's down; and when you have stretched around your resting place a coil of hair rope, over which reptiles will not pass; and lighted a log-heap, an eye of fire in the wall of darkness, to fright away wild-cats, panthers, wolves and grizzly bears, you feel comparatively safe from all but the intrusion of burglar Indians, when they come with hearts like tiger tongues lapped in blood. There is romantic pleasure in reposing thus every evening through many months—a kindling sense of reckless, heroic joy, enhanced by the possibility of dangers imminent. In a frowning gorge of the Rocky Mountains I once went to bed in this primitive fashion, with one companion, a bold, athletic fellow. We had been amusing ourselves firing the compact box-like foliage of cedar, which is there so resinous

that it readily ignites, and with much crackling merriment goes sparkling off in points of rich scarlet blaze. It was near midnight, when with trusty rifle grasped in the right hand, and feet toasting at the embers of a stump, side by side, we yielded to the light trance of sleep. Gauzy is the filmy vail woven by the poppy god for those who court his embraces in the free air. At the first note of peril, the tired slumberer is wide awake, and a touch brings him to his feet: so naturally self-vigilant are we when not stultified by being immured in the baby cribs of civilization. On the night that I mention, after an hour of sleep, there was a snapping of dry twigs in the dark bushes near by, as from the tread of a wild beast or Indian. In a moment each nerve was quick as a thread of lightning, on the alert to detect whatever might threaten, while not a muscle had moved from the rigid attitude of rest. I opened my eyes, and overhead, through the mountain rift, high in the zenith, wheeled the constellation Orion in the dark blue field. All was pulseless stillness for a minute; then another stick broke with a peculiar click which had in it to my mind the unmistakeable token of a moccasin tread. Savage eyes were reconnoitering our quarters, and the fire-light made us sure mark for the brain-dashing whirl of the tomahawk and cleaving speed of the arrow. Softly exchanging a few whispered words with my comrade, without shifting our position beforehand, at an understood signal, catching up our fire-arms, we sprang off in opposite directions, and in another moment were crouching down in the shadow of the thicket. Our supposition as to the approach of the enemy was soon confirmed. Stealthily a dusky form peered out from the leafy covert; then others followed carelessly, and dismounting led their ponies to the rocky trough of a spring near by, until in a few minutes, scores of swarthy figures swarmed around the fire, loitering about, grouped at random, or reposing unconcernedly on their haunches and sending up whiffs of tobacco smoke. In the party were three Mexicans, grum fellows with grisly brows and evil eyes of brutish

bandits, and coarse lips, reeking with a jargon of obscene and blasphemous words. The state of the case was evident. We had escaped observation; and our untimely visitors had mistaken the signs of our bivouac for those left by some night-traveling company. There was a sense of relief in this conclusion, for it involved the probability of soon being left to have our sleep comfortably out before dawn. Yet, as I poised my rifle along the jagged rim of a rock whose mossy curve sheltered me, and watched the copper fiends gliding at times within a yard of its muzzle, there was a tremor in my trigger finger, an insane impulse to try what skill I might have in bringing several within target range. But the crack of a bullet would have brought down blue ruin upon our devoted scalp-locks, could they have blundered upon us in scrambling search among the stones and trees. Discretion prevailed, and I lay snug. In half an hour, the interlopers began to mount and file out into a trail that led down a black ravine. After all had departed, one returned to look for a lariat or other missing article; but he only staid a few seconds, then hastily followed in the route of his band, and all was silent as those uninhabited peaks and crags are when lost in the abyss of night. I thought to make the circuit of the thicket whose hedge of gloom surrounded our fire-place; but had scarce proceeded a rood, when feeling my way cautiously into a cleft between two steep ledges, I struck my hand into a bushy bunch of hair. "For God's sake, don't shoot!" thrilled out a husky whisper. "That is you, Hal," I responded; "come, and let us get to bed." And to our former couch we went, and soon were in an attitude inviting slumber. For my part, however, I was not ridden with objectionable dreams; I lay awake, inly wondering how Hal had contrived to roll himself around to my side of the bushes, when I had supposed him stowed away in some grassy bunk in the opposite direction. Of my wakefulness though, I hinted nothing the next day, nor ever in our long and intimate intercourse after; nor how I had given the problem