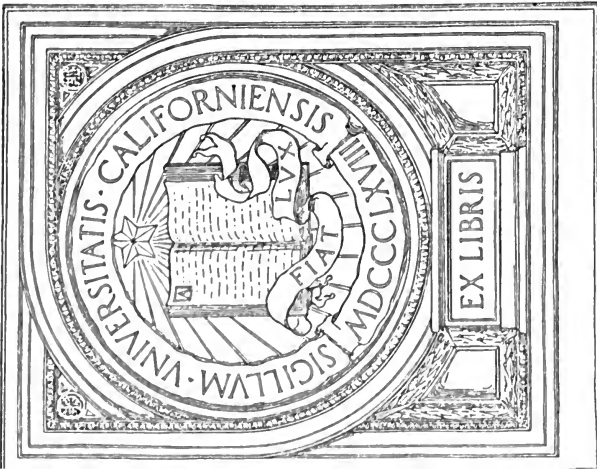


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OBSERVATIONS OF A RANCHWOMAN



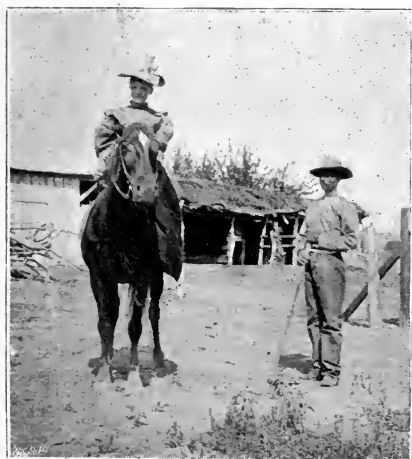


PUEBLOS DANCING IN FRONT OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

Frontispiece.

OBSERVATIONS
OF
A RANCHWOMAN
IN
NEW MEXICO

Bowyer, Mrs
" BY
EDITH M. (NICHOLL)



ON A RANCH

London
MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1898



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OBSERVATIONS OF A RANCHWOMAN



CHAPTER I.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE HEALTH-SEEKER.

THERE must always be a first day—a first strange, hideous day—when, dumped down upon a sand-bank to continue there the tiresome struggle for life, the weary health-seeker has to call once, twice—nay, thrice—upon all the latent pluck there may be in him in order to endure the dead and utter blankness of his lot. Recollections of that miserable hour, when too disheartened to properly appreciate the uniqueness, the indescribable picturesqueness, of my environment, still enable me to sympathize with the newly-arrived—*ergo*, discouraged—invalid.

We had got beyond the stage of belief in pamphlets—a green and transitory stage in this land of glowing periods—yet a solemn silence fell upon our party as the omnibus careened over the sand-billows of a New Mexican village street. Through a day and a night of Texan desert we had been supported by visions of the wonderful fruit-valley in Southern New Mexico, whose fertility and other attractions were to compensate the health-seeker for loss of home and friends—the well-worn shibboleth, in fact, as old as it is false, that everything has its compensations. Every mile of the forty the train leisurely rumbled over after leaving the border-city of El Paso was eagerly scanned; yet it was still desert—the Rio Grande a mere thread on one side, rugged mountains on the other, and between these the interminable sandy waste, gloomily dotted with mesquite, sagebrush, grama, and the like. Nevertheless, these *were* mountains, and gaining, too, in beauty and grandeur with every mile; and upon them the mountain-worshippers, starved upon the Texan plains, fixed eyes at once hopeful and devout. As the train drew

near the goal, there came into view fenced fields, groves of cottonwood-trees, homes palpably inhabited by 'white folks,' irrigating ditches—yes, the vaunted attractions of the famous Mesilla Valley were, after all, materializing.

As we alighted at the station and climbed into the omnibus, the prospect continued to please—at a distance. It was winter, and the world was arrayed in shades of brown and drab; but over all was the radiant American sky, and in the centre of the little town rose the twin domes of the Catholic church, painted, by the order of kind priests, a soft, harmonious red; and there was mistletoe on the shuddering cottonwoods, its berries pearl-white against the background of sapphire. And beyond towered the awful steeps of the Organ Mountains, their jagged spires and pinnacles casting shadows, sharp, yet aerial, in the rarefied atmosphere of 3,800 feet above sea-level. They were a dream, miles on miles removed, yet there were moments in which we were ready to declare that fifteen minutes' walk would bring us to their knees.

Thereafter ensued the disillusionment—the disenchantment, rather — above mentioned. Hurling in heaps to all four corners of the omnibus in turn, our observations were necessarily superficial and perfunctory ; but we were rolling apparently between rows of mud-daubers' nests, and crude side-walks edged with a frill of boneless and unwashed Mexicans. Arrived at our inn, even a genial host could not furnish comfort for the weary, be it for mind or body. Small rooms, all alike infected with the deplorable Southern (American) habit of opening immediately on the open air, are not conducive to the well-being of the invalid, either in summer or winter ; and this was distinctly winter, with that *tang* in the air which goes with the brilliant sunshine of high altitudes. Then there was the Chinaman, who administered the affairs of the culinary department with the careful parsimony of his race when his own provider. To us he allotted leather stripped from the mighty bones of range cattle, watered milk, eggs that had seen better days, canned goods of the year before last. Peace to his manes! He may be

dead—at least, he hath evanished—and to the inexorable fiat of the range cattle butcher all alike, Christian and heathen, submit—not altogether silently, perhaps, but still submit, because, forsooth, the way of escape is not yet made plain. To the health-seeker who had often been cast adrift in the echoing wilds of the Virginia mountain hostelry, the culinary provision set forth by the Chinaman had in it nothing strange or new. Seas of grease; wiry chickens slaughtered on the back-porch an hour or so before the meal; delicacies of the like description thumped down in front of the appetiteless in little dabs of dishes—who that has been ordered to Virginia Springs for the benefit of his or her health has not served faithful apprenticeship in the art of living on nothing? Not quite nothing, however, where the matchless bread of the South is to be found, but in Las Cruces there is no bread of the South.

Within a day or two of our arrival arose one of the winds which sweep occasionally through our midst; and through our midst is no mere figure of speech. Hour after hour

a huge wall of sand, without end or beginning, roared steadily along the Valley, embracing, as it would appear, the entire real estate of Colorado or Arizona, and therewith wiping out our sky and mountains. Across the street men, invisible to one another, shouted vaguely, like hailing and separated ships in storm or fog; the sand sifted into every crevice of one's dwelling, of one's whole entity, in fact. All that could be done was to stuff door and window cracks with paper, and, taking a seat beside the stove, possess what soul seemed to be left in patience. At intervals it was found desirable to inquire as to the safety of the adobe walls, but the answers obtained were not sufficiently satisfactory to compensate us for being blown down the outside stairway of our abode. Already we began to understand why the native almost never builds him a two-story house; and after having watched, only on the day previous to the storm, a gang of Mexicans dig a house down with ordinary spades, our fears for our high house were not unfounded.

But winds pass like other things, and one

glittering, sun-possessed day succeeded another. We sat on the gallery and gazed upon the street below, upon Mexicans with gay-striped blankets, ranchmen coming in with farm produce or to 'exchange the time of day,' visiting invalids wandering aimlessly. Or we paced the sandy and too often odorous streets, passing the commonplace and home-like American stores without interest, but observing and endeavouring to translate the signs over the Mexican stores as an initiatory attempt at learning what we still fondly believed to be a language. Once was pressed upon the prospective housekeeper a Mexican butcher's English circular, by which it appeared that he offered his customers 'a kind and delicate treatment and prompt despatch of business.' Here and there, coming into view at the far end of a street of flat-roofed houses, casting clear-cut shadows on the glaring sand, was, surely, a glimpse of Old Spain. White turreted buildings, one above the other, a background of near, olive-tinted mountain, a sky of purest turquoise or sapphire, according to the light. True, the turrets were but the

humblest of chimneys, but the effect was good, nevertheless.

Sometimes we plunged ankle-deep in sand and climbed the eastern mesa—the tableland rising betwixt the village and the Organ Mountains—gazing curiously as we passed at the adobe huts of the natives, each with its corral fenced about by brush or wattled sticks, or occasionally a mud wall, and harbouring lean, roped ponies. Every live thing is roped in this country, pigs and cocks included, and even sometimes the errant hen, until all hope of her performing her duty for the day is at an end. The ubiquitous cur and the dirty black-eyed child pervaded the village landscape.

The first impression of the native is Dirt and Hat; and here it should be said that the entire population of this little town is only about 2,500, and that the Mexican is in the proportion of three to one of the American—‘American’ being used in the usual comprehensive sense of the word. Dirt is possibly an indispensable item of the picturesque—‘up to a certain point, you know, up to a certain point; but you can go too far.’ We

thought the Mexican went too far, as we circumvented native interiors, and held our breath and hurried, in spots along his streets. Unfortunately, the white settler is apt to fall into the slovenly ways of his coloured fellow-citizen, and filthy backyards and contaminated water bring results which, in their turn, cause grief and woe and the uplifting of hands and eyes: 'Why *do* we have fevers in this climate?' More than this, alkali water at its best, out on a scrupulously swept and garnished ranch, is far from being a delectable drink, though time and custom reconcile the system to its use. In summer many of the white inhabitants of the valley spend Sundays, or even a week or more, at a mountain camp part way up the Organs, where pure water, magnificent views, and cool air are provided. For my part, the air of the valley is invigorating enough—too invigorating, indeed, sometimes.

As for the Mexican hat, as we stood on one of those first days upon the mesa, we could see it bobbing at intervals between the rows of trees along the level valley; for it must be remembered that in Old and New

Mexico it is the hat that maketh the man, not the man the hat.

From this desolate mesa the beauty of the Valley—the Rio Grande, smitten by the strong sunlight gleaming here and there—lay spread wide before us, a Vale of Promise. At our backs rose the mountains, rich in ore—silver, lead, copper, and gold. Across the Valley and the river was the western mesa, swelling in its northward course to the dignity of another mountain range. In the centre of the picture crouched the adobe town, admirably picturesque at a distance, and boasting a few brick buildings in which those who prefer ‘progress’ to comfort can be as uncomfortable as they desire. Notable among these buildings were the court-house, the public and convent schools, the Catholic and Methodist churches, and a mile or so to the southward the New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, with which is connected an experiment station. To north and south of the town swept the wide alfalfa meadows, irrigation ditches bordered by cottonwood-trees, orchards abundant in promise of almost all non-tropical fruits that

grow, vineyards with vines still banked up and tied for better protection from the cold. Here and there was yet to be seen a hacienda, or fortified dwelling, built around a patio, or courtyard, with windows few and inconspicuous, and each hacienda possessing one broad arched doorway for the admission of loaded waggons in times when Indians were a perpetual dread. There was a weird attraction about the landscape which made me, for one, declare that I should like to sit on the mesa in the sunshine for hours every day. This awful desolation—those granite peaks behind, the fertile vale before—the scene was unique. It appealed vividly to the imagination; anything might have happened in such a landscape. And verily enough has happened to earn for the village the name of Las Cruces (The Crosses). Here, in days not so long past, cross after cross dotted the soil, marking the spot where, each in his turn, the white settler fell beneath the tomahawk of the Indian savage; and in the village plaza one large wooden cross still bears the inscription, 'To the Unknown Dead.' The Indian savage has now, in this section at

least, resolved himself into a 'Pity-the-poor-Indian' effect, and the harmless *fin-de-siècle* pueblo visits Las Cruces only to perform his sacred all-day dances in front of the Catholic church, and, as unkind rumour hath it, to be plundered of the priests—in the name of Mother Church, of course.

'But,' observed my friend, as she gazed sorrowfully upon once dark skirts and unrecognizable boots, 'if you came up on the mesa every day, what would you do about your clothes?'

'Hold an auction of my entire Eastern wardrobe at once, and with the proceeds purchase sackcloth,' was my prompt reply. 'A substitute for ashes is provided gratis by the country. But mesa or no mesa, this revolution must take place if we are to remain in the Arid Belt.'

'Yes,' sighed my companion, 'and clothes-brushes come too high; I have worn out one already.'

Down the track from the mountains two bundles of animated sticks were approaching, preceded by a flock of jaunty and inquiring goats. Each bundle was surmounted by the

hat of the country, and further adorned by the long ears of the burro, or native donkey, whose four little legs, greatly abbreviated at that, pattered along underneath the whole affair — two Mexicans, in short, carrying firewood to market. And after these followed a ten-horse team laden with ore for the smelter.

Weeks lagged by, spent in what seemed an almost hopeless attempt, not at ranch-hunting — good ranches abounded, people being at the tail-end just then of a destructive boom, and willing enough to sell—but home-hunting. The dreariness of the surroundings of the average farmer's home in this section debars description. The newcomer, straight from the East, and unable or unwilling to put a small fortune into 'improvements,' may well be discouraged. As one gets better acquainted with the country, some reasons for this apparently wanton neglect of home-making present themselves, but they are far from being sufficient in themselves. The absence of flowers and creepers is partially explained by the care they require, owing to the dry

climate and the impossibility of irrigating near an adobe house, lest it should subside into the mud-puddle from whence it sprang; consequently watering must be done by hand, and the hands of the farmer's wife are already overfull. Still, a little ingenuity overcomes this difficulty in part, and the home is blessed with the saving grace of flowers, however few and humble. The Mexican women are ahead in this particular, and it is not uncommon to see in front of their mud-hovels tiny spaces enclosed by cactus or brush fences and blazing with colour. But, generally speaking, not only is any attempt at outside ornamentation of the ranchman's home absent, but disorder runs rampant and unchecked. Twenty years' intimate acquaintance with a country confer some right to an opinion, and I am obliged to confess that neatness cannot be counted among the characteristics of the average American housewife, admirable though she be in other respects. I have a theory, though theories often disappoint one in the washing, that the conspicuous lack of home-training, combined with the fact that a large majority of

American women have to scramble into the housekeeping business, so to speak, overworked from the very start and with no servants, or else a single inefficient one, are together responsible for this common want of order and method. True, the American house where two or three servants are always kept is, perhaps, the daintiest in the world ; but the reason for this exquisite refinement of detail is that the woman who is rich enough to pay the high wages demanded on this side does not of necessity obtain their equivalent in skilled service. Unless she neglect her duty as hostess—and I have yet to meet the American woman whose peer as a hostess is to be found outside of her own country—she still has to attend to all the details herself, though spared the hard and wearing work which falls to the lot of the immense army of her less fortunate sisters ; she has leisure for those details, therefore, for the proper performance of which her servants are incapable, and in consequence the hand of the refined woman lends a grace not to be seen where even the best of trained servants attend to all the

household duties without aid, and in most cases without supervision. English people who have done much visiting in well-appointed American homes endorse without question this and other graces of hospitality in which the well-bred American hostess is proficient.

But here, in the Far West, the disorderliness characteristic of the average house-owner of moderate means is discouraging indeed. From ranch to ranch we wandered, only to be repelled by the same forlornness. 'It would take a small fortune to make a *home* of such a place!' was the despairing exclamation as we turned our backs on one squat adobe house after another, each planted on a bare patch of hard clay, in most cases destitute of a porch, and not a leaf or a flower to be seen — an untidy barnyard, littered with farm implements, plebeian hens, mongrel curs, and Heaven knows what not, all in close proximity to, if not actually elbowing, the dwelling. That good farm buildings are rare is not surprising. In the first place, the short sunny winters and the hardy stock of the country make it possible

to dispense with elaborate barns. The Mexican stable is as often as not simply four posts stuck into the ground, the roof being made of brush, on which the corn is kept. Should this erection possess sides, they are pretty sure to be made of closely-wattled and thorny mesquite or other brush; and, strange as it may seem, such a shelter is not to be despised. Those who have the money to spend build them barns of adobe, and excellent they are; but to build in adobe is far from being as cheap as it sounds. As for lumber, the farmer who can extend himself in that direction must have a big bank account. The fences are, of course, barbed wire. The indifference to appearances, or, speaking more accurately, indifference to the externals of a home, seems to work like a contagion. Granted the existence of pleasant exceptions, the ordinary ranch-house in the Mesilla Valley causeth the blood of the unhappy stranger to run cold. 'And in one of these I am to make my home!' is his inward moan. He remembers the long and costly journey from the East, and realizes that few will be the friends of his (now) past who will,

for his sake, sit four days and a half in a Pullman car and spend large coin in the endeavour to cheer his exile. One train per diem runs the downward length of the valley and brings him his Eastern mail, and with this, one or two faithful friends excepted, he must learn perforce to be content—make new friends and absorb himself in toil, of which latter he will in very truth find no lack. So the stranger braces himself, and ‘takes a fresh grip.’

And at last, after much wading through and rolling over the so-called roads of the country, a home was found even for this ‘tenderfoot.’ What was it that decided the question? Alas! must it be confessed by an ambitious ranchera that it was not wholly the fertile, if neglected and unfenced land, the fruit-trees in bearing, the generally admirable possibilities of the ranch from a farming point of view, which alone turned the scales when weighed against hideous, nay, almost unparalleled, disorder and neglect? What was it, then? An attractive carriage-drive bordered with young trees, a few rose-bushes before the door, a magnificent cottonwood

spreading wide, sheltering arms over a well-built adobe dwelling. And was this all? No—for bounding the horizon, a perpetual vision of beauty, rose the grand heights of the Organ Mountains. Poor reasoning this, no doubt, for a prospective farmer, yet not without its proven worth as we entered the long vista of toil, struggle, and aggravation which goes to making a home in the Land of Poco Tiempo, that perfect substitute for the After Awhile, and Never-do-to-day-what-you-can-possibly-put-off-till-to-morrow, of certain States of the Middle South.

CHAPTER II.

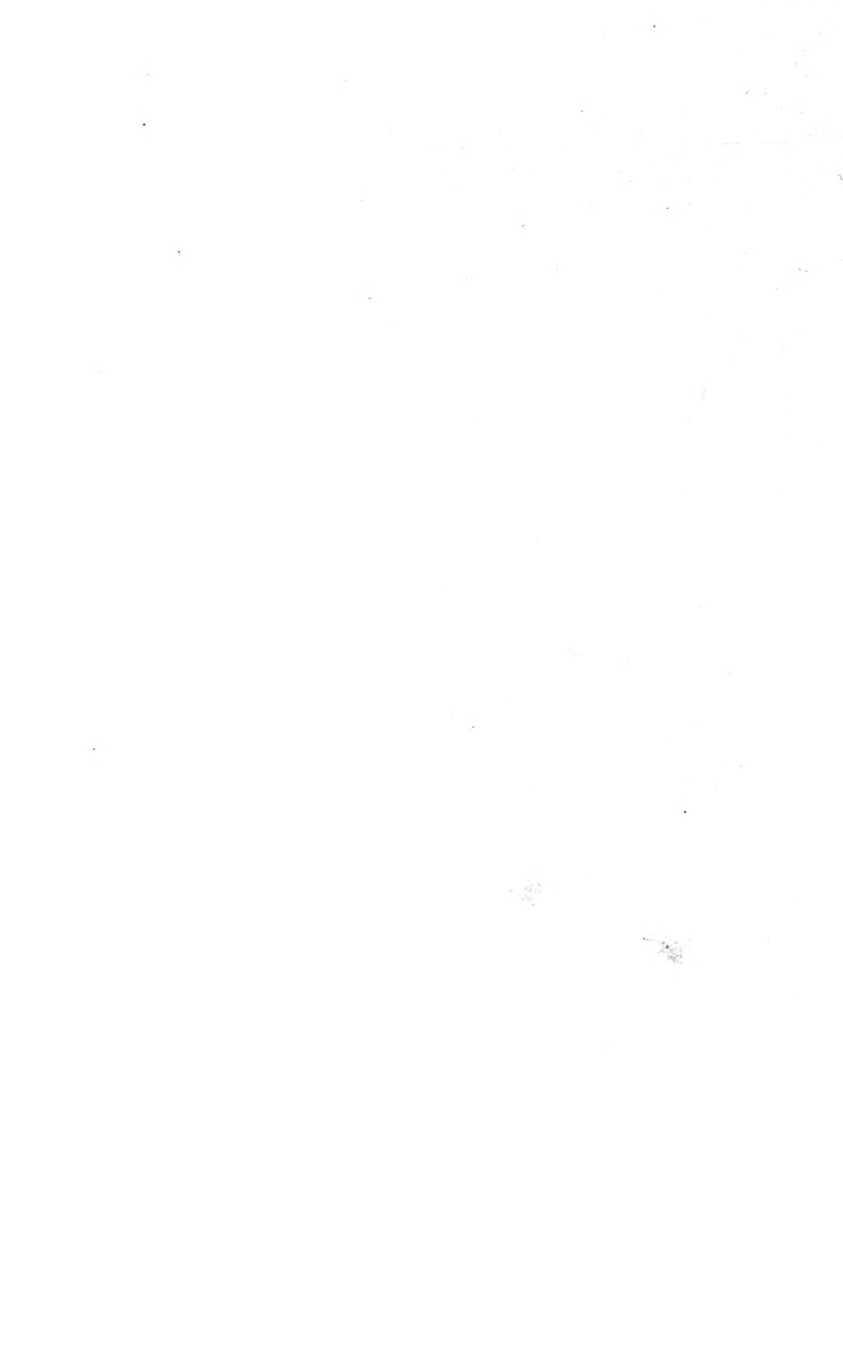
THE MEXICAN IN NEW MEXICO.

THE picturesque attributes of Old Mexico are self-evident, and have been so often and so well written up as to have become almost hackneyed. In New Mexico, on the contrary, these qualities are less theatrically displayed, and, indeed, to many settlers in the territory are barely noticeable, so much, naturally, depending on the point of view as well as on the species of eyesight possessed by the observer. Where the point of view is strictly utilitarian, as in the case of the majority of settlers, the picturesque may be virtually considered *non est*; and, again, when the picturesque is too ardently sought after and desired, the result must inevitably be inaccuracy in the impression presented to the reader.



TYPICAL MEXICANS.

To face p. 20.



For it must never be forgotten that this is New and not Old Mexico, and that whilst the Mexican predominates in the population, enjoying such influence as mere superiority of numbers can bestow, unsupported by intelligence, the American is the dominating element. A nice distinction, perhaps, but an important one, for all that. To assign, therefore, to the Mexican citizen of the United States such a part as he plays in Old Mexico would be to give a false and unreal description of life in the Territory; and it is with life in the Territory, and in a small corner at that, that these unexciting little personal experiences have to do. Yet, small though the corner be, the strong tide of feeling and opinion ebbing and flowing all over this great country searches out its every nook and crevice. The Mexican element is, then, of necessity only a circumstance, and to assign to the native more than his due share of conspicuity or influence would be to present a picture untrue to life as it is with us.

But the language! There is always the language to be reckoned with, and perhaps

the severest of all trials for the 'tenderfoot' is the struggle to acquire the mongrel tongue of a mongrel race. Oh yes, you are going to do wonderfully; you are going to learn a new language, and an easy one—*l'Español!* It is easy? Assuredly, under certain conditions. In the first place, you must divest yourself of the delusion that this that you are about to acquire is a language; for it is a patois, pure and simple. In the second, you must, while learning the jargon, put all more important concerns out of your head—which, for a new-comer in a strange land, settling into a strange home, is a manifest impossibility. When, with a dozen serious matters weighing on your mind, you turn aside from these at some critical moment only to confront an unknown tongue, and rush wildly to dictionary or grammar, in nine cases out of ten it will be your unhappy lot to discover that the Spanish and the Mexican word have scarcely even a blood relationship, and that the dogged and irritating 'no sabe' of the nominally American citizen rises like a dead wall in your harassed path. Then you lose patience, fling

dictionary and grammar out of window, declare the Mexican to be the lingo of the imbecile, and—if you have leisure sufficient—break out in a tirade against a Constitution which permits of such lapses from common-sense in its code of citizenship, etc. Finally, you firmly resolve to insist on your employés learning the language of their own country—the American. After awhile comes a modified relenting, aided by circumstances over which it cannot be said that you have control. But you are no longer an enthusiast. One does not, for instance, repair to Ireland to learn English. And even were it the Spanish you would learn, you gradually grow to feel, as work and cares increase, that a language whose equivalent for ‘umbrella’ is ‘an-article-to-be-held-above-the-head-as-a-protection-from-the-weather’ is—well, to put it mildly, out of date. The word in question may not be exactly ‘umbrella,’ neither may its Spanish equivalent be precisely accurate, but this is the effect of the language upon the novice. Anyhow, we have but one life, and that is short. Stray weeds of Mexican speech are gathered by the wayside, and with these the

busy ranchero for the most part learns to content himself for a year or two.

A simple receipt for acquiring the lingo in connected phrases seems to be as follows : Sit down hard somewhere near the tail-end of every other word, and bawl. Or, as was once somewhat pithily remarked, shout in scallops, and don't forget to swallow the lowest point of each scallop.

The interminable pow-wow of the Mexican who wanders to the American's ranch to trade or buy is an unmitigated nuisance. The object of the former is, of course, to satisfy his desires at less than cost. The moment arrives when the exasperated ranchera is driven to muster her best Mexican for the purpose of observing, with more vim, perhaps, than courtesy :

'If *you* have time to say the same thing over twenty times, *I* have not. I must work. Adios, señor!'

'Trabajo?'—this with smiling disbelief. 'Ah, no, no!'

Then the argument sets in *da capo*. Meantime an annoyed guard-dog is striving to escape the restraining hand.

‘I tell you, No!’ reiterates the dog’s mistress. ‘I will *not* sell my fine wine at half-price. Adios!’

And at last the weary scene is closed.

Mexican courtesy, which is made so much of by the admirers of the race, is a superficial article at the best, and there goes with it, in the majority of cases, a lively sense of benefits to come rather than of gratitude for benefits received. Considering that his order of intelligence is lower than that of any race with which I have as yet come in contact—below that of the negro—it must be conceded that the Mexican possesses a rare talent for imposition. He will get out of the American all he is worth, and more. At this point a typical tale—one of many—comes to my mind. Some neighbours were in the habit of hiring a certain Mexican by the day; and knowing them, I also know how many kindnesses they had showered on this man, who lived with his family at some distance. One morning he appeared: ‘Oh, I cannot work to-day! My oldest boy is sick—mucho malo!’ Filled with sympathy, his kind employers gave him money to buy

medicine for the sick one, invalid food, etc. Soon the sorrowing parent returned: 'Ah! my boy, my muchacho, he is dead! Ah, triste, triste!' His white friends lavished more sympathy, and, better still, more money, this time to buy a coffin for the muchacho. The tragedy was repeated, in the course of a few weeks, with the same results, only on the next occasion the victim was a girl for whom the neighbourly offices of the Americans were entreated. 'And would you believe it,' concluded my informant, laughing heartily, 'my husband happened to have business down that way recently, and he discovered that not only had none of José Martillo's children died, but that he had never had any to die.'

After relating this episode, it is but fair to add that the Mexicans are exceedingly good to one another either in trouble or sickness, and that while the well-provided ranchero will be slow, nay, obdurate, about giving money, he will permit his children and his children's children to abide almost indefinitely beneath the ancestral roof.

But intelligence! Now, here is Juan, who

has worked for me long and often, and whose stupidity is past all prayers and strivings of the gods. He is pleased with me because I pay him more than his labour is actually worth; the reason for this apparent folly on my part being that here, in darkest New Mexico, I pay so much for labour and so much more for honesty and industry, these having their separate and distinct market value—for me. Juan is also pleased with me because he thinks I am rich. In Southern communities a reputation for paying one's just debts carries with it an inconvenient reputation for untold wealth. This is a delusion by no means confined to the Mexican and the negro. Now, Juan, being a steady worker, is not in burning daily need of cash. Therefore, while at the close of each day's work the money due for the same is entered in my ranch-book, Juan usually does not apply for it except on occasion, and then only piecemeal. For he once worked for me as a regular monthly hand, with satisfactory results to himself and his little yellow family; consequently he is willing to use me as a bank. But lately I determined to have

a grand settling-up. This is the scene that ensued :

Juan squatting on the floor in front of the Señora, who is seated in a chair, pencil and ranch-book in hand.

The Señora : ' Juan, I owe you exactly five dollars. Your work for the month comes to fifteen dollars, but I have already paid you ten on account.'

Juan (reproachfully, and with solemn headshakes) : ' Now, señora, I figured that you would give me fifteen dollars to-day.' (Then follows a lengthy summing-up on his fingers of the work he has done.)

The Señora : ' Yes, Juan, that is right. Your work amounts to fifteen dollars. But on the 10th of the month I paid you five dollars, on the 20th three dollars, and on the 26th two dollars. That makes ten dollars I have paid you. Don't you remember? I have it all entered in my book.'

Juan : ' Si, señora. But I still figure that you owe me fifteen dollars.'

The Señora : ' Didn't I pay you ten dollars during the month, Juan?'

Juan : ' Yes, señora ; but the work I have

done I have kept account of in my head, and it is fifteen dollars.'

The Señora (praying for patience): 'Juan, have I ever failed to pay you what I owe you?'

Juan: 'No, señora, never. But I make out that you owe me fifteen dollars.'

The Señora: 'Now listen to me, Juan. Here are fifteen books in a pile. I take away five, then three, then two; how many are left? Five, are there not?'

'Yes, five. But, señora, I make out that——'

'Juan, you took away the money just as I have taken away the books. You can't take away and still have the same.'

A silence. At last Juan, resignedly:

'*¡Sta bueno, señora!* If you are content, I am. I just figured on the fifteen dollars, but if you claim you don't owe me that much——'

He shrugs his shoulders, sighs, and spreads his hands.

The Señora (firmly): 'Juan, that won't do. I will write the account down on a separate sheet of paper, and you shall carry it to Mr. ——' (naming a merchant of

prominence in the town), 'and if he says I have not paid you all I owe you, why, then I will pay more.'

Juan (springing excitedly to his feet): 'Oh, no, no, señora! I am *quite* satisfied. I'm sure you know, and I don't want to ask Mr. ——.'

Of course he doesn't, for obvious reasons.

The above is a fair sample of the Mexican combination of stupidity and avarice, for there is not a white person in the community who would refuse to give Juan a character for honesty. And, indeed, he is honest, according to the lights of the peon.

Taken in the aggregate and externally, the peon is not an inviting specimen of humanity. I pause, because in gazing upon certain types of the Mexican—particularly when, as often chances, he is full of new wine—one catches one's self speculating about the humanity. The health-seeker and casual visitor writes sentimental stories about him—him and her; yet if the average be taken, neither appears to be exactly the proper subject either for sentimentality or romance. The Mexican, as he may be seen every day,

kicking his half-starved pony in the stomach for some imbecility of his own, or digging the terrible Spanish spur into its bare ribs, its poor little back and legs bending and quivering beneath the weight of two of him as it is raced at a gallop through the deep sand, does not commend himself as an object of romance. Personally, I find it difficult to sentimentalize over a race, the large proportion of which is brutal beyond the manner of other races to its beasts. It has been well said that the man who is cruel to dumb animals will bear watching. The Mexican will bear watching. Anyone who can, for instance, observe a Mexican at the plough-tail for five minutes without 'losing his religion' must either be a stoic or a saint—the former for choice. If the low-crested, dull-eyed, slouch-tailed, jammed-shouldered equine 'sons of the sage-brush' are often as bad-tempered as they are hardy and enduring, a slight acquaintance with their environment, past and present, explains their attitude to their world as well as the figure they cut in it. To one, however, straight from Kentucky or Virginia, either of which States

may fairly claim to be the home of the Perfect Horse, the sage-brush beast is a burden scarcely to be endured. Time alone can make him endurable. A good-looking Mexican pony is as rare as a good-looking Mexican peon.

The typical peon of New Mexico may be described as follows : He has a high, conical head, coarse black hair without the ghost of a wave, and combed, if ever combed at all, straight down from the cone over a pair of small dark eyes. His skin is muddled, his nose and mouth designed apparently with more haste than finish. In form he is seldom athletic or well-built. Needless to say, the type is subject to wide variations, but the above is a fair composite picture. For that unpleasing head of his he exhibits the tenderest care, swathing it on chilly days in a blanket, crowning the bundle with the everlasting, ubiquitous hat. This blanket of his, by-the-by, is an altogether fascinating article of apparel—to the artist. In whatever style it be worn, and however grimy, it is unfailingly picturesque. A Mexican crawling up the quaint street of the ancient adobe

town on a cold, brilliant winter's morning, crouched on the seat of his unpainted, ramshackle waggon, behind his dejected, rope-harnessed ponies, his blanket drawn far over his head and shoulders, his high-crowned hat perched on top of all, and the point where we opine his nose to be buried in his knees, comes in well as a figure for a middle distance.

If not in his waggon or on his pony, he may be found in rows—nay, in heaps—squatting in winter against a sun-warmed adobe wall — ‘the Mexican fireplace’ — smoking the perennial cigarette, gambling, possibly, at monte or chusas, drinking the wine of the country, or, better still, simply chattering ; for it is a garrulous race.

The Mexican dude is another affair altogether. He is not common with us, but he is to be found. His is the hat of romance ; the everyday Mexican's is the everyday hat. Both are steeple-crowned, broad-brimmed, and heavy enough to resist the wind of the country ; but while the one is built in plain straw, unadorned, the other is bravely fashioned in solid goods of scarlet, black, or gray, embroidered in silver spread-eagles, or

at its humblest having a silver cord and tassels wound artistically around the base of its pyramid, and it cost probably twenty-five dollars, or even more. Buckskin, also embroidered in silver, and sufficiently tight-fitting to show off a good leg (always provided that he hath an exhibition-leg), is also affected by the dude. His pony wears a tasselled bridle wonderful and gorgeous to behold, and champs restlessly on a magnificently cruel bit, with the aid of which, and a dexterous use of the spur, he can be induced to kick the dust of the village streets into the eyes of admiring señoritas. The high-peaked saddle, fabulous in weight and marvellous accoutrement, has furnished matter for travellers' tales galore. Truly, the Mexican, kempt or unkempt, is, from the artistic point of view, hardly to be spared. Bereft of him, the knight of the brush would be poor indeed.

But the superb Mexican caballero, that gorgeous person who still adorns the pages of illustrated magazines, is here conspicuous by his absence. Even in Old Mexico, when met with, which is but rarely, he fails to fulfil expectations. How should he be anything

but a *rara avis*, where indifference to the breeding, as well as to the comfort, of the horse is rather the exception than the rule, and where the native animal is seldom attractive to the eye unless half or three-quarters American-bred? How can the bony, ewe-necked little Mexican steed, stiff-jointed from colthood, be transformed as by a miracle into the proud Spanish barb of our youthful fancy? The thing is not to be done. Worse still, there is that eyesore, the much-vaunted 'Western seat,' affected alike by American and Mexican, but far less exaggerated and ungainly in the case of the latter than the former. The Mexican, at least, possesses a certain supple quality of limbs and body which detracts from the unmitigated awkwardness of the 'forked radish' cowboy style of riding—heels working, reins held high in air. The average Far Western horseman is more or less helpless without his cumbrous saddle, in which he sits as in a deep chair; the Mexican, on the contrary, provided he lays any claim to being a horseman, is as much at home on his horse's bare back as he is in the saddle. There is a wild picturesqueness about the

Mexican style of horse-racing—traceable, of course, directly to Indian manners and customs—which is unique. The horses—in this section almost invariably possessing some American blood if sufficiently speedy for the Mexican's favourite diversion—lend their own beauty to the scene. The wide, dusty road is lined with country waggons, pedestrians, caballeros, chiefly native, every face tense with excitement. The jockeys—usually two, or at most three—are bare-footed and bare-headed, their loose locks sometimes bound Indian fashion. White cotton drawers and shirts comprise the costume. The frantic steeds rear and plunge, the dark-skinned Mexicans sticking to their bare backs like centaurs. Then, amid the roar of the crowd, away they go, disappearing in a cloud of dust. But anything more unlike the typical caballero can scarcely be conceived of.

Before quitting this subject of Far Western horsemanship, it may not be out of place to remark that, on first confronting specimens of it in the streets of a large city, it was hard to convince me that the riders were not, one and all, drunk. When affected by women,

the prevailing style is even more displeasing; the grace and science of the noble art of horsemanship have no longer any existence. What a spectacle for men and gods! Arms and legs flying, shoulders heaving—yes, it is undoubtedly good exercise, this riding, suitable for broncos without manners, possibly, and assuredly well qualified to aid in the rounding-up of cattle; but Heaven forefend that it should be called ‘riding’ in any other sense!

From the point of view of the employer of labour, the Mexican’s picturesque qualities are obscured by others less gratifying. Experiences on a thirty-acre ranch are necessarily somewhat limited, but not so much so as to preclude endorsement of the opinion of those who farm on a larger scale. ‘Of twenty Mexican labourers whom I may employ,’ quoth one of these large fruit-growers, ‘one may be honest and industrious.’

There are potent hereditary factors at work in the making-up of the modern-day Mexican. For one thing, it must never be forgotten that slavery was only abolished by law as late as 1867, and then, according to

Dame Rumour, but nominally, so far as portions of Old Mexico are concerned. And Spaniards make hard task-masters, affirms the same oracle. A mongrel race—various Indian tribes crossed in the first instance with Spanish soldiery, whose vices were certainly not hidden under a bushel—holds little in it of fine promise. There is distinct evidence of caste among them, and I am assured that the further one travels from the border, the more marked becomes the improvement in the race. The more or less of Indian in the blood has fully as much to do, no doubt, with that question of caste as has the possession of more or less of worldly goods.

The admirers of the Mexican (chiefly feminine) in his labouring capacity will exclaim, in defence of his indomitable laziness, 'Oh, it's the climate! This is the land of *poco tiempo*, you know.' The climate? What nonsense! is our inward retort. This is no tropical atmosphere, but one that is exhilarating and incentive to a fault. At 3,800 feet above sea-level, an altitude which increases with every mile taken northward—with a clear air that literally sparkles even

on the warmest summer mornings—to talk of the languor induced by climate is surely the vainest of follies! It is the land of *poco tiempo* by reason of the nations that inhabit it—the mixed Southern blood, the acknowledged deterioration following on the crossing of the white and the coloured races (a well-known fact where the negro is concerned, and as yet uncontradicted, speaking generally, in the case of the Indian), the prevalence of the bad man (white), the predominance in the population of mere politicians and selfish office seekers and money grabbers. What wonder that the small minority of public-spirited citizens lose heart! But it is not ‘the climate’ which causes honest workers to drop back in the collar; it is the impossibility, as it may well appear to them, of hauling such a load of obstructionists and incapables. In sections of the Territory where capital has been judiciously employed, and politics have been, comparatively speaking, ignored, with the result that intelligent and thrifty citizens have flocked to such sections, talk concerning the land of *poco tiempo* dies away into silence. The climate is, in fact, all in favour of the worker.

For the first few months of my career as an employer of Mexican labour in Southern New Mexico, I received the pardonable impression that the attitude most affected by our progressive fellow-voter and citizen was that which depicted him with his head in a wine-barrel and his legs at right angles thereto. This impression has undergone distinct modifications, but is not yet effaced. The native *ranchero* who is not the owner of a vineyard is a rarity. In a large number of instances the feet of the native still tread the wine-press, and the skin of an erstwhile beast swelled with new wine may yet be seen suspended without the dwelling of the landowner. Why should he not drink of the fruit of his own vine, he argues? But Juan says, with an air of justifiable pride: 'I used to drink like they do, but I don't now; it doesn't pay. I drink a little—si, a little—every day—but I stop. Now, Luciano—he keeps a pitcher of wine by his bedside. When he wakes in the night he drinks a little—therefore you see how it is with him.'*

* The *Americano* declares that it takes very little to make a Mexican drunk, giving as his reason for this assertion the Mexican's lack of brains!

The Mexican labourer is like the negro in one respect, only more so. Your life, if you are a ranchman, or, more luckless yet, a ranchwoman, is largely spent in gathering up the fragments that remain. Nevertheless, your utmost efforts do not avail to maintain the order and neatness which should be the sign-manual of a ranch; yet, if you have already served an apprenticeship with the happy-go-lucky darkey, you submit to the inevitable with at least a fair show of philosophy. If after many weary days your Mexican has been induced, with occasional lapses from grace, to keep his waggon, ploughs, etc., in their appointed places, there still remains to you the felicity of 'picking up' after him. He has been led to mend a gate; there lies the hammer on the ground. A rope has been used to temporarily tie a horse; there lies the rope. You wander through sheds and barns, gathering, or making him gather, pieces of harness, spades, hatchets—everything, in short, that should *not* be just where it is. Or you don't, and the unfailing moment arrives when work presses and some indispensable article re-

quired is missing. Where is it? 'Quien sabe?'—who knows? The retort courteous, but unsatisfying.

Now, there is Hernandez—he is neither repulsive nor degraded in appearance, not even plain; on the contrary, he has somewhat the air of a peaceful Spanish hidalgo—in miniature, and of tender years. He is therefore ornamental, and his manners are charming; also his English is fair to middling. He is also not cruel to animals. Hernandez is really good to horses so long as their demands upon him are not too exacting. He is always courteous, sober, and—great day in de mawnin'! to quote our negro friends—HONEST. At the same time, as before intimated, Mexican honesty is apt to be of the comparative order, and the time came when that of Hernandez gradually became more and more comparative. The inch given was assumed to supply also the ell, and kindness did not seem to produce—as in the better sort of negro—a greater faithfulness.

Hernandez was agreeable in every capacity save that for which he was hired, *i.e.*, work.

Had I been able to give him thirty dollars a month and his board in return for a few light chores, it would no doubt have been satisfactory to retain him as a pleasant appendage to the establishment; but as I was not able thus to support him in affluence and ease, we were compelled to part. Of the six months our contract endured, several weeks were consumed in the ceremony of marriage, which for the Mexican bridegroom appears to be beset with complications. There were the new relatives to be courteously entreated—above all, to be *fed*, lavishly and numerously—wedding garments to be provided for the bride, etc., and much of this with the aid of my waggon and team, and on wages due only in rather dim perspective. For me remained the privilege of providing a home for the bride and groom against the time when they should declare themselves ready to occupy it. Over and above this, I enjoyed the cheap privilege of hope. But hope proved poor provender on which to subsist. Whether Hernandez was already reaping the not uncommon fruits of marrying above his station—for he considered

that he had done so, insufficient as the evidence appeared to me—or whether I was reaping the also not uncommon fruits of kindnesses bestowed, I cannot say; but it is certain that a few hours per diem of reluctant, intermittent toil were all that were vouchsafed me. Hernandez loved better than ever to sit in the shadow of his own vine and fig-tree, and gaze with primæval calm upon stationary horses hitched to a stationary plough. In fine, his motto was, 'Work some—rest some.'

One day there was a large onion order to be filled by 10 a.m. At 8.30 Hernandez strolled languidly to the scene where another man had long been at work. He met my expressions of anxiety lest the order should not be in time with the gentle plaint: 'I'm not used to being hurried.' Later, as he sat in the waggon, his assistant carrying the onions to him, he begged that when he got to town he might have a man to help him lift the hundred-pound sacks to the ground. Hardening my heart, I refused, whereupon he delivered himself thus: 'Sometimes I feel like working, and sometimes I don't.'

I may add that by dint of superhuman exertions on my part the onion order was filled ; also that manual labour was pointedly omitted from the health programme furnished me. It is well, however, that the person seeking a home in the Far West, either for health or other profit, should understand beforehand that it is without avail that he omits manual labour from his programme ; this is the rock on which many invalids either go to pieces or meet with disappointment. A delicate person, unaccustomed to the combination of physical toil and the mental harassment inseparable from inefficient co-operation, is bound, in the nature of things, to make slower progress towards health than one whose conditions of life have always included manual labour. This is a point too often overlooked by physicians who hurry their patients from comfortable homes to shoulder the burden of existence in the Far West. When added to this is a natural love of work in the patient, further encouraged by a stimulating climate, it is easy to understand how at the end of a year or two the medical reproof may be, 'You have gone

too fast. Now go slow.' We all know the story of the impoverished sick woman for whom the physician prescribed port-wine and game!

Finally, there was recommended to me a native who was represented as being trustworthy, hard-working, intelligent—in brief, a compendium of all the virtues. With heart uplifted I hastened to interview him. This was the result : He was entirely satisfied with the wages offered, liked to work (O marvel !), wanted a permanent situation, but—— ‘ But *what !* ’ I ejaculated, concealing an anxiety not unnatural. Well, he had three horses ; times were so bad that he could not sell them, and dared not turn them out on the range, for fear they should be stolen ; he had to get a day-job whenever he could in order to feed them and his family. Representation and argument alike fell flat ; this man, who was really in need of steady work and anxious to do it, could not be brought to see that good wages, although they might leave his fifteen-dollar-ahead ponies idle, would feed the family and the worthless beasts twice over for what he could earn by odd jobs. Before

closing the hopeless—and, of course, long-winded—discussion, I inquired if he could recommend anyone else. No, he didn't think he could—most Mexicans liked to work some and rest some—didn't care to work right straight along. And all the consolation I received when relating my failure to his referee was a shrug of the shoulders, and the ejaculation :

'Just like a Mexican! Waste of time to try and reason with any of them!'

Yet another native touch : Complying with law and custom, I provided four men to do each a day's work towards cleaning the public ditch for irrigation purposes. At the end of the day a Mexican youth presented himself and the bill. On the paper the names of but two men were inscribed as having worked, the sum demanded amounting to wages for four.

'What is the meaning of this?' I inquired. 'If only Luciano and Pedro worked, why do I pay the wages of Matildo and Jesus?'

'Two men worked,' was the stolid rejoinder.

‘Then I won’t pay the wages of four.’

‘But two men did four days’ work.’

‘All in one day? That is impossible.’

‘But, señora, they did!’

‘Muchacho, that cannot be. I must understand better before I pay two men the wages of four. Go, and request the mayordomo to look into this affair.’

Presently appeared the mayordomo.

‘Señora, the bill is correct. The men have worked.’

‘Señor, I repeat the thing is impossible! Two men cannot in one day do the work of four men.’

‘Señora,’ impatiently, ‘four men worked.’

‘Why, then, did this muchacho tell me that only two worked, and why are not the names of Matildo and Jesus on the bill?’

‘He told you that only two worked,’ yet more impatiently, as if I should have divined by instinct his process of reasoning, ‘because there was no room on the bill for the names of the others.’

Here, as often, fortunately, the situation developed itself into the ridiculous, and

having induced the 'boss' to squeeze in the names of Matildo and Jesus, which he did without the trace of a smile softening his hideous features, we parted on the best of terms.

CHAPTER III.

OUR CROPS.

SEVEN of the clock on a fair summer morning. The breakfast is fizzling on the stove ; the aroma of mocha and java floats out through open doors and windows. The flock of ebony hens, lately released, and heralded by gay chanticleer, their score or so of scarlet combs glowing in the sunshine, are grazing in the alfalfa, uttering loud croons of satisfaction. In the stable-corral chicks are furiously scratching. The cows, long since fed and milked, chew the cud of bovine ease. Up and down the drive, round and round in the alfalfa, kicking up its heels in the joy of life, races a beautiful colt, the hope of the ranchera, to whom the beast of the Far West is as the abomination of desolation. Meanwhile the mother tugs at

her rope in all the futility of maternal uneasiness.

Equally anxious, though from a different cause, the ranchera stands at the kitchen door, shading her eyes from the blinding morning radiance.

‘Juan, have we got the water?’

‘Si, señora,’ cheerily.

‘Ah, that’s good! Now, *hold on to it.*’

‘Bueno, señora.’

And the bare brown legs, tall hat, and clumsy hoe disappear under the orchard trees.

If there is any more entrancing sound than the hissing of water after long drought into cracked and thirsty land, or a more refreshing sight than that of the brown torrent spreading cool fingers over the face of dry and heated meadows, this ranchera is not acquainted with either.

It is no easy task for an enthusiastic farming person to tell of the agricultural methods, the fruits, the vegetables, the crops, of this productive Valley without waxing tedious to those for whom farming matters are simply a bore. Yet there is one process, that of

preparing for, sowing, and harvesting alfalfa, which may not be wholly uninteresting in the telling, even to him who loves not the land.

In the first place, Alfalfa is the stand-by of the Arid Belt. Without going into botanical distinctions, it is sufficient to say that it is a variety of clover, but in those sections where it flourishes the superior of both clover and timothy. Ton for ton it yields more than either ; not only that, but here in New Mexico four cuttings in one season are not uncommon, and a yield of three tons per acre is considered by good judges a conservative estimate. In nutritive and muscle-forming qualities as hay it has no equal. Work-horses fed only on alfalfa keep in fine form and spirit, so long as they are given enough, or, more important yet, sufficient time in which to eat. The careless Western horse-owner's bony steeds must lay the blame of their appearance to his indifference, not to alfalfa-feeding. Horses used for speeding purposes require grain, although I have seen even this disputed by the trainers of young trotters ; but as the condition of our roads

seldom permits of more rapid transit than that provided by the leisurely pounding of the English carriage horse, it may be at once perceived that there is one corner of the United States in which, alas! we do *not* 'trot'—or, at least, not often. Personal experience goes to prove that cows fed on alfalfa hay, supplemented only by a nightly ration of bran, produce butter excellent as regards both quality and quantity. Needless to dilate on the trouble and expense spared the dairyman in this detail alone. Hogs and chicken graze it, and with little additional food in summer time are remunerative to their owners. Whatever may be affirmed to the contrary, however, alfalfa will not bear very close grazing, and although, if properly irrigated and not grazed too long at one time, it will last an indefinite number of years, enriching instead of impoverishing the soil, it is doubtful if it will endure flagrant neglect. Compared with other crops, however, it needs but little attention. Its one and only serious disadvantage lies in its dangerous properties where cows are concerned; that is to say, there are but few

weeks in the year when cows can be turned loose with safety in an alfalfa meadow. It is no exaggeration to say that there is not a farmer in this vicinity who has not lost one or more cows from the deadly 'alfalfa bloat.' When growing it is very succulent, and the cows eat it greedily—the result: bloat and speedy death. Scrub cows suffer comparatively little—horses and mules not at all—and careful investigation goes to show that the pure-bred or graded Jersey, of small stomach and voracious habits, is the common victim. But the subject of 'alfalfa bloat,' the best modes of prevention and cure—when a cure is effected—is a subject for a treatise; and when I say that at the meeting of our Farmers' Institute a whole morning was consumed in the animated discussion of how and when to graze cows on alfalfa, bloat and the various modes of prevention thereof, and that scarcely two persons agreed, it may well be seen that the subject is at this point ripe for abandonment. Each ranchman has his own method of dealing with the matter, and considers his the best.

As alfalfa does not thrive in heavy or

holding soil, the levelling of the land in order that water may not lie on it is of the first importance. Here the Mexican is in his element. With plough and scraper he accomplishes unerringly a task which to the inexperienced white man is beset with difficulties. By the aid of his eye alone, unassisted by any mechanical devices, he rapidly reduces uneven land to the uniform level of a billiard-table. Then with hoe supplementing plough he divides his field into squares, each square having its raised edge or 'border.' The land is now prepared for irrigation.

Many Americans irrigate before sowing, and not again till the crop is well above ground. Personally, I have had poor success with that plan, and now do as the natives do. The Mexican sows his seed first, though it goes without saying that the initiatory step to ploughing in a rainless country must be irrigation; then after the land has dried off sufficiently the plough follows. The Mexican, therefore, having sown his seed, and made his ditch along one or two sides of the prospective alfalfa meadow, and through the centre also should the case

require it, now seeks the public acequia. He raises the water-gate, and lets the stream flow into the private ditches of the ranch, following it up, making dams with his hoe, and directing it into the special ditch requiring to be filled. From this acequia, by cutting small water-ways in the borders, he runs the water into one square after another until all are covered in turn with from one to two inches of water, according to the supply and to the condition of the land. This is the simple and effective flooding system. Sub-irrigation, practised with success in portions of California, has been found to be on the whole a failure here. It seems as though the fine seed of the alfalfa, and especially as it is never covered deep, must inevitably be swept away and drowned by the waves of such a flood; but somehow or other it survives, and soon greets our waiting eyes with a show of tender green. It is usually sown here in March or April, and with a nurse-crop of oats or barley, for the double purpose of keeping down the weeds and sheltering the young alfalfa from the burning rays of the sun. It is ready for its

first cutting by the time the nurse-crop is sufficiently high to be cut for fodder.

A prettier spectacle than a meadow of well-established alfalfa ripe for the harvest, running like a purple sea under a fine May breeze, it would be difficult to picture, even for the man who cares nothing about farming. The first cutting takes place in May, and, provided there is a good supply of water, at intervals of from six to seven weeks during the season. The harvesting of fourteen acres occupies at the most four days, there being, as a rule, more danger of the hay drying too much than too little. If stacked too dry, the leaves, its valuable element, are apt to fall and be wasted in the hauling. There is occasional loss in the 'rainy season.'

Then there is the fruit, the joy and pride of our Valley—still more to be its joy and pride when that awful doubt about water ceases to haunt the spring dreams of the ranchman. Now, when the doubt is solved in the wrong way, and he knows there is no water, he simply resigns himself. When his alfalfa crackles under his feet, he endeavours

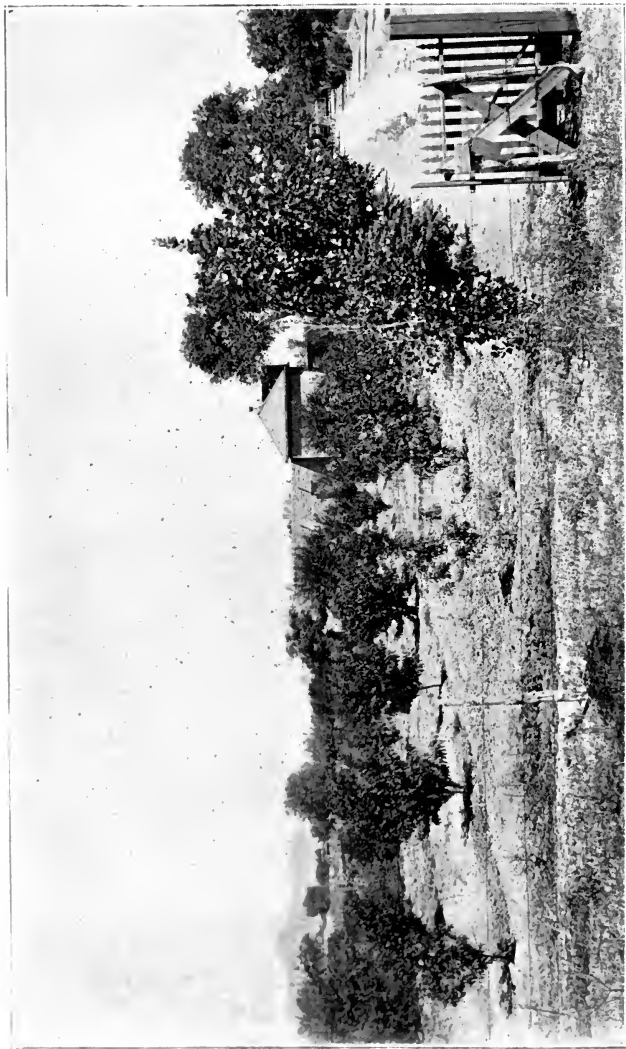
to shut his ears ; when his cabbage falls in helpless heaps, his corn turns its leaves inside out and looks to him in vain for succour, his young fruit-trees develop weak backbones and cast their yellow leaves reproachfully in his path, and his melons and cucumbers shrivel into the invisible, he strives after blindness. What better can he do? At least, he is not on a cattle ranch, watching dumb live things perish by inches ; *his* creatures are not sentient, or he hopes that they are not. Moreover, in the Arid Belt the rainy season can at the worst be hoped for, and complete destruction of crops is more rare here than in certain States of the Middle West or even of the South.

As regards improved orchards, the Valley is yet in its infancy. The first shipments of 'improved' fruit were not made until 1891, and yet 'Mesilla Valley peaches' are already considered 'gilt-edged,' and are sold on the trains as far East as Chicago. Last season, shipped for the first time to Los Angeles, they drove the Californian product out of the market, for the peach and apple of California, though fine to look at, are, except when

mountain-grown, without flavour—a defect, some say, due to over-irrigation ; others, to a lack of stimulating quality in the atmosphere—whereas the fruit of New Mexico, since being taken hold of and improved by Americans, possesses both looks and inward merit. It is also said that the superior altitude of the Territory gives its fruit the flavour so much relished, and that when the dam is built, which will enable the high mesa lands, at present barren, to be irrigated and set out in orchards, not only will the fruit be still finer, but the danger resulting from occasional late frosts will be greatly lessened. In California it is already proved that the orange groves set out on the mesas enjoy almost entire immunity from frost. Orange and lemon groves are, of course, out of the question in this climate, but in their stead we have not only peaches and apples in perfection, but apricots, plums, quinces, prunes, pears (the latter fruit so far only of medium quality), nuts of different varieties, and grapes by the ton. If this were a farming treatise or an advertising pamphlet, exact statistics of the bearing capacity of trees and vines

might be of interest, and even in this place they are not altogether superfluous. The chief objection to such details lies, of course, in that question of accuracy. One successful American grape-grower estimates that each vine yields him on an average twenty-five pounds of grapes. This is the Mission grape, taken all in all the most satisfactory grape to grow here. It was brought to the territory several hundred years ago by Spanish priests, and is certainly a delicious grape, purple in colour and very juicy, devoid of the solid flesh which makes some high-priced varieties such uncomfortable eating. It ripens some time in August, is not subject to disease, and when more widely known, owing to improvement in transportation facilities—our present bugbear—should command an immense market. Here comes in, again, the need of co-operation—co-operation as it is practised in California and elsewhere. It is easy enough to make fruit grow in New Mexico; to sell it to profit and advantage, especially in the case of small or moderate growers, is another matter. The small grower, under present conditions, finds





A YOUNG PEACH ORCHARD.

To face p. 61.

himself at a disadvantage. He is not able—railroad charges on the one and only railroad being so high—to ship with profit, and the local market is soon glutted. He either sells his grapes at a cent a pound, makes the crop into wine, or tears up his vineyard in wrath and sows the land to alfalfa, vowing that grapes cost more to irrigate, prune, cultivate, and bank up for the winter than they bring in the market. Co-operation alone will bring relief, and with the influx of intelligent farmers, who understand that in union is strength, prosperity is bound to come. Even in peach-growing the small farmer cannot be sure of his market. The large grower is, of course, safe enough.

Last June I was in a peach orchard containing about sixty trees in full bearing. A lovely display it was indeed, the great round fruit glowing in the evening sunlight, and bending the branches almost to the ground. But the owner did not share my enthusiasm. There was no market, and the peaches were spoiling, for the peach is the most perishable of crops. There were not enough for a carload, too many for village peddling. Even

the markets of the neighbouring city were so crowded that prices were down, and shipping would not pay.

‘Well, we must combine,’ I cried, ‘and ship to distant points like the big growers do individually.’

‘There’s no combine in this place,’ was the retort; ‘it’s every man for himself, and—the Old Gentleman take the hindmost!’

I regret to have to say that this was but a rather vigorous summary of a reply I received from the President of our Agricultural College, whom I consulted as to the feasibility of forming a Farmers’ Association, not merely for the marketing of fruit, but of all farm products, and I added that I thought that the College, placed here with the idea of guiding and instructing the farmer, ought to take the initiative. The President expressed himself warmly in favour of my view, but also as to the utter hopelessness of any such happy consummation. ‘Someone would have to be at the head of such an association,’ he wound up by saying, ‘and no one trusts anyone in this community.’ A nice state of affairs in a community which

claims to be of the great progressive West! It is no marvel that some intending settlers prefer the effete East, and return whence they came. The President might have added that as an institution planned for the benefit of the people is run to a large extent—some persons maintain entirely—in the interest and for the benefit of the politicians, any such independent move on his part in the direction indicated would be considered distinctly officious. However, when 'the old order changeth, yielding place to new,' and the dam is built and the farmer comes to the front, then we may yet live to see the politician drowned out.

A peach orchard costs considerably less to plant than an orange grove, and comes into bearing much earlier. I set out some one-year-old peach-trees last spring, and this spring one of the trees bore fruit. No doubt I should have plucked it immediately, but I allowed three peaches to hang on the tree, and they are now, seventeen months from the date of planting, very large, beautifully coloured, and of fine shape. The thinning of fruit in the spring is important in a climate

where trees bear so lavishly. An experienced horticulturist of this section gives it as his opinion that a three-year-old tree, speaking generally, covers a circle of twelve to eighteen feet in diameter, and bears in proportion from two hundred and fifty to three hundred pounds of peaches. Apple-trees bear equally well, and until this year it was truthfully declared that a failure of this crop was unknown in the valley. An unprecedentedly late frost in April, however, 'broke the record,' and left us only half a crop. Apples from our neighbourhood won the gold medal at the World's Fair.

Needless to say that, while it was the sight of native orchards heavy with fruit which was the impelling motive of the original American settler, it is not from the orchard of the native that the magnificent apples, peaches, and other fruits for shipping are culled. The Mexican, unless a superior specimen of his race, is at once too supine intellectually, too lazy physically, and too unintelligent by heredity, to improve upon methods acquired three centuries ago. True, he uses more modern implements, but his

'scalded' trees tell a tale of slovenly irrigation; that is to say, in the majority of instances he still prefers to flood his orchard with water rather than go to the trouble of ploughing furrows on either side the trees, in order that the water may sink to the roots and may not touch the trunks, the effect of water upon tree-trunks in combination with a hot sun being disastrous. The lazy Mexican—and, to put it mildly, he is often lazy—considers such precautions in the light of misplaced energy. By the same token, when the time comes for cultivating, he floods again. As for inducing a native to keep down the weeds in a piece of land that does not happen to be cropped—well, then in very truth you may brace yourself for a tug-of-war. That the noxious and growing-apace weed of the Territory propagates itself from seed does not seem to occur to him. That there are progressive Mexicans and unprogressive Americans may be taken for granted, the latter vastly more numerous than the former. The often unavailing efforts to induce some fruit-growers to take measures for the extirpation of the insect

pests which have lately begun to infest our orchards is one proof—nay, one of several—of the existence of the latter; yet the exercise of prevention as well as cure would soon rid us of worms and insects which have partially devastated orchards in neighbouring States.

Another industry here, which has been tried in a small way with success, is the drying of fruit for market. If successful on a large scale in California, it surely should be so in New Mexico, where the climate is far more suitable for the process. Everything exposed to the sun and air in this region desiccates rather than decays. A gay-plumaged bird, shot and lost, was found two or three weeks later in a perfect state of preservation—dried like a mummy, yet feathers and shape perfect. This was in winter, too, when the power of the sun is, of course, less intense than in summer. A taxidermist could scarcely have improved upon Nature's work.

All the common cereals do well with us, wheat in particular—partly, perhaps, because wheat is a crop which is usually ready to cut before the river gives out. When the water-

supply is assured, a report of yields to the acre of corn can be more accurately rendered. At present the yield varies too much with each year. Most vegetables grow with vigour, though, to be strictly impartial, not to greater size or in greater luxuriance than elsewhere. There are some, such as the potato, which need special care in irrigating. Onions and sweet potatoes are, perhaps, the champion vegetable crops, tomatoes merely being as luscious as they are in most parts of the United States, and as plentiful—which, however, to the English idea means a good deal. Carloads of canned tomatoes are shipped from this place in the early winter. The famous Georgia water-melon has yet, it is asserted, to find its peer; but its prototype, exhibited at a recent territorial fair as grown in the Territory, was a tolerable specimen, weighing 71 pounds 4 ounces.

Small fruits—with the exception of strawberries, which succeed admirably—are a trifle discouraging. Having had no experience with small fruits in this climate, I can only speculate on the causes for failure. Neighbours—an elderly couple without children—

get along with them very well ; but everything they touch thrives, the reason being, I think, that they were wise in their generation, and bought only four or five acres of land, with the result that they require comparatively little water, easily obtaining a sufficiency, and that they do all the work except hoeing, etc., themselves. Ergo, when in the driest summer season one enters their leafy domain, behold there are no complaints ; everything is prospering, and, indeed, they *do* seem to grow everything. It is a veritable little paradise for the eyes of a woman weary of coping with thirty acres, water rights that are but an unseemly jest, and Mexican labour. To net \$500 (about £100) clear off so small a ranch every year, and that without the annoyances that add burden to burden, is a result not to be passed by with contempt. To have no losses, moreover, implies still further gain.

Then there are the bee ranches. For those who like bees, there at once opens a profitable and light form of employment. For my part, I give my beehives a wide berth ; but, fortunately, there are enthusiasts in this culture as in most others. A bee ranch has

the appearance of a white, flat-roofed town, its streets laid out with admirable neatness and order, the inhabitants prosperous and industrious—though since coming to New Mexico I have learned that the bee is by no means always busy ; that, on the contrary, he is sometimes very lazy—whole hives of him—and that he has to be entreated, sometimes rather evilly, to labour. He is due to work, I am told, for from three to five months of the year in this climate ; but occasionally he shirks. He sips largely from the alfalfa bloom ; and, indeed, alfalfa is the chief dependence of the bee as well as of other farm stock. An average of fifty pounds of comb-honey per hive is considered a very moderate estimate of the yield.

In speaking of that matter of co-operation, on even a small scale, I by no means share the despondency of ‘those who know.’ I have reason to believe that a combination of no more than three persons, provided they undertook to raise more or less the same products, and under present unfavourable conditions, could find profitable market for their wares. A careful study of the question, reinforced

by consultations with small ranchers, led me to this conclusion. More especially is this true of early vegetables to be shipped to distant northern points. The cost of transportation as borne by three persons instead of one—the high prices obtained for the produce—these are self-evident facts. There is comparatively little hot-bed work done in this neighbourhood at present, and the early vegetable culture, which should feel encouraged by the perpetual sunshine, languishes without fitting excuse.

But here, lest love of my profession should lead me into discourse suitable rather for a Farmers' Institute than for these pages, I stay my too ready pen.

CHAPTER IV.

IRRIGATION, POLITICS, AND SECTIONALISM.

DRIVING recently across the unreclaimed desert, we came suddenly upon a small patch of wheat, the fag-end of a stretch of land under ditch. There had been welcome thunder showers, and the air held a dewy softness not common in the Arid Belt. But for the glorious mountain range—over whose bright face the clouds trailed giant shadows—the varying greens from emerald to sombre olive, the swift play of light and shade across golden wheat-field and verdant pasture, were almost English in their unaspiring loveliness. The eastern mesa wore its tenderest, most changeful aspect, and the red domes of the Catholic church made entrancing spots of colour in the middle distance of brown

village in a bower of greenery. In the foreground was this patch of ruddy wheat, bending figures of Mexicans, a man in blue overalls and jumper erect against a harmonious sky. Once more, from the artist's point of view, the effect was perfect. But the eye of the rancher looks deeper. With that eye we noted the scanty crop in a fertile land—its scantiness in part the result of a long drought and the river's treachery. Fickle river indeed, which every third year or so fails in the hour of need, leaving only its bed, over which a man may walk dryshod ere June is old, or rising may engulf and drown him before he has time to cry *Peccavi!* Or it may wash away part of a neighbouring city and miles of railroad, and leave hundreds of persons homeless, and ourselves cut off for two or three weeks from communication with the world beyond. Manifestly, therefore, our river is not to be depended upon. And though some day it may do its worst without resulting damage to homes or crops, the Mexican's pitiful if picturesque mode of transacting his business will in all probability endure, with certain modifications, just so

long as he endures—which in our midst may not be so very long.

Some of the wheat had already been cut, but there were no shocks visible. The stooping figures were gathering the crop in little handfuls and armfuls from the ground, and carrying these dolls' bundles to the rickety waggon drawn by sad little ponies. Further on two or three other men were reaping as their fathers and grandfathers did before them with miniature old-time reaping-hooks. It all looked somewhat futile and inadequate in the centre of this wide panorama of mountain, vale, and sky.

And yet further, as we drove upon our way, we passed a threshing-ground where a flock of panting sheep and goats were being driven in a circle beneath the pitiless sun, engaged in trampling out the grain. And round and round, keeping the flock within the appointed radius, walked the Mexican herder, raising at intervals that long, wailing cry which belongs rather to the desert wastes than to the cultivated levels and the brown ranch-house and friends and cheer. Further still threshing was at an end, and in the light

airs drifting out of those high clouds men tossed the wheat above their heads, and let Nature do their winnowing. Later, in the autumn days, women may yet be found to sit without their doors, and grind the corn betwixt the upper and the nether millstone. It is even said that there are portions of the Territory in which the Mexican hitches his pony to a pointed stick and turns the kind earth, which here rewards him beyond his due measure, according to the manner of his progenitors.

But there are some things which a man learns in three hundred years or so, and, as has already been shown, levelling land is one. Irrigating is another. In these arts the Mexican is an adept; not only that, but in irrigation he finds much joy. After levelling his land, a man has, indeed, to hoe small canals from his main ditches in order to conduct the water, and there come times when his bare brown feet have to skip through the flood at a lively rate; but there are always long delicious intervals in which he can lean sleepily upon his hoe and gaze upon the flowing tide, and smoke cigarettes of

which the odour is atrocious. The Mexican likes irrigating; whether because, if he so choose, he can do it well, or for reasons less ambitious, the evidence is not sufficient to accurately record.

This matter of irrigation is an all-important one with us. Our rainfall is practically limited to one season of the year, although it may surprise us at other seasons. In amount it cannot be depended upon; it may rain too little, or, again, it may even rain too much—*quien sabe?* The Rio Grande, which has its source in the far mountains of Colorado, and is fed by the rains and snows of those regions, as well as by tributary streams descending from our own mountains, is our principal dependence, and, as has been intimated, of late years an unreliable one. Not only that, but in my experience it has elected to go dry early in the summer, when water is most needed, and not in the fall, as is often inaccurately stated for 'boom' purposes. The fertilizing properties of this muddy stream, however, are so great that the progressive farmer is spared one big item of expense in the purchase of fertilizers,

and is, moreover, enabled to follow a crop of barley with a crop of corn, in the same season, and without impoverishing his land. Then, should the river give out, he pins his faith to 'the rainy season,' due to arrive in July or August.

The storage dam, now hoped for, is a decidedly more reliable prospect than either river or rainy season, and once built and in working order it will transform this already fertile valley into a veritable Garden of Eden. Productive now to an extraordinary degree, and far ahead of California in the quality of all fruits, with the exception of the citrus varieties, for which the climate is not suited, the only hindrance to the success of the intelligent farmer will be removed. I say intelligent farmer advisedly, for in these days scarcely a profession on earth calls for a greater show of intelligence, and the traits that usually go with it, than does this profession of farming. Co-operation in all things, and in particular for the securing of good markets ; abstinence from petty, small-beer politics ; the holding of farmers' institutes for the frank and free discussion of all matters

pertaining to the farmer's craft ; the bringing of scientific and up-to-date methods to bear on the raising of every crop, and especially the fruit-crop ; the extermination of insect pests and noxious weeds ; the keeping of careful notes and records ; the improvement of his stock—all these things, and many others besides, are the inevitable duties of the intelligent and progressive ranchero in a section where climate and soil do so much, as well as in sections where they do comparatively little. One of the worst features in farming in this valley at present, notably in 'wet' seasons, is the tendency to sit back and let the river do everything. Constant cultivation is not valued at its true worth, except by the few ; and when a drought comes, it is still but these few who understand that between cultivating and not cultivating their orchards, and that to a fine tilth, lies the difference betwixt life and death.

The Mexican system of irrigation is simple, but, though primitive, it is devoid of the primitive advantages of autocracy and the 'Against this law there is no appeal.' The law of the Mexican ditch is the law of the

strong or the wily. The mayordomo and the commissioners are alike invested with at once too much and too little power. The system in itself might not be amiss, provided other things were equal. But when not merely a coach and four could be driven through it, but one of the huge 'schooners' of the plains also, ox-team included, it is no wonder that the American ranchero waxes restive.

The system in brief is as follows: Each settlement or village possesses its own main ditch, or acequia, which leaves the river at a given point above the village, to return to it at a given point below. From this main acequia branch out various tributary ditches, or contra-acequias, which are used for the irrigation of land situated at distances more or less remote from the main ditch. The latter has its water-commission, to which commission one or two Americans generally manage to get elected. To this body appeal can be made should corruption and injustice get beyond even a Westerner's endurance—no, not his endurance, for the Westerner is apt to be ready enough to take care of his own rights without appealing to law, but beyond his

powers of self-defence. Unfortunately, behind the commission there are still the courts to be parleyed with, and the law takes a course even more roundabout and endless on this side of the water than it does on the other.

For the maintenance of the main ditch, the property-owners are taxed both in money and work, according to the number of acres held by them. The first and second mayordomos receive salaries, and are elected annually by the community of water-tax payers; it is their avowed business to see to it that the ditch is kept clean, and that the water is distributed fairly. The cross-ditches, or *contra-acequias*, are governed by the same laws, each having its own *mayordomo*—invariably a Mexican, who almost as invariably makes the law of the *acequia* a by-word in the market-place. Taken all in all, the water-taxes in money and work on a thirty-acre ranch amount to from \$32 to \$40 per annum (£6 or £8, more or less). Naturally, those who give bribes and corrupt the innocent (?) native pay considerably more or less.

But it is not alone the Mexican who is responsible for the farcical application of our

water-rights system. Small-beer politics, the curse of this fair land, set the mark of the Beast on all 'rights.' Tom pays honest money in fair taxes; but Manuel, the mayordomo, has other fish to fry, by order, probably, of some politician, who for the nonce holds the cards, or perhaps for more substantial reasons. So Tom gazes distracted and helpless upon shrivelling trees and parched alfalfa, while Dick and Harry, not more righteous than he, batten in green pastures and swelling orchards. The reiterated information that he is being imposed upon soon begins to wear for the 'tenderfoot' the tiresome aspect of a truism. 'Tell me something new!' he cries, in the accents of the goaded.

It may be there are yet some left in Israel who confound politics, as they are generally known, with patriotism. If so, let them live and learn in the Far West.

For weeks before the fall elections, we ranchers were desperate for want of water. Early in the summer the river had run dry, and the rainy season took a seat behind the sun and grinned at us. Towards election-time a storm or two in the mountains filled up the

river sufficiently for the bare salvation of the young orchards. But, behold! the small and inefficient dam was broken, and there were none who would forego the delights of electing, or failing to elect, a few unimportant men to unimportant offices—petty in every sense, but that of the ‘boodle’ that went with them. As for the native, the idea of inducing either him or her to work so long as free whisky was the order of every day was childish, unless he or she happened to be a regularly hired hand.

‘If it was the election of the United States President, now,’ I cried in my wrath to one who, like Gamaliel, cared for none of these things, ‘or if there were the faintest show of any desire to serve the country, I could understand this idiotic condition of affairs; but when it’s all about *nothing*——’

‘It’s just a money-grab, that’s all it is,’ replied my acquaintance. ‘These men don’t want to serve their country; they want the so many hundreds or thousands per annum these petty offices represent.’

‘And, while they quarrel and scuffle, our Valley is to perish?’

‘Not quite so bad as that, let’s hope ; but there’ll be no end of unnecessary loss, of course, and times are bad enough already. However, you won’t get a stroke of work done until election’s over, so it’s no use to worry.’

I was sitting in my buggy in the main street of the town—that same street at night the scene of one huge ‘drunk.’ Even in this brilliant hour of morning boozy groups, principally Mexican, rolled from one saloon door to another. Every natural prospect pleased, save man and his present works, and they were indeed vile. I drove off rapidly, wrath and disgust in my heart. But what was the use ? Where comes in the utility of hurling one’s self against a stone wall ? My object in starting out that morning had been the hope of inducing some merchant, the continuance of whose own prosperity depended in some measure on the prosperity of the farming population, to furnish half the labour for the repairing of the miserable little dam—only twenty men, all told, for one day—I furnishing the other half. Needless to say, my drive was just so much time thrown

away. I went home to gaze helplessly upon thirsty young peach and apple trees, many of which died, of course, and the orchard had to be partially replanted the following spring—more time wasted again. The usual wail went up—equally, of course—concerning ‘hard times’ and the ‘poor man.’ And all this took place in the dire and memorable year 1894—the year of the Coxeyite Army and other such exhibitions. The elections resulted principally, over and above the aforesaid losses, in furious mutual accusations, foul-mouthed abuse delivered through the medium of its usual mouthpiece, the village newspaper; and stuffed ballot-boxes, fraud, bribery, and corruption of every description, darkened the air—nay, darken it yet, two years afterwards. Perpetual squabbling, varied by an occasional ‘shooting,’ takes the place of progress.

One method of securing the votes of our enlightened fellow-citizens is worthy of mention. On the evening before election-day, the henchmen of one political party rounded up forty or fifty Mexicans well primed in advance with whisky, and, putting them into

a corral as if they were a bunch of steers, kept them under guard all night for the purpose of ensuring their 'straight vote' on the morrow. This incident is only one of the anomalies of a country whose freedom is not only in perpetual danger of degenerating into license, but which does constantly degenerate into some of the worst forms of slavery—facts so obvious that the occasional lament of the more thoughtful citizen is not required to draw to them the attention of the new-comer, provided that the latter has eyes and ears of his own. Whether matters would improve, so far as New Mexico is concerned—whether its Augean stables would be cleansed by the simple process of turning a Territory into a State with State rights—it is not given me to believe, any more than, with the best intentions in the world, I can be converted to the Free Silver faith by the hollow and specious arguments of its expounders.

It is claimed that, by the conversion of this Territory into a State, an immense influx of solid citizens, able and willing to develop so favoured a section, would ensue; that,

with the gradual extinguishment of lounging natives and ruffling gamecocks yclept politicians, a day of prosperity would dawn. We who are unable to accept this dogma inquire, in our turn, 'If such men came, would they stay?' For us the inevitable answer is 'No.' If the Territory is not ripe for statehood, a mere Act of Congress cannot work a miracle. The answer might be less assured if the right kind of men were striving for statehood—men of high character and noble motive, and that true, and, alas! rare, patriotism which desires the public good rather than its own. To the reasonable reader the existence of the customary exceptions is a matter of course.

In order to show how utterly dead to shame, as regards political corruption, the average territorial citizen is, I will quote a conversation overheard in a public place. The conversationalists were two gentlemen of fair repute :

'Yes, A. acted badly. B. has been supporting him and his family for years.'

'Why, certainly ; and everyone knows the reason for B. doing so.'

‘Of course. Well, when B., in the nature of things, claimed A.’s vote last election—the only vote B. needed to get him his office—A. asked him a thousand dollars for it.’

‘A rascally shame!’

‘Yes; and, what’s more, on that sum, and others A. has screwed out of B. at different times, A. will go down to Mexico and live in clover on a coffee plantation for the balance of his life.’

More indignation, etc. The placing of the ‘rascally shame’ precisely where it belonged might have caused more exercising of spirit—to the uninitiated.

As for the quarrelsomeness of a little town abandoned to the lowest form of politics, this remark was once made in my presence: ‘Well, it’s no use to talk; it is utterly impossible that Z. can have any enemies, for he does not mix himself up in politics.’

No; our hopes rest on a surer and more solid basis than statehood, though that will be welcomed when it is ready to arrive with permanent blessings in its train. An assured water-supply will bring us the right kind of men for the proper development of our rich

and beautiful Valley ; and they will come to stay, too.

It may seem a far cry from irrigation to politics, but in truth it is never a far cry to politics anywhere on this side the water. In every condition and phase of life there is to be found the influence of politics—in their too common guise the curse of this fair land. At this hour quite a little furore is raging anent the publication in a well-known Eastern magazine of testimony by public-school teachers, going to prove how hopelessly they are at the mercy of the professional politician, and if they, how much more their luckless pupils! The wiseacres, many of whom have for years been blindly extolling a public-school system which to the humble observer long since acquainted with its ways, devious and corrupt, and its results, poor and unsatisfactory, looked amazingly imperfect—these wiseacres are now wailing and crying : ‘ How can such things be in a free country ? ’ But they are, and have been for years, and their sudden unearthing is the result of a slowly growing dissatisfaction on the part of the best citizens, not perhaps with the system,

but with its workings. The fact is, that if the curse of the country is politics, a still worse curse has been the indifference of the best citizens to politics. I say 'has been,' for a brighter day is dawning, and the enlightened voter of the Eastern cities, who in the past has so often declined to go to the polls because it isn't worth while—his one vote won't stem the dirty tide, and he has no fancy for handling pitch—is very slowly, but it is to be hoped surely, being relegated to that past. As for women of the better sort betraying interest in politics, I well remember the shock that ran through the assembled company when in the first year of my sojourn on this side I failed to drop, with the other women, immediately out of the conversation when politics came to the front. That English politics are not necessarily and inevitably defiling, and that as a consequence the average Englishwoman might feel an interest in the politics of her newly-adopted country, was not at that date generally understood. Also, the American women who were interested were for the most part of the howling, woman's-rights, would-be-masculine variety. Now that the

American woman, as well as man, of culture and refinement is awaking to the untold value of a lofty standard in matters of civic and national importance, and has grasped the pitch of politics with the strong hand of a genuine patriotism, both find that, if defiling, it will wash off, or at least that it does not hurt *them*. The unpleasant fact that the awakening feminine interest in politics brings prominently into notice the New Woman as she ought *not* to be, often to the further defilement of what she claims to purify, must be accepted in the spirit which accepts the evil with the good.

As at this writing Western views of things still claim eventual ascendancy, with wide-spreading consequences to the entire civilized world, it may not be uninteresting to know what is the dominant Western view. It can be summed up in one phrase culled from a recent speech of one of the West's great men: 'What's the use of paying attention to foreign countries, any way? We're big enough to do as we please.'

To such crude schoolboy utterances as the above, the Many-Headed, maddened by long

financial depression, the result of causes it cannot or is not permitted to understand, pins its faith. That the serious-minded men of the Far East anticipated with perhaps unnecessary anxiety a Western victory at the last Presidential election was scarcely surprising. It is also not surprising that in these years of perplexity, when the wisest go astray, seeking in vain for the right path, the question of Universal Suffrage, disposed of generations since as a *question*, and set away on a pedestal beyond the meddling fingers of irreverent sceptics, should be taken down once more, handled and turned over even by some of its most ardent devotees. Now, with a matter to decide which calls not only for a liberal and cultivated intelligence—*Weltbildung*, in short, in its most comprehensive sense—but also for intimate knowledge of finance, the multitude is nevertheless legally permitted to render a decision. *Reductio ad absurdum* indeed!

On the other hand, there is a strong and growing feeling that the complications of electoral machinery in this country prevent the true expression of the opinion of the

people, and that the Federal Government, considered as a representative Government, is a failure, more or less. To the outsider, who is popularly supposed to see most of the game, the astonishing thing about these apparently opposing, but in truth perfectly reconcilable, sentiments is that they should have been so laggard in manifesting themselves. The causes, however, for those who know the country, are not far to seek. A natural reluctance to question or disturb institutions religiously designed not merely for a young country's own enlightenment, but as lights to lighten the darkness of effete monarchies, is one cause, and not an unimportant one.

The arguments of the Free Silverites, set forth on street corners, isolated ranches, and where not, but rarely unheard in the Territory, are as restricted as is the view of the painter who, for the purpose of confining his sketch within artistic limits, cuts him a small circle of pasteboard, and through this peephole makes the necessary observations. Outside of this limited radius he sees nothing. Admitting the possibility that the Free

Silverite may eventually be 'on top,' the Gold-bug—and especially during the late campaign—earnestly endeavoured to limit his vision in the same manner. For months he steadily perused the organs of the Silverites, lent a willing ear to eloquent harangues of neighbours, abandoned his reason to the impassioned speeches of Convention speakers. All in vain. Fallacies so patent as to appeal only to the ignorant formed the foundation of the addresses of these 'silver-tongued' orators. The Gold-bug, still in that dread of the inevitable, clung to a desperate and forlorn hope that fallacies might yet be found to have bottom enough to uphold a huge country struggling in the throes of protracted financial distress; but this was hope, not conviction. Now and then a working man arose, and in strong and ringing words called on his fellow-workmen to pause, to bethink them—set before them in lucid argument the fate which would be theirs should silver become the coin of the democracy, and pierced the wind-bags of Free Silverite oratory with the home-driving nails of stern fact. To what avail? Although, as has

been sapiently remarked in the columns of an Eastern paper of repute, no one knows what the people's favourite orator meant, or indeed means now, by his oft-repeated figures of speech, still, when shouted forth by a man with waving hair and upturned eyes, they strike everybody who is dissatisfied with the way the world is moving as the very soul of eloquence. The American people have been dissatisfied for a long while. Spoiled by prosperity, they have revelled for years in reckless extravagance, public and private, and now are endeavouring to lay the blame of present conditions anywhere but at the door of national thriftlessness; yet no one with any powers of observation can deny that this extravagance has as much to answer for as those wider international issues and events which are almost equally overlooked. It has been well said that the intelligent and upright American farmer would indignantly refute the accusation that he desired to repudiate the nation's debts of honour, if he knew whither his straying feet were leading him. That is true enough; the trouble was that during the electoral campaign he

had lost his head, and was no longer responsible for his feet. That he would regain it before November, and lend his ear to plain solid facts rather than to flamboyant oratory, was the belief of those who professed to understand him, and from the Gold-bug's point of view this belief has been proved to be well founded. Nevertheless, the assertion that the Republican victory at the polls was a sweeping one is not borne out by facts or figures. The enormous influence exerted in favour of the gold standard by what is called the Foreign Vote is in few instances accorded its full measure of consideration, and, more significant still, the Free Silverites are undaunted by defeat, and continue hard at work. There were hundreds of persons who held the opinion before the election, and hold it to this hour, that the two Presidential candidates offered only a choice of evils—a choice betwixt anarchy, national dishonour, the overthrow of the Constitution, and a prolonged period of financial depression on the one hand; on the other, a renewal of wasteful expenditure, force and tariff bills, pension

jobs, and kindred iniquities. Neither can it be said that all this is past history. We are now but turning the first page of an era eventful not only for this great country, but for all civilized nations. Vainly do the Western politicians declare that the United States can go forward on her own course, paying no heed to the other great peoples of the world. Nations, like men, cannot stand or fall to themselves. The shrieks which rend our Western welkin are pitiful in their ignorance and narrowness of view. 'We won't do as European nations do'—such is the reiterated scream of the Western demagogue, a small child in a rage—'we won't! we *won't!* we *won't!*' Meantime the genuine patriot and statesman reviews the scenes which took place at the Democratic Convention at Chicago, and exclaims in despair: 'But this is mob law!'—which it is.

The people in these latter days is violently partisan. It regales itself with the illiberal and virulent local, or, at best, strictly Western and one-sided, newspaper. The idea of reading the other side never enters its head; and it is marvellous, for such a wide-awake, in-

telligent people, with what trash it doth satisfy its soul! But it is an excitable people, and oratory is beloved of it; and it never pauses to consider significant revelations—such, for instance, as that which proved the most notorious expounder of the Free Silver doctrine to be a resolute and prudent Gold-bug in his private business, and other minor details. Nevertheless, it is maintained by those who know that the American people can always be trusted to come to its senses, given due time. This is as it may be. Should, however, the event not justify the prophecy, one would like, if possible, to become a convert to the inevitable, for considerations involving personal comfort.

There is another matter which Englishmen settling in the South or West are wholly unprepared for, and naturally so, seeing that the Eastern paper which finds its way across the Atlantic steadily ignores it, and that is the strength of the sectional feeling. What is more, so far as the West is concerned, it is growing, and there is a threat in its growth.

Union, peaceful and assured for ever, is inscribed as one of the shibboleths of the

North and East. A bland and indulgent smile is the sole reply vouchsafed to anyone venturing to suggest the possibility of future rude shaking, if no worse, of the uniting bonds. In the days when my home was in the South, I was firmly assured by Northerners—profoundly ignorant as they were then, and are, in large measure, to this day, of the inner workings of Southern life and feeling—that sectionalism was dead and buried in the Southern States. I permitted myself a lifting of the eyebrows, but kept silence. If, in their desire for a consummation devoutly to be desired, they were anticipating events, why ruffle their calm by bringing forward proofs and statements which in all probability would not be credited?—on the same principle that those who are acquainted with a foreign country only on hearsay are prone to claim a more profound knowledge of the subject than he who has lived in that country for years. The untravelled Englishman and the untravelled American make themselves almost equally ridiculous in this respect, though the palm for absurdity must in fairness be awarded to the inhabitants of our own tight little isle.

As late as the well - advanced eighties, twenty years and more after the Civil War, a Northern friend, teaching in a Southern Sunday-school, received the following answer to the question, 'Who is our ghostly enemy?' 'The Yankee, ma'am.' The answer came pat and prompt from the exceedingly juvenile son of a man himself scarcely old enough to have carried a musket in the sixties. My Northern friend and I were discoursing on the strength of sectional feeling in the South, and she brought forward this anecdote as one of many proofs of that strength. It is difficult for me to believe that the resentment and antagonism rampant in the South in my day has entirely passed away. The North never has fully appreciated the sense of injury—born of cruelties and injustice which, however necessary, were at once horrible and irreparable—left by the war, any more than she appreciates the distinctive national differences existing betwixt, for instance, a Virginian or Georgian and a regular 'down-easter' from Maine. Like oil and water, they may live in peace, but they will never assimilate.

A certain amount of bigotry is indispensable to the life of great undertakings. The typical New Englander, as he was represented in the ranks of the Abolitionists, and as he is to this day, was, and is, a person of one idea. True it is that his enthusiasm is usually exerted in a good cause ; but as he fights his way, blind and deaf, towards his goal, the course behind him lies strewn thick with blunders and mishaps. It is not too much to say that the bitter sectional feeling, dying so hard a death in the South, owes much of its persistency to the stubborn unwillingness of New Englanders, and more particularly of New England women, to be learners in what was to them the unknown land of the South, before starting forth to be therein preachers and teachers.

The peculiar conditions of Southern life, its unique mental atmosphere, the cause and effect of its existence, so to speak, have never been thoroughly understood by those who may almost be said to belong to another race, so antipathetic are the inhabitants of these widely-sundered sections. The South it was that had to pay for the mistakes of an earnest

and well-intentioned philanthropy, whose successes, when they arrived, were earned at great cost to all concerned. And nowhere did the inevitable blunders of those, whose philanthropy believes that it has nothing to learn in the midst of new conditions, produce more intense bitterness than in matters concerning the negro. The impartial observer, passing back and forth betwixt North and South, soon discovers that the South is the natural home of the negro, and that it is there alone he is thoroughly understood and receives the truest affection and kindness. It is in the North, generally speaking, that he is found at his worst; his attractive qualities—those qualities that give him distinction and individuality—more largely in abeyance, his most contemptible characteristics of conceit and monkeyish imitativeness more largely in evidence. He is no more the darkey we have learned to love, and who loves us; he is offensive, or merely ridiculous. This is, I acknowledge, generalizing with a vengeance; but these pages being no place for a treatise on the negro, generalization must serve for the present. It would be easy, no doubt,

to dwell on those exceptional negroes who have shown themselves capable of something higher than servile imitation of a superior race, as it would be easy to enlarge on the errors of a book which set the Northern world on fire, which owed much of its success to the fact that both author and readers had never penetrated beyond the outermost rim of Southern life, and which sowed seeds of as bitter a feeling as the world has ever seen—a feeling which to this day, whatever may be said to the contrary by those unacquainted with the actual truth, still maintains its vitality.

It was but recently that further proof, if further proof were wanted, was presented to me regarding the still existing ignorance, in certain portions of the North, of Southern modes of thought. Duelling has been practised even in Virginia during my residence in that State; and I have heard more than one Southern man declare that nothing but stringent States laws stamped out the custom—that the sentiment in favour of it was very far from dead. Be this as it may, certain occurrences falling under my immediate observation are by no means opposed to this

declaration ; and yet a few weeks since a Boston paper gave vent to the following somewhat amazing utterance : ' It is not easy for Americans to understand the depth, and even violence, of feeling with which this foolish and demoralizing custom is defended by intelligent and well-meaning men.' It is allowable, under the circumstances, to inquire if Southerners are not ' Americans.' Granted that the inclination towards settling ' points of honour ' by means of single combat is now, in the South, a thing of the past, that same past is but a few short years old. And even if it be conceded that the formal duel is abolished, such abolition by no means includes the not uncommon habit still prevalent of ' shooting on sight '—and shooting, moreover, with intent to kill.

Late political agitations have shown a tendency in the South to follow the lead of the West, and in doing so it certainly travels far from its ancient enemy, but of late years nominal friend. The lack of sympathy between the Far Easterner and the Westerner is a thing to marvel at—for the new-comer to the West. He may, indeed, be pardoned

for wondering whether the union of such heterogeneous and often antagonistic material can endure for ever. And into the midst of his speculations was hurled the cyclone of the Democratic Convention of the year of grace 1896.*

Abuse of the East may be diverting at first, but waxes tiresome by dint of constant iteration. Of course, everyone knows that the Western editor, anxious to 'scare up' subscribers, must not be taken too literally (after the much-decried and ridiculed English manner); nevertheless, when during the Venezuelan folly editors in 'the wild and woolly' howled for England to come along and blow the Eastern seaboard cities into eternity, sectional feeling might well be requested to call a halt. The language of those editors, by-the-by, was decidedly more virile than as quoted; but let that pass. During the height of the Free Silver agitation a citizen of Utah exclaimed to an Eastern acquaintance, 'Why, sir, if the cause of Free Silver is defeated,

* Since these words were written, that which many persons have long believed to be the sole panacea for internal dissension and discontent has arrived—namely, a foreign war.

every able-bodied man in the State of Utah will take up arms and defy the East!' In response to this martial declaration, the enthusiast was gently reminded that the able-bodied men in the entire State of Utah were not equal in number to those contained in one city of 'the effete East.'

The ignorance of one section of this country concerning another is, as before hinted, a surprise to the immigrant; but it is something he would do better to understand in advance, for it has to be reckoned with. Americans are indeed extensive travellers, and shrewd and observant beyond the common way of men; but their travelling in their own land lies very much in beaten tracks, and it is a truism to remark that what a man learns before he makes his home in a section, and what he learns after, are wide as the poles asunder—too wide sometimes for comfort. Authors and literary people generally are not a little to blame for sectional ignorance—publishers also, if the truth were known. I was visiting once in a Southern city, and found myself in a room full, as it chanced, of Virginians. I ventured the remark that I had never read a novel dealing

with Southern life that gave any idea of the life as I knew it, and my home had been in Virginia, with Virginians, for a long term of years; and I went on to mention in particular the works of a noted authoress, whose writings are accepted by Northern people as absolutely realistic in regard to life in the South. My somewhat hesitating remarks were greeted with a perfect storm of approval and agreement.

And when I speak of part of the blame for inaccurate representation lying with Northern publishers, I have in mind the case of a friend who wrote a novel, of which the local colour was Southern, the author having the best of rights to be familiar with that colouring, and which was warmly commended by Southern friends for its accuracy. It was submitted to a well-known Northern publishing firm, was read and passed with favourable comments by four of the firm's readers. The fifth, however, drew attention to certain 'inaccuracies' in dialect and local colour. Now, as no 'inaccuracies' existed, according to the best Southern judges, it was impossible for the author to make the desired alterations, and the manuscript was

withdrawn in preference. When it was discovered later that the critical fifth reader had never been South in her life, the author experienced a pardonable self-gratulation. No doubt this is the plan on which many Southern books are published—corrected to suit the Northern reading public's idea of what Southern life, habits, and customs should be, and in nine cases out of ten are not.

With a ranchwoman's life such matters as politics and sectionalism may seem to have little to do ; but unless she spends year after year shut up within the narrow confines of an 'English set'—which surely no person in full enjoyment of his or her senses would desire to do—these and other public questions touch her at all sorts of unexpected points. To live in a rapidly-moving, progressive country, and not be of it—to exist without interchange of ideas or the formation of friendships with its people—would indeed be a cramped and wretched existence ; and it is in the doing of these things that we discover how, more perhaps in this country than in any other, public and private questions are inextricably mingled.

CHAPTER V.

CLIMATE, EVIL BEASTS, SCENERY.

NOTHING is more absurd than the classification of Southern New Mexico among tropical climes. Yet I can bear actual witness to such mental aberrations. Perhaps the worst slip of the kind is perpetrated in an elaborate pamphlet issued by a Michigan sanatorium of high repute, whose duty it is to avoid misleading statements.

The fact is that no fruit, flower, nut, or vegetable exists with us if requiring for that existence unbroken mildness of climate. Sunshine at an altitude of 3,800 feet above sea-level, and even if perpetual, does not imply perpetual warmth. Stinging winter nights, during which the thermometer is occasionally reduced to a few degrees above zero, prohibit all dreams of the tropics; and

though after the sun has risen in his wonted power and glory a leap of 30 to 40 degrees is a common occurrence, I have never yet seen the thermometer over 75 (in the shade), and that but rarely ; whereas in Virginia, for instance, and in the mountains too, I have day after day seen the thermometer stand at 76 during several hours of a mid-winter day, and this in a climate where a nightly temperature of 10 degrees below zero is not a myth. Yet the winter climate of this section is as superior to that of Virginia, or of Southern California, as that of these two States is to the winter climate of Vermont. Here one brilliant day succeeds another with little variation. Weather comes in the shape of a stray wind or so, or a very occasional rain or light snow-fall. Our winter warmth is due entirely to the force of the sun's rays shining through an atmosphere unimpeded by fog or damp, for the fogs of Southern California are unknown here, as are its horrible 'northers.'

In California, too, one sits in the winter sunshine and feels overheated and relaxed, moves on into the shade to creep and shiver,

and, if one is sensitive, to take 'a California cold,' which is so hard to get rid of. In fact, to a skin-sensitive person—a form of sensitiveness which, I am assured, is more common with invalids whose lungs are sound than with regular 'lungers'—there is no point of comparison betwixt this climate and that of Southern California, so far ahead is ours. Nothing is more astonishing to the delicate person than the cautions whispered into his ears by the Oldest Inhabitant of 'the most favoured State in the Union.' It is not safe 'in this climate' to do things which are done with impunity every day in New Mexico. One is warned against sitting in the shade in summer (the heat of the sun being nevertheless unbearable), against sitting out even in the sun in winter, against wearing light clothing at any season, against a dozen and one performances which are a matter of course elsewhere.

Life becomes very tiresome by reason of so many precautions, and in spite of a conscientious observance of them all, the sensitive person—many delicate individuals are not sensitive, by-the-by—takes one deep

cold after another. There is an insidious, lurking dampness in the climate which can be easily proved, but to which the bare brown hills of two-thirds of the year apparently give the lie. The dripping, nightly fogs or heavy dews, together with the absence of tonic quality in the atmosphere, are no doubt responsible for many of the complaints one hears. The Los Angeles fogs, which have at length become notorious, are backed by a yearly record of twenty-seven inches of rain. Compared with England or the Middle West, no doubt the climate of California does well enough, but not so well, in spite of its flowers and oranges, when compared with that of New Mexico, or even of Virginia. It is as treacherous as a cat. Added to all this is another trouble : comfort is almost unknown.

‘ People don’t know how to live in California !’ exclaimed a prominent medical man at a Pacific coast health-resort.

‘ The sin of unheated houses in winter,’ writes another, ‘ is one that will, as it ought to do, haunt some Californians who think they mean to be very good. Their mode of

living in this particular is constructive suicide, if not constructive murder.'

'I have never suffered so much from cold in my life as I have since coming to Southern California!' is quite a common remark made by those hailing from New York, New England, and even Manitoba.

In Southern New Mexico we make no pretences. We light good fires, and keep ourselves warm nights and mornings, or, in fact, whenever we are likely to feel cold. The people of Southern California sit around shivering in fireless houses, bundled up in shawls, waiting for their sun—which, unlike ours, rarely rises in an absolutely cloudless sky—to warm them. Yet competent physicians declare that in no climate are fires needed more than in that of the Land of Flowers, on account of the lurking damp in the air and the apparently trifling, yet in reality serious, variations of the temperature from day to day. Overheated by necessary clothing and the warmth of the sun, one enters a house as cold as a vault; the consequences need not be described. The absence of an honest, stimulating cold affects

other forms of life besides that of the human. Fleas abound ; mosquitoes provide torturing concerts. It is true that vegetables are grown all the year round in the open air, but, like the apples and peaches, they have little flavour ; even the nuts are insipid. At the same time, the climate of California ought to be paradise to the newly-arrived Englishman ; strange to relate, he is one of the worst of the grumblers.

In New Mexico, to sit in the winter sunshine is to bask healthfully. This does not imply that there is no difference betwixt shade and sunshine with us ; on the contrary, the difference is strongly accentuated. But in this dry, aseptic, bracing atmosphere, and at such an altitude, there is no relaxation of the system, and, in consequence, comparatively little susceptibility to atmospheric variations. The astonishing leaps the thermometer is capable of making betwixt a winter sunrise and its noon is looked on by progressive physicians as being not only beneficial to consumptives, but almost essential to their improvement, implying as it does a strong tonic and bracing influence, com-

bined with the important factor of excessive dryness. Whether these leaps are equally beneficial to those delicate persons who are not afflicted with lung trouble, and whose duties compel them to expose themselves to the morning cold, is not so certain. To stand out and feed chickens, and direct the starting of farm work, at 7.45 a.m. is just a trifle trying; although, as before remarked, the most sensitive persons lose in great degree their propensity to cold-catching in this grand climate—often to resume it, however, on returning to less favoured climes.

Let me repeat, with emphasis, that if any person imagines that in coming to New Mexico he is coming to the tropics, he is singularly deluded. But though there exists no paradise on earth, the climate of this section approaches as nearly to paradise as any earthly clime may.

The winters are short, and though the nights continue cold to cool till late in the spring—indeed, often well into the summer—fires can be dispensed with except morning and evening after early in March. There are many mid-winter days, besides, on which

the nuisance of the winter fire can be banished from the mind—an advantage not to be despised in a land where the trained domestic is not, and fuel is scarce and costly.

The wide, radiant sunshine of this region comes less as a surprise to one who has tarried long under beneficent American skies than to one fresh from the old country. Even in unfairly abused New York a carefully-kept weather diary records as follows :

For December	= 21	whole days of unbroken sunshine.
For January	= 20½	” ”
For February	= 12	” ”
For March	= 17	” ”

Not a bad showing for a by no means exceptional winter. And the statement commonly made in various sections of the United States, *i.e.*, that winter rarely sets in before Christmas, is very fairly accurate.

Whilst ‘falling weather’ of any kind seldom comes our way— $\frac{49}{100}$ of an inch being hailed late in June further north as practically the first rainfall for the year—we do have what goes by the name of the Rainy Season, furnished with what importance it may in-

trinsically lack by the use of capitals.* One would scarcely go so far as to say that during the Rainy Season it invariably rains, but usually it does. This 'weather' descends in the form of thunderstorms in July or August, and, in all probability, a rain during the September equinox. Occasionally such showers are sufficiently heavy to do more harm than good in a section of which the inhabitants are rarely prepared for wet weather, their vaunted Rainy Season to the contrary notwithstanding. The water races down from the mountains, cutting channels for itself both deep and broad, sweeping everything before it, Mexican mud-daubers' nests included. The inadequate haystack of the country suffers, and the wail of the unready goes up to an indifferent heaven, once more blue and smiling.

If it were possible for me to describe the

* RAINFALL (ALTITUDE 3,800 FEET).

1892	-	-	-	6'47	inches.
1893	-	-	-	10'91	„
1894	-	-	-	4'47	„
1895	-	-	-	9'46	„
1896	-	-	-	7'99	„

beauty of the Fall—that expressive word for which autumn is so poor and meaningless an equivalent—I would do so; but it is not. English people, however, who have ever abandoned their own clammy October and November in order to test the same across the Atlantic, can form some notion of what it is here in New Mexico. A world painted in blue or gold—an atmosphere so exhilarating that no amount of malaise or worry can render one who breathes it utterly insensible to its charms—and, at the same time, each day as it rolls by so unvarying in its perfection that to sit, walk, ride, or drive, whether in sun or shade, is alike delightful and desirable. In short, whatever you choose to do, the weather will endorse your choice as being exactly the right one. And this weather sometimes endures for months, and always for weeks.

Then is the sportsman abroad in the valley, hunting the crested quail, and the jack rabbit lengthens his already monstrous bounds, fleeing for his life; and camping-parties betake themselves to the mountains in search of higher game—deer, and even bear; and

'bear stories' are the order of the evenings spent around the roaring fires of cottonwood or cedar.

Spring in the Land of Perpetual Sunshine meets, of course, with a less joyful greeting than in gloomier climes. Nevertheless, when the acequias brim with the brown and rushing flood, and the orchards flush with colour and resound with song, and the winter world casts off its mantle of drab, and rises to meet the advancing year and be made by it a thing of naught—well, we have Spring indeed, but Spring performing only half her functions, where there is no snow to be melted, no sodden earth to be dried, no misty skies to be swept clear.

Also there are the winds to be reckoned with. On first making a home in the Arid Belt, one is informed that the wind blows only at certain seasons of the year, and that its velocity, although apparently great, is not, in fact, comparable with that attained by it in other parts of the Far or Middle West. The charts supplied show the wind-rate of El Paso, a city on the Texas border, only forty miles distant, and possessing a climate almost

identical with our own, to be considerably less than that of Denver, Colorado, San Francisco, California, or even San Antonio, the great health resort of Texas. Cyclones and blizzards never visit us. Having said all this, it is proper to add that our wind is extremely disagreeable, nay, hateful, and that it bloweth at any season, when and where it listeth, though without resulting damage to man, beast, or crop. Allowing that spring is its most favoured season, summer and fall its least favoured, I have, nevertheless, known a lamblike March and April and a rowdy, blustering May. The wind is not to be relied on, though it must inevitably be reckoned with. Months may go by without one rude puff, and then it may rage ceaselessly for days, calming itself only at night. Consolation is to be sought in the knowledge that it brings neither rain, damp, nor languor in its train, and that, on the contrary, it acts as a wholesome, if disagreeable, purifier and disinfectant.

The summers are, as summers should be, hot. This characteristic is not peculiar to the season in Southern New Mexico, but is

common to every inland section of this vast country, except to certain mountain resorts to which people betake themselves for the pleasure, we presume, of being able to tell their friends that they were obliged either to kindle a fire in August or else freeze to death. Doubtful summer joys both, methinks. The month of June is the hot month. About the 30th thunderstorms may be looked for; and throughout July and August, while the death-rate swells higher and higher in the sweltering Middle West and in the Eastern cities, here only the hypercritical can find cause for complaint. But, then, there are persons who are seeking paradise on earth; and they are still seeking.

Sunstrokes and prostration from heat are unheard of with us. Therefore, when we read of this form of suffering occurring in England when the thermometer is only 'in the vicinity of 80'—in our clime a delicious and health-giving temperature—we realize more than ever the aseptic and invigorating qualities of the atmosphere we daily breathe. And no matter to what height the thermometer may rise later, the morning hours are in-

variably fresh and sparkling. Indeed, I have stood at noon watering stock in the broiling sun (and no one who has had no experience in this direction knows the infinite leisureliness of the drinking animal), having to mark time with my feet to keep them off the red-hot ground, and suddenly up has come the vivifying breeze of these latitudes, and, hey presto! I am cool—nay, almost cold. Consequently the same given temperature East and West implies probably twenty degrees of difference in one's feelings. However hot it may be here, no sense of relaxation or languor—provided, of course, that a person be in tolerable health—is ever experienced. It goes without saying that the average English person has to learn how to live in a warm climate; to abandon his beloved 'flannels,' for instance, to eat less meat, and to acquire the art of keeping his house cool. Open doors and windows, and a great many of them, he will gradually repent of as a bitter mistake—only gradually, no doubt, for our race is a pertinacious one, and is proverbially reluctant to do at Rome as the Romans do.

An old Spanish house built of adobe—*i.e.*, bricks made of wet clay and straw, run into a mould, and then turned out to bake in the sun—with walls of from two and a half to three feet thick, is the very acme of comfort. The bare idea of having ever again to live in any other kind of a house, once having enjoyed an adobe, presents itself as a woeful prospect. Those who, for the sake of worshipping the little tin god called Style, build them mansions of brick or wood live to rue (in secret) the error of their ways, or else have never lived in an adobe. To remove, either in hot or cold weather, from a clay house to one of brick is to receive an object-lesson not easily to be forgotten; words are rendered at once and for ever superfluous. The adobe house, then, with its ponderous walls and windows, sufficient in number to let in the winter sunshine without admitting too much of the summer heat, is an abode for the gods—provided the gods do not admit to their circle the little tin travesty aforementioned, and are also willing to risk the possibility of a volume of muddy water pouring through the flat ‘dirt’ roof when the

Rainy Season comes along. But the gods can make them an American roof, should their patience or philosophy give out—which roof, if painted a deep crimson, adds to, rather than detracts from, the picturesqueness of their dwelling. For adobe houses *are* picturesque ; not only so, but they adjust themselves admirably to the requirements of the landscape ; and should the day ever arrive when American enterprise sweeps them from the face of Nature, the beauty which abides in harmony, as well as the solid comfort of the citizen, will depart with them. To draughts, that bugbear of the sensitive, their heavy walls and deep-set windows are impervious. The bedroom of the invalid, interpenetrated by the radiant winter sunlight, becomes a sun-parlour of the choicest. In summer our adobe, its windows protected by venetian, or, as we call them, outside blinds, its roof sheltered by the widespreading arms of the cottonwood - tree, is a veritable palace of delight.

Noxious beasts are not numerous, venomous ones few. Of the noxious variety, the American housefly stands easily first, both

in point of numbers and ferocity. All over this broad land—east, west, north, and south—there have we to sit down with him in hateful and familiar association. To be appreciated, however, he must be known, this American fly. In summer, by dint of screened doors and windows and shaded apartments, we can in a measure control his visitations ; though even then he lingers on the porches ready to follow on the heels of every entering guest, and once within to lay waste, devour, and destroy—temper and peace of mind included—as only a fly can. Strange to say, the agile flea seldom darkens our doors, and the hum of the mosquito is heard only in occasional seasons, when the river waxes riotous, and water lingers in the acequias or overflows their banks. Snakes are common enough ; but though they writhe and hiss, and stand up on their hinder parts and give us bad dreams, they are, the most of them, harmless, though hot-tempered. Some of these big brownery-greenery snakes are excellent mousers, and, as mice are our constant torments here, I persuaded myself, after much travail of spirit, to permit one such snake to

make my store-room his home. I have no doubt that some people might find both instruction and amusement in this association. I experience neither ; I endure. Lizards and horned frogs abound. The latter are amusing little beasts. They seem to like having their backs scratched with a stick, and, if too rudely accosted, prove themselves to be past-masters in the art of simulating death. Once I met a tarantula at my front-door, but only once. He is dead now. He was a terrific beast, and I am free to own that my spirit quailed within me. I will not attempt to say how large he was, for I should promptly be accused of exaggeration ; though to exaggerate the size of these nightmares of spiders would really seem to be impossible. Certain learned Eastern professors claim that the bite of neither tarantula nor centipede—another occasional guest with us—is harmful. That is as it may be. No Texan could be found to agree to this verdict, although it is generally acknowledged that the Texas variety of both beasts is considerably more virulent than the variety living in New Mexico.

Lovely and beloved as all our seasons are

to us who dwell in closest fellowship with them, it is in the winter that the health-seeking visitor seeks and knows us, and for him that boarding-houses and hostelry spread wide their doors. Winter is our trump card, then. Granted. Nevertheless, for me the early summer, when my low brown house draws around itself, day by day, a denser veil of greenery, and sinks back, like the swooning fair one of our great-grandmother's favourite novel, into the arms of cottonwood and locust trees ; and the little roses of New Mexico run riot, and the drab alfalfa fields and the brown orchards drown by inches in the rising emerald sea ; and the mocking-birds, noisy rascals, shout night and day ; and the everlasting blue of the sky takes a paler, tenderer hue, into which azure bath, as the heat-wave surges along the valley, the mountains plunge their craggy heads, retiring day by day further and further into the land of dreams. Then it is that, noon-tide drawing near, the olive-tinged mesa decks itself transiently in ribbons of gold and black as the summer clouds roll through high heaven, leaving in their passing swift-fading memories on those mountains'

rock-bound sides. And morning after morning under the climbing sun, and evening after evening as the moon sails up over the lonely peaks or the stars creep out solitary, a breeze like the cool foam 'of perilous seas' in some 'faeryland forlorn' scatters its vivifying drops upon the heated face of the valley, and we live and move and breathe the breath of life as those whose tents are pitched nearer sea-level can never do. Ours is the Arid Belt; but ours, too, is the keen pure air of untrodden desert and mountain.

It is the habit of the comfortable and prosperous to declare that everything has its compensations, and for once the comfortable and prosperous are right, though prating after their manner of that of which they know nothing—nothing of the leagues of desert solitude—or of the gray Atlantic, no friendly sail in sight.

For, in truth, there is but little neighbourliness in Nature here. Even at her best and fairest she retains her remoteness, her indifference. Yet we know that it is here that Nature, in spite of herself, enters into our heart of hearts. She who would not

appeal has appealed. In her often wild and always mournful beauty, she is as the embodiment of all the sorrows of the world. We turn from her in vain ; we look and look again.

And yet, early some June morning, stand with me at the head of this long, five-deep regiment of giant Russian sunflowers, all with radiant faces lifted eastward. The gold-flecked vista closes in a wealth of green—the heavy, rounded masses of the umbrella-tree, the airy feathers of the tree of paradise ; birds, scarlet flames and scimitars of blue, or here and there a yellow flaxbird, leap and dart hither and thither. And beyond and above all is the azure—the unutterable, the unpaintable azure—of Southern sky and mountain. Have we no soft loveliness, no depth of colour, in the Arid Belt ?

Or, again, turn now, the hot day waning, from the mountains and the eternal mesquite and sage-brush of the desert, and gaze from the back of the brown clay house athwart the long shadows of the levels. Why is this landscape so sorrowful ? Peace, stepping quietly, should come like an oft-bidden, long-delaying guest across these tranquil meadows.

One beyond the other they lie spread, a carpet of varied greens, brightening into the dazzling shimmer of ripe wheat or pale bands of barley, or oftener yet deepening to the deep purple of alfalfa ready for the cutting. On the ear strikes only the wailing, not unmusical cry of the Mexican, urging his weary flock to the trampling of the gathered sheaves. The eye wanders on and on to the river's bank, marked by wavering lines of woods, on and up to where the still and solemn mesa leans upon the deep-burned sky.

'How beautiful, but how sad!' exclaims the new-comer softly.

Or it is November, and the brilliant blue and golden day hushes itself beneath a dome the tint of a sparrow's egg, gilt-edged where the sun has sunk. A gray hand steals over the valley; the very cottonwoods cease to blaze, and pale from gold to amber. It is night, we say; the bright day is over. And then, suddenly, the mountains flash rose-hued upon the sight. This is their crowning hour of glory. Battlement after battlement, peak after peak, catches the unearthly radiance. From the veiled and silent valley we watch

with suspended breath, and even as we watch the glory passes. Already the mountains' feet are dimmed. The veil creeps up and up. All is indeed over. Night has come.

And these sunsets! But why write of them? Is not their splendour common to this whole land, wherever the wide and wonderful American sky prevaieth? In its purity, in its lustre, above all, in its height, its peer is hardly to be found. For this is no 'azure vault,' besung and belauded of the conventional poet; it is a vast immensity, in which the eye loses itself and the soul mounts secure, on whose lower altars the sunlit days are heaped nightly, and whose sacrificial fires are a spectacle for gods and men.

But here, and once more. We rise in the night watches, slumber hard to be entreated, and look forth on the changeful moonlit spaces overswept by the wide-winged shadows of the wind-clouds, stealthy visitants from the Great Unknown. Silence reigns but for the rarely hushed sigh and murmur of the Southern summer night; then of a sudden, rushing fearlessly into the stillness and the silence, ring out the exultant notes of the

mocking-bird in his prime, lord of Love and Life, challenging, as it were, the Immutable, the Eternal, which answer not. His voice breaks, droops among the summer trees, dies away in a long, questioning murmur. The swift cool breeze tosses the leaves of the cottonwood in the round moon's face, and swings away across the desert to where the untrodden spires of the mountains cleave the translucent sky, themselves as remote, as indifferent.

'What have we to do with thee, O man, and thy day of small things!'

The moments pass solemnly, the hours. The bird lifts his wild voice no more. The winds pause in their flight; the darkest hour before the dawn is at hand.

'The cloud-shadows of midnight possess their own repose,
And the weary winds are silent, and the moon is in
the deep;
Some respite from its restlessness unresting ocean knows,
Whatever moves, or toils, or grieves, hath its ap-
pointed sleep.
Thou in the grave shalt rest. . . .'

CHAPTER VI.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE MEXICAN.

HAVING a little business to transact with a ranching neighbour, described as living 'somewheres near the river,' I set forth one July morning between seven and eight o'clock in quest of my trading friend; for we still trade and barter here after the primitive manner.

And just at this point we are brought up short in order that we may consider the vanity and futility of resolutions. Had it not been resolved in the court of my mind that never again was I to establish myself in a section of which the prevailing sentiment expressed in brief was, 'I've got no money, but I reckon we can make a trade'? And then to consume several hours trading for a small chicken—to stand out, furthermore, in the broiling sun and lend a neighbourly ear

to the life-history of the trader from the hour he was short-coated, inclusive probably (in the West) of a recital of the possession of great riches and how he came to lose them! This the listener can believe or not, according as he is minded at the time. But personal historiettes figure largely in rural trading. This bargaining with plain country people is not, however, devoid of instructiveness, even if they get the better of us, as they mostly do—not perhaps entirely owing to superior wit, but rather to a keener zest for the business. The milk of human kindness is somehow not destroyed by this transparent mode of making something out of individuals who ‘must be rich because they pay their bills.’ Nevertheless, a hundred times in the past have I cried in my wrath: ‘If ever I farm again, I will try it in the Great Progressive West.’ And here I am in the G.P.W., and history is still engaged in repeating itself.

This, however, is the South-West, and therein lies a distinction, if not a difference.

The morning was cloudy, and there is always something weird and uncanny in the

veiled sky of the Arid Belt ; or we think that there is because we have been spoiled by too much sunshine. The deep-rutted track winding between tall sunflowers and other high-growing weeds of the desert, and framing in its twists and turns oft-recurring peeps of granite and (to-day) frowning mountains, was lonely—yes, lonely, in spite of the little adobe houses set at intervals in the midst of unfenced alfalfa and corn patches. The buggy wheels splashed hub-deep through long stretches of running water or stagnant pools—enough wasted, as I pondered regretfully, to save my wilting corn. Taken altogether, it was a verdant and beneficent desert that morning, inhabited, one would say, by a simple and rural population. Yet in such rich bottom land as this, holding moisture as it does twice as long as land at a greater distance from the river, the vineyards and orchards common elsewhere should not here be conspicuous by their absence. Some of this, too, is actually the old river-bed, the Rio Grande being partial to changes of location. Nevertheless, signs of careful cultivation are few and far between.

At last I came to a puzzled halt. Three tracks strayed away in various directions, one tumbling headlong into a deep arroyo, another lunging sideways around a gully, and a third pursuing a calm and meandering course around a corner, and so into a leafy retreat of mesquite bushes. It was very quiet under the high gray clouds; not a bird stirred or sang—stupefied, we may suppose, by the absence of light and radiance. A horned toad scooted into the middle of my road, took solemn note of me, and then proceeded hurriedly on his business. I, too, had business, and was, like himself, in a hurry. Then it was that a dusky but benevolent old gentleman on a burro came around the corner, his donkey's long ears parting the emerald feathers of the mesquite bushes. He was properly interested in my dilemma; and after he had described my errant course to the best of his ability, he continued to wave his arms and legs to all points of the compass, and shout 'in scollops.' In truth, he presented so agitated an appearance that I pulled up once more, and, pointing with my whip ahead, repeated with emphasis :

'*Este camino, señor?*'

'*Si, si, señora—*'

The rest became hopelessly involved in a repetition of circular demonstrations, interrupted somewhat rudely and excitedly by my horse, who has a habit of protesting against lengthy native discourses. But I discovered later that what that ancient sage meant to convey was the fact that two roads pointing in diametrically opposite directions arrived in due course at one and the same goal.

Finally, after scaling one of the lofty, unprotected bridges which clamber awkwardly, and in the case of a spirited team somewhat perilously, over the large acequias, I found myself surveying a wide level expanse, sprinkled here and there with brown dabs. Which of these dabs was the home of my trading friend? I looked around, and on the hither side of the acequia my eyes lighted on a family party seated at breakfast beneath the shed of the country—four bigas, or posts, upholding a roof of brush. The fire for performing the simple culinary duties of the Mexican smoked on the hard-trodden ground

beside the table. From these people, after more waving of arms and much unnecessary and wordy circumlocution, I obtained directions which landed me at my destination.

Tables and chairs are not a necessity with the Mexican, and the introduction of furniture may not unjustly be considered in the light, to some extent, of an American innovation. Francisco, for instance, takes unto him a wife, and is provided with a house; but the subject of furniture is still far removed from his thoughts. Then his employer undertakes to display continually before his eyes, and in large type, the advantages as well as charms of house-furnishing. The summit of many a Mexican's domestic ambition is attained when he rolls himself nightly in his blanket and groups himself *en famille* upon the hard clay floor about his brick oven or open fire, and rises to cook his frugal meal of frijoles and chili, or some other native preparation, simple enough but not unappetizing. For, except in that matter of wine, the Mexican, like the Spanish, peasant is frugal to an admirable degree, and enjoys for the most part good health therewith. But if he can

quarter himself on an American, then indeed do his powers of absorption develop themselves alarmingly — of absorption, not of assimilation — for there falls upon him the curse of the *Americano*, the dyspepsia, and he suffers 'mucho malo' in his 'estomago.'

Francisco and his spouse add chair to table, therefore, and, far more surprising, cook-stove to bed, and spread a fine new carpet on the clay floor. In two years they own a furnished house, and Francisco can speak English. Sad to relate, Francisco has since that time undergone something of a relapse; but when a man removes into the bosom of an extensive family connection, and together with it becomes the owner of fruitful vineyards, what would you have? The wine barrel is always on tap, and if there are none to buy, a man must e'en drink thereof himself.

Our native population is chiefly Catholic, and held in sore bondage by its priests and by the might of its own superstitions. The work of mission-schools — Methodist and Presbyterian mostly, the Episcopal Church being notoriously backward in home-missions — is decidedly good. If it does nothing

more, it civilizes the native, catching him young, and teaching future voters the language of the country whose laws—oh, supreme height of human folly!—they are to assist in making. True, these mission-schools are but as a drop in the ocean, but still they accomplish the above, and something more too, judging by the few specimens I have seen of mission-instructed Mexicans. That they have acquired the (to them) unnatural art of truth-speaking, I cannot go so far as to affirm, but in all other details they are an improvement on the original.

One day Adelado came to me.

‘Señora, will you advance me five dollars?’

‘But, Adelado, you are already ahead of your wages.’

‘Si, señora, but the padre; it is to pay the priest.’

‘The padre, Adelado? But you have already paid him much!’

‘Si, señora, but Tomas—he has asked me to be godfather to his child, and to be a godfather one pays the priest ten dollars.’

Now, the priests are sleek and fat, and as even Mother Church soils her garments with

the mire of petty politics, it is presumed that a use is always found for the dollars coined out of the superstition or religious instinct—call it which you will—of the poor Mexican or Indian. But occasionally the Mexican rebels, the wild blood in him asserting itself. He cherishes certain superstitions of his own, with which it is well for not even a holy padre to interfere. For instance, there are saints' days on which it is his pleasure, and has been his pleasure for centuries, to dance, and to dance much. The priest interferes ; his flock maintains a passive obstinacy. One night the padre receives a pressing call to a dying bed ; but this is no dying bed to which he is hurried through the deep sand of the desert, or through groves of sighing cottonwood, under a moonless sky. When he is escorted home again through the darkness by that band of silent men, it is a very sore padre who climbs alone upon the porch of his comfortable home, and seeks consolation in a goblet of the wine of the country, of which he always maintains in his closet a sufficiency, and of the best, too ; for the padre, as he is known with us, is a good judge of wine.

And just now he stands in need of a reviving draught, for he has had a beating, and a thorough one at that. The cloven hoof may not often be *en évidence* in our tawny neighbours, but it is there, all the same. And in this case the culprits are as easily to be found as needles in a haystack. The Mexican population is large, and on the point touched by its padre it is of one mind.

‘Juan,’ I said one day, ‘do you have to pay your priests much?’

Juan, who had been laughing at the antics of a puppy, turned on me a lowering countenance.

‘Señora,’ he said, with a passion that had in it more than a trace of vindictiveness, ‘I am a poor man. I work hard, and my children are many. The priests live well; they are fat, and have all that they wish. I give to the priests—yes; I put a dime in the church-box for them when I go to Mass with my family. But I do not go too often. The priests rob the poor.’

But if Mother Church gets a good deal out of the Mexican, he gets out of her in return something—his money’s worth in

holidays, for him who chooses to enjoy them. But Juan despises these incessant holidays, which to the American *ranchero* cause much and sore vexation of spirit. Some indispensable work is due to be done on the morrow.

‘But, *señora*,’ says Hernandez firmly, though courteously, ‘to-morrow we do not work. It is a holiday in our Church.’

Juan declares that these holidays are for the lazy ones, and we know that there are many lazy ones.

On these festive days waggons roll by from dawn till dusk—for the holiday begins with Mass at the church—laden with loud-voiced natives; the women, more rarely the men, in gala attire, the inevitable black shawl—sorry aftermath of the mantilla—drawn over their heads. They visit their friends, talk endlessly, drink wine, at night, perhaps, hold a baile.

On the Eve of the Feast of St. Geneviève the natives treat the town to an illumination. All day the householders are engaged in placing rows of paper bags filled with sand along the edges of the flat-roofed houses. In the sand they plant candles. When the

hour for lighting up arrives, the effect is bizarre and charming. The band thumps on the arid plaza, rockets whiz heavenward in honour of the patron saint; the scene, with all its adjuncts, is complete. When the morrow arrives, with perhaps a wind at its heels, reaction sets in. The paper bags tip over, and spill their contents down the necks of unwary passengers in the street below; and this is a gradual process, continuing for days. Naturally, the bags do not all tip over at once. As for removing them, we are gently reminded, and not for the first time, that we live in the land of *poco tiempo*.

Christmas Night brings us another illumination, and one that appeals more vividly to the imagination; for this is the night on which, many, many years ago, the Holy Mother visited her children in the Valley of the Rio Grande. She has never repeated her visit; but what of that? There is always a hope that she may do so, and her sacred feet must not be allowed to tread an unlighted way. So for days before Christmas the devoutly inclined Mexican gathers brush and sticks, and whatever combustible he can

find—on the mountains, if possible ; if not, hauls them toilsomely up their sides—and, when darkness falls, lights his fires upon the crags and peaks for miles around. Therefore it is that, should the Holy Virgin come our way, there is no fear lest her feet should stumble in the night. When bedtime arrives, we step out on the porch, and look towards the high mountains ; the fires still burn.

The superstitions of the Mexican have, in certain cases, a familiar ring to one who has spent many years in the heart of the South. For instance, there is the moon, whose proceedings govern, in the Southern States, sowing and planting, pruning and reaping, and all the daily actions of the farming man. Lately I said to Valentina that it was sad that, in my flock of thoroughbred chickens, all my pullets should have turned out to be cockerels.

‘ Ah,’ replied Valentina, ‘ when you set the eggs, you did not watch the moon!’ Valentina has lived with me, or rather worked for me, on and off, a matter of two years, but still stoutly refuses to speak a word of English, and, indeed, pretends she understands none—

which is an imposition. 'La luna chiquita—oh, *chiquitilla!*—poco gallinas, mucho gallos! La luna gra-a-a-nde' (spreading arms and hands, and opening mouth cavernously), 'mucho gallinas, poco gallos!'

The native woman has an inveterate objection to learning English. She often understands it, as can be proved somewhat disagreeably on occasion; but she will deny such an accusation with her latest breath. A shriek of 'No sabe! no sabe!' and a frantic waving of hands, greets the mild but firm insistence that she understands the language of her country. Except for this peculiarity—and, of course, even to this there are exceptions—she is in some ways the superior of her better-half. Partaking to some degree of the nature of the Indian squaw, once caught and induced to work for an employer, she plods on with far more of automatic steadiness than does her masculine counterpart. In truth, on her, in the home, falls the burden and heat of the day. Given a little more intelligence to counterbalance the stupid greed which is one of the characteristics of the Mexican, male and female, she has in

her the material for an excellent domestic. But she either strikes for higher wages—being already paid beyond her worth—or burns with uncontrolled desire to hasten home and spend her gains. She cannot cook; but hitherto, in view of the frugality and limitations of the native menu, the culinary art has possessed no solid attractions for her, and she is furthermore wholly destitute of the negro's facility in, and desire for, learning. But whether it is the touch of the artist in her nature, or merely the plodding quality aforementioned, she is capable of being trained—at least, in my experience of her—to pleasant household ways of orderliness, and love of those details which make a home a home. This is not only remarkable, when one considers the home in which she is so often content to exist, but it is also remarkable that, in this respect, she should be far ahead of the American woman who 'hires out' in these parts. Set a Mexican woman to clean your parlour, and even if she should not be able, at the first attempt, to restore everything where it belongs, she leaves it in such shape that you feel it has

been a pleasure to her to handle pretty things. In fact, she has probably wasted time in twiddling a silk scarf to suit her, or arranging bric-à-brac to carry out some idea of her own, and also not improbably has gathered flowers and set them in a vase with some show of taste. The American woman, on the contrary, and as she is known here, would have made of this cleaning nothing but a task, her mind very likely only occupied in comparing your humble matting and rugs with the velvet-pile of her own past glories ; or handling with scorn, and perhaps shattering, a piece of old china on which you set some store. Nothing will be put where it belongs, and will not be, should she clean the room a dozen times ; and as for arranging flowers——

Yet even she—the great, impossible She—has her exceptions.

That the native woman must be caught and induced to work remains nevertheless true. Strange to say, mere offers of money will not do it. It is possible that she wants to see before she believes, and while promising to come again and again, it may be weeks, if ever, ere she materializes.

Distrustfulness seems to be born in the native, and a significant fact, and one constantly overlooked in writing and speaking of him, is the profound suspicion he entertains towards those of his own race. Evidently, and not wholly without reason, he views his compatriots in the light of a band of thieves! Also it requires an exceptional Mexican, man or woman, to see that petty thieving is against his own interests, while the average negro almost never steals when satisfied with his employer. Therein consists one of the many respects in which the negro, intelligently speaking, is superior to the Mexican.

The native woman is courteous herself, and expects the same in return. There are few Englishwomen, however—or ladies is perhaps a better word—who demean themselves by rudeness to those in their employ, so there is no trouble about that; unless unfortunately it should be necessary to employ an American woman also, in which event there will certainly be trouble: the result, precipitate flight on the part of the native.

With all her drawbacks as a domestic, the house-mistress with us usually prefers the native to the (American) imported article. For instance, we have our Jesucitas—not of common occurrence, but occurring sometimes, nevertheless. Jesucita is not grasping, and she does not mind work, sickly though she be. Her wages burn a hole, all the same, and she is restless until they are spent. She has the great advantage of having been a scholar in a Methodist mission-school, and she speaks English—a passion for calling milk and other inanimate objects ‘he’ to the contrary notwithstanding. She is altogether, as a Mexican, a superior production. That she partakes of the lack of intelligence characteristic of her race is not to be reckoned against her, inasmuch as she had no hand in her mental make-up. She is a gentle, and of course untruthful, little creature, and we grow fond of her as she lingers from week to week within our borders. If after making an object-lesson of my housekeeping desires four or five times in one morning, only to find them carried out in a totally contrary direction, or else to have them forgotten

altogether, is somewhat exasperating, a backward thought bestowed on my graceless American 'help' speedily reconciles me to Jesucita's trifling deficiencies. At all events, the pleasant 'Si, señora!' even when attended with inconspicuous results, is vastly more soothing than the barbaric 'All right!' given grudgingly, or even not at all.

Jesucita, in her scarlet bodice and pink skirt, her dusky hair tied with yellow ribbons and hanging in a long tress, her black eyes mildly shining, as she drives away with her brother for her Sunday's outing, is a not unpleasing picture.

But even as I write my hand trembles. Who can tell what an hour may bring forth? And, lo! I turn the page, and Jesucita's modest sun has set, and, weeping, she has returned whence she came—'Mucho malo, señora, mucho malo!' Poor little sickly Jesucita!

Though as a race distinctly unsightly, occasionally by good hap one lights on a comely Mexican girl. Her cheeks are red, her thick skin is white, her raven tresses fulfil all expectations, her face is plump, her

eyes are large, and black as the oft-quoted night. Yes, she is certainly comely, and, as a certain popular (female) novelist hath it, 'good to look upon.' What is the matter, then? The matter is that there is invariably something wrong with the expression of those fine eyes of hers. They ought to be superb, and they are not—emphatically *not*. Is it something lacking in their expression? Or is it a faulty setting? Quien sabe? Who knows?

CHAPTER VII.

OUR HELP.

‘ HAVING come to New Mexico for my health, I intend to procure a competent American woman to take care of my house while I attend to the ranch. Don’t you think that a good idea?’

I had spoken ; but why did the countenance of my acquaintance wear so queer a smile? All she said, however, was :

‘ Admirable ! I wish you good luck.’

Some months later I once more encountered her. I was a battered, indignant, outraged wreck. She called for a recital of my woes, and I furnished her with one.

‘ Don’t worry,’ was her remark, as the last words of the painful drama fell from my lips ; ‘ we’ve all “ been there ” before you. Now, perhaps, you understand why we do our own

work, or else get along as best we can with Mexican girls. You have probably been too kind to your help—shown them too much consideration.

‘Well,’ I replied apologetically, ‘they were a long way from home and friends, and it is dull for help on a ranch, and they were always complaining about their health, and——’

‘Oh, never mind about that!’ interrupted my acquaintance, smiling. ‘What *you* did would in any case have made little or no difference; it would have been all the same in the end. As for me, white help belongs to my ‘tenderfoot’ days. Now I do my own work. My household gods have vanished; I have scarcely anything left me by the destroyers except peace of mind; but at least I have that.’

One day I started out with the hope of inducing two or three friends to aid me in an effort I was making for a certain philanthropic society in the East. Help being so hard to procure, and so incompetent in our section, the idea was that almost any housekeeper would be thankful to take a white woman to

work for her board—more especially as my promised protégées, though needing a change of climate, were represented as perfectly able to do excellent work, besides being provided with flaming credentials. The answers I received ran somewhat in this wise :

‘Well, to speak frankly, I hate to disturb the peace of my family, and I have tried having “ladies” to work for their board. It’s pretty hard doing all the work one’s self, but a tranquil life is worth paying something for.’ Or—

‘You’re still a “tenderfoot” as regards Societies, I see. You will win your experience after awhile—experience that you won’t forget, either.’

No, I have not forgotten my experience ; neither am I ever likely to do so. But let me hasten to turn that bitter page.

‘It’s well enough here for the men,’ exclaims the sympathetic masculine ; ‘but it’s awful hard on delicate women.’

Never was there a truer word spoken. Let those who sit at home at ease, whose ‘housekeeping cares’ are by comparison anywhere on this side of the ocean a mere

matter for jest, come to the Far West, or even no further than the East, and learn for the first time the true meaning of 'house-keeping cares.' Let the theorist who, like the Pharisee, stands afar off, and moralizes on the beneficent effects of 'housework,' come and try it just for one little year. Or perhaps a bushel of American 'Home' magazines and journals, conscientiously explored, would suffice to still for ever any ill-advised hankering after 'housework.' The amount of actual manual labour the average American housewife and mother—for even the possession of good means does not ensure a life of ease—gets through in one day would stagger the Englishwoman of the same social position. No wonder the demoralizing existence endured at hotels and boarding-houses is so constantly found preferable to the worries of home-making. But here let me call a halt. This subject is too burning, too endless, a one to find place in these pages. Suffice it to say that, in that matter of mere manual labour, there are few even healthy women, unless backed by an ancestry of 'horny-handed sons of toil,' who can bear with

impunity year after year daily drudgery, complicated as it usually is with the care and responsibility of their children.

I tried my 'competent American woman' exhaustively, and, so far as I was personally concerned, exhaustingly. The type of this variety of Impossible Person does not vary much. At all events, it is not difficult to present a composite picture of her or it. I may add that until she appeared upon my Far Western carpet my domestic trials had been so few as to arouse the envy—nay, the greed—of neighbours. But luck had favoured me, and my home was then not in the West. The Impossible Person was to change all that; the Impossible Person, or the Portly One; either title applies equally well. And as for calling her names—why, she owes her victim that compensation, and it is but a little one, after all. The self-restraint demanded by a year or two of slow torture was due only to one's self; for as regards her it was distinctly misplaced. Undoubtedly there is a large class of women on whom the restraints of the noblesse that obliges are entirely wasted; a good shaking

would not only be of greater benefit to their system, moral and physical, but in most cases would be more acceptable into the bargain.

‘I do not believe,’ I said once, when considerably exasperated by the complaints of a Portly One, ‘that you would in any house meet with as much forbearance and consideration as you meet with in mine.’

‘No—I know it,’ was the reply, interlarded with unpleasant sobs, ‘and that’s just the trouble. If you’d tear around some, and quarrel and fuss, I wouldn’t feel so bad and home-sick!’

I gazed musingly upon the big, fat, strong woman, able, an she would, to make a good living anywhere—to live anywhere she chose; not cast out into the desert to struggle for health or semi-health, far from home and friends. I let her go. To engage in wordy encounters with one’s help in order to ensure her against home-sickness? No; *that* game was not worth any kind of a candle.

Let us suppose, O reader, that you are a quasi-invalid, and that one of these persons, for the modest sum of £48 to £72 per

annum and railroad expenses paid, has agreed by letter to all your demands, robust health included, and has undertaken, in her own words, 'to keep your house as I keep my own, and to be a help and comfort to you.' She arrives, and deposits herself in the most comfortable, and of necessity the roomiest, chair in your parlour. She has not occupied this position for half an hour before you are in possession of a category of her ailments; not very serious ones, you consider, but in the vain hope of curing which she has, she assures you, spent hundreds of dollars on divers physicians. She is so imposing and so large that a slight expenditure of moral courage may be required in order to remind her of her written assurance of 'perfect health.' Thereupon she expands her ample bosom in a gust of injured dignity, and retorts severely :

'You need give yourself no uneasiness; I never give up.'

At this point at once make up your mind that, to use words once addressed to yourself, 'You have come to New Mexico for everyone's health and benefit but your own,'

unless—unless you have a skin of leather and deaf ears through which the roof-raising sighs of well-nourished martyrs cannot pierce. It is assumed that your household is very small, but that your Portly One may have no excuse for failing to be your ‘help and comfort,’ you provide her with intermittent native assistance. With these Mexicans, should she have picked up a smattering of their tongue, she gossips or plays the bully, and they loathe her with a loathing that promptly and permanently annihilates all hope of immunity from domestic uproar.

‘But I wish you, Valentina, to take your orders from the other señora!’ you ejaculate, upon the tenth interruption in one hour by an excited señorita.

‘No, señora—no, I cannot! I go if you will not tell me what to do yourself.’

Upon expostulating with your Portly One for her roughness to her aide, she shouts :

‘I tell you *I* kep’ a gyurl in my day, and I never let her do me as your gyurl does you, you bet! She imposes on you awful.’

Therefore she sees to it that all the ‘imposing’—and there is plenty of it—shall

be done by herself. She can usually cook fairly well after the somewhat greasy fashion prevalent in her class ; for she is more often than not the relict of a railroad man, and anyone who has been let behind the scenes of that profession knows that the majority of these workers put what they earn into the mouths of self and family, or on the family back. Also you must expect to have diamond earrings dangled before your eyes once or twice a week, and to be informed at each proud display what they cost. As these diamonds are generally quite ordinary, and mounted in the worst possible taste, you will not suffer acute pangs of envy. Allowed, then, that she is a tolerable cook, her want of neatness—her complete ignorance of the discrepancy existing between her ‘I will keep your house as I keep my own’ and ‘I will keep your house as a lady’s should be kept’—is rather harrowing ; in fact, she condescends to take your money on her own conditions. She associates with you as your equal—or, better still, your superior—though you are fain to acknowledge that in many respects she is greatly inferior to the English

upper servant, for the reason that the latter has not only had some sort of training in domestic duties, but has also had some form of association with people of refinement, or at least good manners; whereas the Impossible Person has had neither the one nor the other. This female, out of whose mouth pour the frogs and toads of 'English as she is spoke,' considers herself your superior because—— But let her speak for herself in her own choice vocabulary :

'*That* your sealskin? My! but you oughter seen my aunt Marie's!' (pronounced *Murray*, French names mispronounced being *chic* in her social circle)—'reached clear down to her shoe-tops! Them's your books? Th'ain't nothin' there for *me* to read—got through with that kind in my schooldays.' Here, if you are wise, and hope for quiet evening hours, you will hastily promise her all the 'dime novels'—Anglicè, 'railway trash'—that the neighbourhood can be induced to yield. 'This your parlour? H'm-m-m! Wish you *could* ha' seen *my* velvet pile and plush suite! Well, matting and rugs is good enough for a ranch, I

guess. Heigh! now I've gone and done it!' as a choice piece of Dresden slips through her pudgy fingers with a crash. As yet but imperfectly acquainted with the Impossible Person, you rashly assume that her sentiments are even as your own would be at so direful an accident, and you assure her that the cup was already cracked. 'I should *say!* Didn't look anything so almighty fine, anyhow—cost a dollar or two when it was new, like as not. Bill gave one hundred dollars for the bric-à-brac on my parlour mantel; and I tell you them gilt vases were about worth lookin' at! And the crayon portraits of him and me each side o' that mantel had the handsomest frames you ever laid your eyes on. We lived tip-top, we did—kep' the *richest* table. Your account at the grocery ain't a patch on mine!

'Perhaps that is the reason you suffer from dyspepsia now,' you suggest, with a meekness born of the first encounter with an avalanche.

'Like as not'—complacently; 'we never stinted ourselves for nothin'. We had a

plenty, and soon's Bill got a thousand dollars together we'd up and take a trip.'

'Where did you go, and what did you see?'

'Oh, I don't just know where we went—'most everywhere, I guess, where the crowd goes. We took in everything, you can bet on that, and we stopped at the most toney hotels, and had everything we'd a mind to, and lived as well as the first in the land. We wasn't goin' to be cut out by nobody so long's the money lasted. When we'd spent it all we went back home. Been to any picture-galleries? I dunno as I has, but when I was a young lady I painted sech pictures as *you* ain't never seen since you was born,' etc. Or: 'You not acquainted with Mrs. Z. or Mrs. Y.!' (obscure Western luminaries, in ignorance of whose very existence you have hitherto contrived to 'make out'). 'Well, they're *real ladies*—real wealthy, you bet!'

Then follows the wearisome inventory of their plenishings and furnishings and personal effects. When it is over you feel moved to throw decency and self-control to

the four winds—to take your Impossible Person by the shoulders, and, exerting your small remaining strength, thrust—or perhaps *kick* (there is no telling how near to lunacy such association may bring you)—her out of the room, bang and lock the door in her face. But you don't do it. You go out to mount your horse, on business bent.

'Humph! you a-goin' to ride *that* horse? *I've* ridden some *fine* horses in *my* time! Wish you could ha' seen the kind o' rider *I* was—could break any colt as ever you laid your eyes on! Can ride anything *now*—don't know's I care *how* wild.'

You look at the 'too, too solid flesh' before you, with which tight corsets have played strange pranks, and a sudden frantic desire possesses you to see it upheaved into the air and mounted on the impatient little steed awaiting you.

'Well, get on this mare and take a ride up the ranch; she's tolerably gentle.'

'N-n-no; I guess not. I'm busy to-day—don't feel like ridin', any way.'

She never does feel like riding any more, and there is at least one subject of conversa-

tion (?) disposed of for ever—so far as you are concerned, at all events.

So it goes on. You support and sustain—in the widest sense of which these words admit—a succession of Portly Ones, every line of whose faces and forms bears loud witness to coarse pleasures (within decent limits, of course, one or two examples to the contrary notwithstanding)—beer and cards, physical as opposed to intellectual labour, dull intelligences, aims of the most material—and you know beyond peradventure of a doubt precisely how their progenitors looked and acted before them. And you feel a kind of pity for their impotent and ungraceful struggles to beat down class barriers, which exist in this country as they do everywhere else, and which will continue to exist so long as education, high aims, common-sense, refinement—nay, even heredity—count for anything. Oil and water cannot mix until the constituent elements of both undergo a change, and in spite of the waving of banners and shouting of shibboleths, like will continue to seek like, and class distinctions, on one plea or another,

hold their own. Even here, in the 'wild and woolly West,' I endure with a far greater show of equanimity the pretensions of the type I am engaged in describing than do some of my neighbours, citizens of a free and equal country though they be; and I cannot, by any stretch of imagination, picture my Eastern friends associating on anything approaching to equal terms with a succession of Impossible Persons. Theory may shout in one's ear, but Fact slaps one in the face.

There is an infinitely larger and more varied middle class than in England, within whose radius lines of demarcation may be said to be loosely drawn; but as surely there is also an aristocracy, definite and exclusive, and which by no means rests its claims on wealth only, or even on wealth at all. The members of this extensive society recognize one another as promptly as one Freemason knows another; and of all societies in the civilized world there is none more attractive—none perhaps so entirely charming.

Yet even in the great middle class, in its endless branches, one trips up against barriers

as often as not. Yea, the Impossible Person herself owns to distinctions.

‘I was the adopted child of a minister,’ she says. ‘And when I up and married Bill, my folks said as I were stoopin’ to take up with a locomotive engineer; and they kind o’ turned against me. Then me and Bill we didn’t have no children, so we took a girl and ’dopted *her*.’

‘What’s become of her?’

‘Oh, she’s married too. But Bill he weren’t pleased with her marryin’ no better than a brakeman, so we ain’t seen nothin’ of her much. But now Bill’s gone, and Bob he’s a conductor, and a-doin’ well, so I guess I’ll go on and see my daughter when I gets away from this place.’

You continue to sustain her—her and her successors. You, the invalid, do, or have done for her, the work she is paid to perform. She *sets* down on you—metaphorically; she *sets* and *lays*, by-the-by; she is a burden heavy to be borne. Dominated by that tremendous ego, that has not a thought or hope or wish unconnected with itself, and your own spirit fainting beneath bodily

malaise, perhaps, or cares and anxieties, you may be driven to suggest that conversation (Heaven save the mark!) might flow in a more cheerful channel than that of her ailments: she bursts into tears, and howls stormily that 'No one loves' her. You wonder whether anyone does, and 'if so, how many?' You soothe her fancied ills and wrongs; you, in fact, are in charge of a great overgrown baby. You take her driving, and the glories of sky and mountain are for you obscured by her enormous preponderance of matter. Dissolving brain and weary ears are tormented by ceaseless iteration of what 'Charlie he sez to me,' or 'me to Charlie,' or 'what me and Bill ate for our supper'; or with narrations of social gatherings and triumphs in which *you* could never have shared. Truly, you never could. It is in hours such as these that you realize you are in the desert indeed; and though she is funny, very funny, she palls. And then there come dark days of your own, when to live perpetually in the atmosphere of a vulgar egotist, whose coarseness, moreover, keeps you in a chronic state of wince, is an existence

no longer to be borne. Restoration to health is seriously impaired by your Portly One ; yet what are you to do? The woman who considers 'I forgot' ample restitution for omitting the pudding at dinner or the orders to butcher or grocer, can scarcely be considered in the light of a housekeeper ; and your duties, already too heavy, have to be further weighted by some of hers. As for mending—the Portly One, who constantly bewails the poverty entailed by profuse expenditure of the late lamented's high wages, looks on while you darn and patch, and exclaims : ' Well, that's a thing I never *could* do !'

What is her due is of the first importance ; what is your due is not to be considered. You pay the taxes and bear the expenses of the house ; but the house and all that is in it, yourself included, is apparently not yours, but hers. The mildest suggestion in regard to the household machinery—concerning which, nevertheless, you have to be mind and memory, not daring to become oblivious of it for one hour—is met with : ' I'd have you to know I'm no hired gyurl ! I've kep' a gyurl myself.'

She is 'mad,' and she intends you to know it. Her piety, should she profess any, will not prevent the use of 'language.' Then you wish that you had an umbrella, or that you had not spoken. The scene will probably end in her informing you that you can look for someone else. 'You are at liberty to please yourself.' This with much condescension. But as in no case will you be pleased, the remark presents itself in the light of a superfluity. Still, for a time you persist in hopefulness; though the sigh of relief you heave as your help and comfort's Falstaffian form is trundled off the ranch has to be repeated so often that at last even hope expires, and your thoughts rove wildly to a Chinaman, until you remember that a *woman* you *must* have. Yet the undisputed fact remains that the object of your help and comfort in coming to you is so to contrive that you shall be hers; and if you fail to come up to her requirements, and provided she has skinned you sufficiently for her purposes, she decamps. Sense of duty, respect for her given word, gratitude for kindness received, she scorns.

A couple more illustrations; and I have done with 'our help.'

Having, not without the expenditure of thought and trouble, obtained for the Portly One then on hand what she claimed to have set her heart on, *i.e.*, some outside sewing (for occasional specimens of the type can make dresses), I was somewhat annoyed to see that same 'sewing' lying around in the dust day after day, while the Portly One reclined at ease and read the sensational newspapers beloved of her class. I therefore urged upon her my friend's need for the dress then in process of making, and that, as a Mexican woman was doing most of the Portly One's housework, the latter might turn her attention to sewing. A burst of wrath, unrestrained, descended upon my head.

'If you was as tired and exhausted as I is, *you* wouldn't want to do no sewing!'

It may here be remarked that I, presumably the invalid, was at that time, in addition to all my other duties, sitting up night after night with a member of the household who was very ill, while this particular

Portly One was enjoying nights unbroken, except by her own snores.

Once more: One day, having been prevented from cleaning the silver myself, I took up two spoons, the bowls of which were—in short, indescribable.

‘Oh,’ I exclaimed involuntarily, ‘what dirty spoons! Indeed, they will have to be washed before being put on the dinner-table!’

‘Let’s see!’ They were snatched from my hand and critically examined. Then, in a tone whose scorn no efforts of mine can convey: ‘*That ain’t dirt!*’

‘What is it, then?’

‘Only *preespiration* off of my hands!’

There was a time when I exclaimed: ‘There are plenty of women in the world who like housework, and don’t like anything else; let *them* do it, if only as a matter of principle!’ I waxed hot and indignant on the subject—not because I personally have any special aversion to housework, but because it does not like me. Gradually, as month after month rolled by, though principle remained unaltered, words were quenched.

‘First catch your hare; then cook him.’

Moral : If your family is large enough to keep the industrious and methodical Chinaman employed, get one. If his wages are beyond the capacities of your purse, or your family is too small, provide yourself with a Mexican woman, and do the fine cooking with your own hands. Best of all, if there are two or three feminine members of your household each able to take her share, divide the work between you, and hire a native occasionally to sweep and scrub. If, however, you are all delicate, and there is a ranch to be looked after, you may find even this arrangement somewhat wearing. But it is the best you can do.

Above all things, avoid American female help, as she is grown in the Far West. With apologies to the inevitable exceptions to the rule, this tragic tale may close.

CHAPTER VIII.

WAGES, EDUCATION, AND THE JINGO.

ON the Help Question—that bugbear of American householders, male and female—follows inevitably that matter of wages, the terror of the householding stranger. It may appear like a contradiction in terms to add that one of the favourite war-cries of the late political campaign was the down-trodden working man and low wages. Taking this fact into consideration, it will not be amiss to present to the reader a few experiences reaped in actual daily life—too limited, indeed, to lay claim to any importance so far as refuting theories, statistics, or a more extensive acquaintance with the subject are concerned, and yet occupying a certain position of their own.

On establishing himself in the Territory of

New Mexico, for instance, the settler will find the following rate of wages, or one approximate thereto, prevailing: If a competent white man can be found—a doubtful prospect, despite the hordes of unemployed on the tramp, said to be thirsting for work—the wages asked will not be less than £5 or £6 per month. A competent Mexican—a veritable white crow—demands scarcely, if any, less. To a Mexican hired by the day, 3s. to 4s. will have to be paid. Of the native capacity for work, enough has already been said. A *señora* or *señorita* considers herself entitled to 4s. a day, and from £2 to about £3 10s. a month; furthermore, it must be noted that the native lady who can cook, or even desires to acquire the art of cookery, is another white crow. A white carpenter, the efficiency of whose work is not included in the bargain, receives 16s. a day.

Now, the above can hardly be considered starvation wages; indeed, wholly out of proportion as they are to the cost of living, it is not unfair to inquire whether the high rate of wages in the Far West, where the large majority of the employers of individual labour

possess small or moderate means, is not a factor in the ever-increasing wail concerning want of work. Theorists, and others of that ilk, may throw scorn on the insinuation; but numbers of private families, as well in California as in New Mexico, would, if questioned, give this as their principal reason for dispensing with hired help. Those able to pay the wages demanded prefer Chinese or Japanese labour both in house and grove, for reasons best set forth in the words of an employer of both: 'When I put a Chinaman or a Japanese in my house, for the high wages he demands he gives full value, more or less. He goes about his work steadily, not fancying much interference, I allow, but, on the other hand, seldom requiring much. When I put him into my orange-grove, he comes early and stays late, obeying the directions given him about the picking, and never shirking or cheating. Of the average white labourer, the exact contrary would have to be said. Yet the latter boycott and in every way outrage and abuse the Chinaman or Japanese, while declining to provide labour as satisfactory. Our reason for preferring

this "foreign labour" is not based on any question of wages, as is pretended, but on the question of competence or incompetence.'

Then, it must also be remembered that the disastrous series of 'booms' which devastated the Far West, as almost everywhere else, unnaturally inflated wages, and undoubtedly play their part in the present discontent. The bane of the hoodlum, or street rough, rests on more than one large city of the Far West, and the tramp is the terror of women on lone farms or dwelling unprotected beside the railroad; though of the hoboe it must be added that it is not here that he is at his worst, but rather in the States of the great Middle West. The Mayor of one of its cities recently suggested, moved by righteous wrath, that the whipping-post be resurrected as the only known cure for the disease of trampism, and an authority on the hoboe has exposed him, shorn of all his moving attributes, in the pages of the *Century Magazine*. In vain! For him the tears of the sentimentalist still flow.

'I only want a piece of dry bread, ma'am.'

‘ Poor fellow ! Walk right in, and let me give you a hot breakfast.’

‘ No, thankee. Me and my mates jes’ crave a mite o’ dry bread to help fix the dressin’ for our turkey ; that’s all we’re after gettin’.’

When the Coxeyite army marched through the land like a horde of locusts, it was known, past all dispute, that many of these unemployed had thrown up paying positions in California, and had since refused excellent offers of work *en route*, for the sake of the excitement of tramping and posing as martyrs. And for awhile their posing was admirably successful ; but the patience of the most good-natured, kindly people on the face of the civilized globe at length gave out. At the time of the uprising of unemployed in Chicago, farmers throughout the North-West were crying out for harvesters ; but farm-work at two dollars a day was not good enough for ‘starving men.’

Far be it from me to sneer at the distresses of the deserving unemployed, of which the hard times so long prevalent on this side have produced their thousands. Yet even into their case an element enters rarely observed

upon, but existent, nevertheless. An eminent philanthropist alludes to it as the 'thriftness of the American working man.' Saving, which involves abstinence, does not, in the majority of instances, enter into the working man's scheme of life. Especially is this true regarding the denizens of large cities. The best of everything is in demand for the family table, in spite of which, or as a resulting consequence thereof, various forms of 'dyspepsy' stick closer than a brother; and the wife and daughters indulge without stint that passion for personal adornment which permeates all classes more intensely than in England. New York provides for her citizens, and especially for her crowded poor, an almost limitless variety of cheap daily excursions throughout the summer by land and sea and river. No matter what day in the week one may select for a trip, there is the same holiday-making crowd—greater, of course, on Saturdays and Sundays, but always great; and I do not believe that anyone who has not, like myself, spent a summer in New York, under medical orders to avail myself constantly of these really

enjoyable excursions, can form an idea either of their variety or of the numbers who take advantage of them. It has always, since that summer, been difficult for me to expend an extravagant amount of emotion over the sufferings of the artisan class 'left to stew in the city.' That it should be possible to place such measures of relief within the reach of the working man and his family is a boon indeed; nevertheless, seeing him and his so prominently and constantly 'on pleasure bent,' whilst one's ears are assailed with tales of the hard times, low or no wages, one is tempted to meditate concerning men and things. Does the working man ever anticipate that possible 'rainy day' which men of our own class—the professional class—are apt to prepare for? Why should the working man—who, in truth, only shares the hard times with others of his fellow-citizens—deem himself superior to the duty of thrift, and angrily demand the same luxuries in bad times as in good? For this is, in truth, what his attitude amounts to. I should, indeed, have to disbelieve the evidence of my own senses were I to declare that it is the majority,

and not the minority, that lay by for hard times, ever-recurring strikes, and so forth. When the working man is saving and thrifty, his aims, generally speaking, are material; money, together with the gaudy spending thereof, his engrossing object. It is not from his class that the great men of American history have sprung—speaking again generally.

During a period of many months I was served faithfully and competently by an intelligent Irish-American woman of the respectable tenement-house class. She talked with me freely concerning the manner of life prevalent among the families of working men. Some of her disclosures provided not a little food for thought. That many were receiving relief who were not merely unworthy, but were fully able to take care of themselves, goes without saying, and also that it was not the Charity Organization which was making these blunders, but the Churches. My informant was temporarily supporting her sister and child on the wages she received from me, yet incidental remarks revealed that their table was liberally supplied with 'the best,' with beer, of course, in plenty. She one day

proudly displayed a doll for which she had just paid about six shillings, in order, forsooth, that her little girl should not be ashamed to carry it out to the park on Sundays! I have heard women of high social position, whose means, nevertheless, called for judicious management, declare that at their butcher's it is common for them to be contemptuously elbowed to one side by slatternly tenement-house women, ordering for their home consumption the best cuts of beef at what might be termed prohibitive prices, or spring chickens at 40 cents (about 1s. 8d.) per pound. Another woman, a working woman herself, told me that during a certain famous car strike in New York I should have been amazed to see what costly purchases were made in the city markets by the wives of the strikers.

While living in the flat alluded to above, the position of engineer to the house fell vacant. At least a hundred applicants pressed forward. It was an easy task to weed out the preponderating element of incompetency; a harder task for the kind-hearted manager to close his ears and blind

his judgment to tales of heart-rending woe. The man finally selected, on account of superior efficiency, professed to be in urgent need of work. When, a little later, I was preparing to leave the city, and offered for sale a few pieces of furniture of a light order — bamboo and wicker chairs, etc. — the engineer came to view them. ‘Oh no,’ he exclaimed, in a burst of fine scorn, ‘these things ain’t *near* fine enough for *my* wife’s parlour. She wouldn’t as much as look at ’em. *We* got to have somethin’ in plush—somethin’ rich.’

It is occasionally asserted that the majority of those who consider thrift or self-denial beneath their notice are foreign born. This may or may not be so ; I can only say that my own personal experiences are directly opposed to that view. The bugbear of the foreign immigrant is, in any case, losing much of its terrors for the home-grown citizen. I am not alluding here to the lowest of his kind, mostly to be found amongst the Hungarians, Poles, Italians, Russian Jews, etc., whose admission to this country calls for the strictest of regulations, but to the great

mass of well or partially-educated and, more or less, law-abiding importations, consisting in no small degree of Germans and Scandinavians. The Irish importation, its desirability or the reverse, I will omit all discussion of, merely remarking that, whatever its merits, it is mostly *en évidence* to the private citizen in its least attractive guise, and that the ranks of saloon-keepers, low politicians, and the great Tammany itself, are kept well supplied by the representatives of the Emerald Isle.

As for that worship of Mammon of which one hears so much, it was not until my footsteps turned Westward that they stumbled seriously by reason of it. The West, railing against the East as the idolater of wealth, kneels in very truth far nearer to the god's footstool, worshipping more blindly and ignorantly. The vast bourgeoisie of the Middle West (I know that many Americans will jeer at the expression, but again there are many who will consider it fairly apposite) is a far-reaching power. Within its radius are to be found strongly-defined, if to the stranger sometimes incomprehensible, class distinctions. Nevertheless, its aims and the

objects of its worship have much in common one with another. Its highest tide never does more than break against the barriers of the highest and most cultured society, and its lowest strictly defines its own limitations. Yet the wheels within wheels of its own social arrangements are beyond measure bewildering to the foreigner, who has had it dinned into his ears that 'there are no class distinctions in America.' It is in the ranks of the bourgeoisie that the most ardent worshippers of money are to be found. It is for this huge army that certain manners and customs continue to exist. Its beardless, semi-educated youth must have its vanity tickled with the title of Professor; its schools must continue to be institutes, academies, female seminaries, and the like. A more enlightened day in these and other respects dawns but slowly. Its feminine contingent see to it that a suit of sombre black continues to be the *ne plus ultra* of decorum for its masculine representatives. These are trifles light as air, but they lend a sameness, and at the same time a distinctive mark, to the otherwise variegated social landscape. And this

great bourgeoisie, though stronger and more prominent in the Middle West than elsewhere, is a force throughout the whole country.

Allusion was made in a former chapter to a certain dissatisfaction becoming apparent amongst the 'best' people with a public-school system hitherto extolled as perfection, but which to the writer—then a new-comer to the country—seemed nineteen years ago to be capable of improvement. Intercourse with school-teachers in various sections, and with young people graduated from the public schools, has only served to strengthen and deepen this impression. The standard demanded by popular opinion is low, both as regards teachers and scholars. An enormous mass of useless lumber is loaded upon the scholar, to be forgotten as soon as 'memorized.' Country schools are intrusted to teachers not only devoid of the gift of imparting any knowledge they may chance to possess, but whose ignorance is a thing *pour vivre—mais pour vivre!* Education (Heaven save the mark!), no matter how superficial, is deemed, even by men and women who ought to know better, the cure-all for every

evil, and in hundreds of cases the remedy is worse than the disease. Not *what* shall they read, but that they *shall* read, is the shibboleth best approved.

The conspicuous dearth of good literary taste, so often deplored where public-school graduates are concerned ; the lack of desire for the 'higher culture' ; the fact that grammar is taught by the yard in the schools, and yet that the inability 'of the American youth to write good English in his examination papers,' has aroused an indignant query from a well-known Professor at one of the great Universities as to whether these establishments of learning are expected to teach their freshmen the use of their own language both for pen and tongue—these and other hard facts are beginning to pierce the self-satisfaction of the average American citizen. To talk with a tried and competent public-school teacher is in itself a liberal education ; but what is one among so many ? The competent teacher bewails the superficiality in the teaching, the mass of subjects impossible of assimilation even if suited to the needs of the pupil, the number of children of all ages

assigned to one rural school-ma'am to discipline and instruct; above all, the delusion that 'anyone can teach school.' 'All the reform this country needs,' exclaimed a public speaker lately, 'is a retrenchment in education and an advancement in agriculture.' Even in cultured Boston, the delusion that to train the young idea is a work for which the most ignorant are fitted is one that occasionally finds place, judging by the following anecdote printed in a religious weekly, and purporting to set forth only the fastidiousness of applicants in search of employment :

The head of an industrial bureau asked a woman what she would like to do, to which, as always, she said, 'Anything.'

'I asked her how she would like a cashier's place in a store.

"Oh dear no! I know nothing about figures, and I can hardly write."

Now follows the moral of the tale :

'*Had you thought of teaching in a school?*'

'Oh dear no! I thought I said I hated children.' And so forth.

The head of the industrial bureau did not

appear to be impressed with the absurdity of her own suggestion, but simply with the airs of the applicant for employment.

Normal schools for teachers abound, and yet, excellent as many of these are, the ignorant instructors of youth are as thick as blackberries upon the roadside bush. Politics, interest—Heaven knows what not—all lend their quota to the trouble. Education by all means, but let it be the right kind, applied in the right manner in the right places.

In an admirable article published recently in New York, attention was drawn to another crying evil calling for reform—namely, the education in Jingoism given by the public schools. American history is taught with a Jingo bias, and, to quote from the article, ‘The one thing needful, the *sine quâ non* of American citizenship, without which a republic constituted as is ours is hopeless, is not taught at all; and that is political science, science of government, or political economy, or whatever you choose to call it.’ ‘Every word of that article is true’ (and there was a great deal more in the same strain), commented a public-school youth in

my presence, 'and I wish the schools would give a better education in citizenship. Waving the Stars and Stripes isn't all of it.'

A teacher wrote me as follows: 'Your observations concerning a child's education in history seem to hit the mark exactly. About all an ordinary child knows, when he first begins to study history in the eighth grade, is that George Washington was the father of his country, and that it is his own bounden duty as a future citizen of the United States to hate England and love America with all his heart and soul. The last clause is all right, but I think that the commandment to love our neighbours is as essential to national harmony in national affairs as it is to individual harmony in private affairs.'

The influential journal—and the newspaper in this country is the god of the superficially educated, or demi-semi-educated, majority—exerts probably more influence when it holds the Jingo up to ridicule than when it contents itself with simply scolding him. One of the best of these journalistic anecdotes deals with a bristling warrior who presented himself at

the office of a large city newspaper, provided with the customary manuscript, but anxious before delivering it to ascertain what were the chances of war betwixt the United States and any of the other Great Powers, England in particular. Having been assured by the editor that peace for ten years at least might in his opinion be confidently expected, the warrior proceeded to hand over to the editor a formidable-looking document, tied with red tape.

‘What is it about?’ inquired the editor, taking it gingerly.

The visitor straightened himself up proudly.

‘It is an appeal, sir, to the patriots of this great and glorious Republic, sir, to defend the nation’s honour at whatever cost of blood and treasure, sir, and that article announces that I desire to enlist a thousand men at once who will be ready at a moment’s notice to lay down their lives, with me at their head, in defence of liberty and our native land. We must defy all foreign Governments, sir, and effete monarchies, and I desire to go upon the record, sir, as a patriot with blood to shed upon my country’s altar.’

The editor applauded the valour of the visitor, told him there were hundreds like him, and took the communication under advisement, where it still is.

Song and story glorify the patriotism of the Northern soldier during the Civil War ; yet this glory is sadly dimmed by the scandal and greed connected with the Pension Roll, its barefaced corruption and fraud. That thirty odd years after the War the number of pensioners living on the country should be 970,678 proves that patriotism, like other things, has its price. No doubt our Jingo friends' patriotism is after the same order. For the thousands of gallant soldiers who merited pensions for themselves or their families, there are other thousands who by their covetousness have disgraced the Union for which they fought ; and in nothing has Mr. Cleveland shown greater courage or endured greater obloquy than in his endeavour to relieve the country in some measure of the burden imposed on it by so-called disinterested patriots.

CHAPTER IX.

OURSELVES, AND OTHERS.

AND, speaking of Jingoism, it was well and wisely said by one having authority to pass judgment, that this element, so noticeable during the happily blown-over Venezuelan disturbance, owed no small share of its virulence to the personal feeling aroused by the deportment of the English individual in this country. The accusation is unfortunately a true one. As immigrants we cannot—at least, in our initiatory years—be said to shine.

The reasons for this failure are various. We assimilate too slowly with our environment, hug our ignorance, or our self-conceit, too closely—in short, we think we ‘know it all,’ and are not willing to learn. Those of us who have long made our home on this

side, and count many of its people as amongst our dear friends, agree that we prefer to meet our fellow-countrymen after they have had time to be well aired, and have emerged from that crude condition which may not unfitly be described as 'sending home for our things.' After awhile even the English man or woman discovers that in a progressive and civilized country 'things' can actually be purchased well and cheaply. Perhaps four to six years is the time to allot to our countryman for purposes of growth, at the close of which period, provided he is a hopeful member of any kind of society—which, alack! is far from being inevitably the case—he settles down into a citizenship, whether naturalized or otherwise, with which both he and his neighbours have reason to be satisfied. But the process aforesaid is to the onlooker a rather tiresome personally-conducted affair, doing more credit to the individuality of the race than to its intelligence.

'Are you *really* English?' I should never have suspected it! is an observation not seldom made to the writer.

‘*Really!* And why not?’

‘Well, you’re not at all aggressively English.’

As if to be aggressive and to be English were necessarily one and the same thing!

‘We welcome all strangers with open arms,’ remarked an American lady in the course of a discussion of this slightly unpleasant subject, *i.e.*, the English abroad, ‘and we try to make them feel at home. But it fatigues us to be told day after day how much better everything is done in England, and how hateful everything and everybody American is. After all, we are generally acknowledged to be a not unintelligent people, and those of us who have been denied the privilege of a visit to England, and thus drawing our own comparisons, grow weary of hearing ourselves and our institutions persistently abused. We must be pardoned, therefore, for avoiding persons who render themselves tedious, and for wishing that they would return to their own little isle of the blest. We have entertained them hospitably, but we can get along without them very well.’

Who of us, having once chanced to see it, can forget Du Maurier's admirable 'On a Certain Condescension in Foreigners'?

'*He*: Oh, you're from America, are you? People often say to me: "Don't you dislike Americans?" But I always say: "I believe there are some very nice ones among them."

'*She*: Ah, I dare say there may be two or three nice people amongst sixty millions.'

The 'Britisher' who comes out here with the idea that he can do as he likes in America—to employ his own expression—would do well to disabuse himself of that belief with all the expedition of which he is capable.

Deny if you can, O candid reader, that such a scene as the following, viewed on Broadway, New York, at the fashionable hour of the day, would not cause your patriotic flesh to creep. You are, let us say, one of the passengers in a crowded cable-car. Suddenly you become aware that there is some spectacle on the side-walk which is attracting the attention of your companions—regulation New Yorkers, accus-

tomed to all sorts and conditions of men from all corners of the globe. Your well-dressed neighbour touches her equally well-appointed masculine escort, and murmurs in derisive accents, 'English, of course!' whilst a mild ripple of amusement ruffles the human surface around you. You look out, and what is this that meets your shrinking gaze? Striding along through the loitering stream of fashionables, tricked out in tweed shooting-suits and caps and huge shooting-boots, hands very conspicuous and innocent of gloves, behold your fellow-countrymen, the butt of gods and men! Lucky for you if no cartridge-belts encircle their stalwart waists. And all this in the United States, where style ranks next to godliness!

The ideas of the average English immigrant concerning this vast country and its inhabitants are at first, and often continue to be, as vague and inaccurate as those of the tourist who, on landing on these shores, wrote to relatives in England that he was disappointed at not being able to see Pike's Peak from New York, but that he expected

to drive down to North Carolina the following day to call on some friends. Furthermore, if he falls into the pit of an 'English set,' he is not likely to improve very much. Let him avoid as he would a trap its narrow confines. Also he will have less to blush for in later, better-instructed years if, after a limited period passed in a probably ill-selected corner of this great country, he were to refrain from wholesale criticism of a people concerning whom he has taken especial pains to know a little less than nothing, and whom by these manifestations he sometimes offends, but more often extravagantly amuses. The American, and in particular the educated American, is a person possessed of much tolerance, to which his sense of humour contributes not a little; the airs of the unaided Englishman consequently afford him diversion.

To claim that the American community in which the newly-arrived Englishman is apt to find himself is of necessity congenial or elevating, would be as absurd as to pretend that the Englishman himself is of necessity superior to his surroundings. American rural

communities, if one may be permitted to generalize, whilst ahead of the same kind of community in England in some respects, are, in the South and West, at all events, distinctly behind in others. The reasons for their deficiencies are obvious to one who has spent any length of time in their midst. But it must never be forgotten that a large proportion of our immigrating fellow-country-people have not been conspicuous successes 'at home,' and to the impartial observer have no solid foundation on which to build their ostentatious claims to superiority. And for his rigid inadaptability to unaccustomed surroundings the Englishman too often pays dearly, sinking lower and lower in the social scale, and making a failure of everything he attempts, until 'See what an Englishman can come down to!' has become a universal exclamation, overheard at all times and in all places. This is not to say that a rigid inadaptability is not a virtue in the right place, or that the manifestation of it is not in some localities eminently desirable.

But however personally distasteful the country community may chance to be in

which the immigrant's lot is cast—and our compatriots seem to have a genius for making a poor selection—there is one virtue rarely absent from any American community, whether of city or country: I allude to the virtue of neighbourliness. We, as a race, would do well to take example from it. An Englishwoman of my acquaintance, slowly coming to understand the self-imposed restriction of her social instincts to the limits of one of the 'sets' in 'the English set,' expressed herself once to me somewhat in this fashion. Needless to say, her discoveries offered to the old settler nothing in the way of novelty.

'Americans are *so* kind to one another in sickness or trouble! Now, if I ask an Englishwoman to help some mutual acquaintance, she will be pretty sure to reply, "I'm too busy at home; I really *cannot* go outside of it," or, "She's not in our set, and if we take her up we shall be obliged to invite her to our houses, and you know that won't do," etc. Now, this is all wrong, and yet I don't see how to alter it. An American woman, when she hears that a neighbour is in distress,

drops everything and runs to her without a thought of "sets," or her own probably already heavy duties. And ten to one she carries some tempting home-made delicacy with her, if sickness is in the house.'

That will be a bad day when the fashionable One Hundred and Fifty of the various large cities succeed in sneering out of existence the above unique feature of true American life, *i.e.*, its simplicity, its lovely and admirable neighbourliness. It is rare, indeed, to hear even the busiest of New York women declare that she has 'no time to spare' for a sick or otherwise suffering acquaintance, much less for a friend. Her social duties, her philanthropic work, her clubs, call her in every direction; her domestic duties, compared with those of her English cousin, are appalling; but her neighbourly duty is seldom neglected, and never grumbled at. No doubt the greater simplicity of social life as it is lived in the *best* American society—and by best I do not necessarily mean the wealthiest and most fashionable—encourages the practice of the more kindly virtues. The reins of the social

law are grasped less rigidly on this side—so far. Formal invitations are not *de rigueur* for the assembling of congenial guests ; and the *grace* of hospitality is perhaps nowhere in the world beheld in such perfection. The well-bred American hostess possesses in the highest degree the art of drawing out the very best of which her guests are capable. The least brilliant of them is conscious of her desire that he should appear to good advantage rather than that she herself should shine. Added to all this, there is a tolerance of differing views, a freedom from narrowing ‘fads of the hour,’ distinctive of a society composed of persons drawn from various sections of a great and varied country. They have no possible excuses for dulness or monotony.

Indeed, it may even appear at times as if the American people were a conglomeration of as many incongruities, inconsistencies, and surprises as there are nationalities in its make-up. Yet deep down at bed-rock there lies but one soul, it is declared, animating the mass, and which on occasion, provided the occasion be mighty enough, will speak

with but one voice. Nevertheless, in face of the swift and unexpected developments ceaselessly revealing themselves in the life of a hurrying people, who can foretell the future with any kind of certainty? The old shibboleth has, to the attentive ear, already lost much of its confident ring. There is a new spirit abroad that watches and waits, prepared to be surprised at nothing. 'The old order changeth,' it whispers, eyes dark with dread and suspicion, 'yielding place to new; and who is this that will fulfil himself?'

Admitting therefore that two kindred and 'hard-headed' nations have certain unexpected foibles in common, we have also to admit that the American—perhaps because his emotions are nearer the surface, and because of his more varied origin—presents himself to the world as a person possessing a larger capacity for inconsistency than the Englishman; although the Englishman, too, is quite capable of giving his 'surprise-parties.'

The typical American—if, indeed, it be fair, or even possible, to set up a type in the midst of such diversity—is at once imitative and

independent. In the words of the Western Governor, quoted in a previous chapter, he cries, 'What have we to do with foreign nations, any way?' Yet those who admire and value the higher traits of American independence, and more especially those which give free rein to the national kind-heartedness, regardless of conventionalism or fashion, regret the insidious encroachment of imported manners and customs filtering down from the Upper Four Hundred to what, for want of a better word, we must call the great middle class. We, who love the people for itself, sigh over the evanishment of one distinctively American custom after another, the loss of simplicity, of marked characteristics, without appreciable gain. The moral can be pointed and the tale adorned by an illustration drawn from life on one of the fashionable roadways of any large city; a trivial illustration, possibly, but not without its application to graver matters.

Rumbling slowly on its way towards us comes a cumbrous vehicle—English-built or imitated, it matters not which—which the aspiring American has recently learned to

call by the ineffably foolish and inappropriate name of 'trap.' The appointments of the whole outfit are perfect, *i.e.*, perfect as regards imitation, even to the imported groom sitting erect with folded arms. The horse, whose chief recommendation appears to be that he can almost knock his nose with his knees, frets on a stiff curb-bit, and labours under the weight of the complicated English harness, with its endless straps, buckles, and chains. Furthermore, he is sorely tormented by the great American fly, senseless and cruel Fashion having ordained that he shall be docked of his one weapon of defence. His anxious owner, perched high on the driving-seat, sticks his elbows out at the correct angles, and handles the reins in what he has been assured is the latest English style. So far, so good, in the English manner. Now let us see the American manner :

Here he comes, with a swish of light wheels and a patter of light hoofs—the American roadster. Behind him one of those airy vehicles which for comfort as well as speed have surely never yet been touched.

The horse is no track star, with a record somewhere within hailing distance of two minutes, but a two-sixty or three-minute fellow, such as the average American citizen likes to drives behind, with wife or daughter at his side—the daughter to-day, one would say, her face bright with the joy and exhilaration of rapid motion. With head erect, and large eyes filled with generous emulation, the native roadster flashes past the heavy-moving trap, and breasts the incline at a pace the mere beholding of which warms the blood. He carries what Colonel Dodge, one of the great equine authorities on this side, would describe as ‘a poem of a tail,’ in a proud arch. Of the admirably quiet and tasteful harness there is as little as is compatible with safety ; the unused whip rests in the socket. Another moment, and the most perfect turn-out civilization has yet evolved spins over the crest of the hill and is gone. Such joys as these are distinctly native products. Why, when he is so proud of native produce, does the American abandon them for lower pleasures—the pleasure, for instance, of imitation, of reducing everything

and everybody to a dead level? In certain forms of horseflesh, as in some other matters, he boasts with reason that he has the best the world can give; yet, such is his inconsistency, he elaborately and anxiously forswears himself. For what? A mere freak.

We have to allow, therefore, that the typical American is, on the whole, more inconsistent than the Englishman, more 'past finding out'; or, at least, the newcomer may well be pardoned for holding such a belief. In some rural communities prudish self-consciousness advances to the border-line of indecency, yet the wondering stranger perceives, nevertheless, in the pages of family newspapers, advertisements which cause the hair upon his head to rise, and the blood in his veins to run cold. *Autres pays, autres mœurs.* Again, it is a nation of a humour fine and unsurpassed; its wit is a perpetual delight. Yet now and then it stumbles, and then what a fall is that! To the dull Briton, at whose deficiency in humour his livelier cousin never ceases to poke fun, these lapses from grace are in-

explicable. A lack of the sense of the fitness of things may be more responsible for such lapses than actual inconsistency. The Presidential handshakings are among the ludicrous incidents of American life, in which the average American—we are not dealing here with the exceptions—sees nothing but what is solemn and impressive. His real deficiency betrays itself in trifling occurrences, such as the following: A magnificent washstand set of the finest cut-glass, worth hundreds of dollars, was offered for sale in a famous New York emporium. Many among the envious went to view it. ‘But one would not dare to use anything so valuable,’ was the natural comment. ‘*Use* it! No, indeed! It is not intended for use—only for ornament.’ A washstand set for ornament!

The noisiest people on earth at once take pride in and bewail their nerves. Yet they slumber serenely—they and their babies—in the midst of a pandemonium such as causes the tortured, though supposedly thick-skinned and phlegmatic Briton to yearn for the quiet of the grave; and, despite the taunts and protests of the small minority, the large

majority continues to thrive in a bedlam of street and other sounds well calculated to drive members of any other civilized race to the shelter of the first convenient lunatic asylum.

The citizens of a certain great city of the Middle West recently demanded that a bell which was about to be cast for one of their public buildings should be, not the most beautiful from an artistic point of view, or the most melodious in tone, but the *loudest* ever produced by the hand of man. The national holidays are remarkable principally for noise—senseless, rampant noise. The Fourth of July—a day surely filled with stirring and solemn memories—becomes each year more noted for the encouragement it offers to the American boy to outdo himself in noise and rudeness, and to banal oratory with a voice of brass, than to the suitable celebration of a tremendous national event. Tin horns, steam-whistles, and fire-crackers are deemed the fittest exponents of a great nation's emotions; and the musical chimes ushering in a new and untried year are drowned in a clatter which can only be

described as diabolical. The American child that is prevented—I do not say entreated, because ‘prevention’ and ‘entreaty’ are not synonymous terms in this connection—from banging doors, stamping on its heels, talking as loud as the constitution of its lungs will permit, is a *rara avis*. Modulated tones and light footsteps in the mature human specimen are not, on this side, considered the sign-manual of refinement and good-breeding. At this point the doubt is suggested to me by one who has recently visited our mutual native land: Are they any longer considered so on the other side? *Quien sabe?* as the Mexican says.

The American Eagle screams for the ‘rights’ of every incapable or tyrannical oligarchy miscalled a republic—dubs any uprising anywhere, no matter how lawless (always provided it does not occur within American jurisdiction), patriotism; whilst beneath its extended wings its own nurslings clamour loudly for ‘rights’ of their own. So runs the world away.

CHAPTER X.

'LAW-ABIDINGNESS' IN THE SOUTH-WEST.

ON first settling in this section, and receiving the assurance, inevitable in all American rural communities — namely, that this particular community was 'remarkable for its law-abidingness'—it was something of a shock to be told, in addition, 'But you must get yourself a fierce guard-dog. And, of course, you can fire a gun? No? Why, then, you must learn!' This to a woman of the old-timey kind, who can be reckoned on (always provided the act be unseen of men) to clap her hands to her ears at the first symptom of demonstrativeness on the part of the gun, and who, when personally conducting a loaded weapon, can with equal certainty be relied on to carry it at arm's length, muzzle pointed to the ground, and who—— But enough.

Let it be said at once that the old-timey woman has improved, and that there was room for improvement.

We are informed by Eastern authorities that the place of the original cowboy knows him no more. Having in former days depicted Far Western life with the extreme of exaggeration, they now hasten to cover up their tracks with material distinguished rather for redundance than accuracy. Meantime, the cowboy still disports himself in our midst when so disposed; which, fortunately for us, is not often. As a matter of fact, the ranchers of New Mexico have small reason to fear molestation, unless they mix themselves up with what we call here 'politics,' and the man who thrusts his hands into that blazing compound has no right to complain if he gets burned fingers instead of raisins.

The remark made occasionally by lonely ranchers, to the effect that they abide in more fear of white men than of Mexicans, is not, however, without significance. The Bad Man of the Far West, who from the earliest days of American encroachment has been a potent factor in hindering the progress of civilization,

and whose treachery and cruelty have scarcely been surpassed by the savage he so despises, still exists, and that not only in the commonly accepted type of mere barbarian. He comes now in less profusion, certainly, but in greater variety ; his talents cover a wider range. Having said this, it is but fair to add that the number of murders committed in the Territory is relatively small—*relatively*, because the general sense of lawlessness in the air is not to be denied. Where the political element is strong enough to poison justice at its source, to thwart Sheriffs in the execution of duties which are at best perilous and difficult, when the enormous size of the Territory, together with its imperfectly settled condition, is taken into account, the qualifying adjective is not out of place. And there are also other obstacles to the growth of a large and openly criminal class.

‘ If there were more rain in this section, there would be more murders,’ commented a Sheriff with whom I had been conversing concerning things which pertain to his craft.

‘ How so ?’

‘Because in this arid country, with its wide expanses of practically untravelled desert, murderers and other criminals are compelled to return to civilization for water, even if they venture any distance away. Thus, we track them up and catch them. More water-holes, more criminals!’

‘Notwithstanding these difficulties, there are enough murderers and cattle-thieves to keep you occupied?’

His smile responded to mine. Then he added soberly :

‘And there are enough bad men in this section, let me tell you—as bad as they make ’em.’

Taken altogether, the negro is decidedly the intellectual superior of the Mexican, as a man, but not as a woman. Yet, his oft-times malevolent appearance to the contrary notwithstanding, the Mexican is not made of the stuff that lends itself to the commission of great crimes. The enormities which have given to the Black Belt such revolting prominence are in New Mexico conspicuous by their absence. The Mexican is, on the whole, fairly harmless. Everything with

him is petty : he makes friends with the ranch guard-dog ; failing that, poisons him with strange and secret decoctions made of herbs ; but, if offended, he refrains from poisoning the rancher or his family, after the negro manner. It is possible that he is not sufficiently intelligent for such deep plotting, or is too timid to face probable consequences. At all events, having disposed of his greatest enemy, *el perro*, he prowls around the white man's dwelling under cover of the night, seeking literally what he may devour, and gathering up everything capable of conveyance, from firewood to hives stuffed full of wrathful bees.

Nothing comes amiss. Actual house-breaking is not to his fancy ; it is too dangerous, and he is not partial to danger. Nevertheless, he can be induced, if suitably entreated, to undertake even that at a pinch. Light-fingered and nimble, the native can raid your store-room whilst the cook is passing backwards and forwards between the lights ; or, as a voracious chronicler hath it, whisk up an oil-stove from before your door, and make off with it and your breakfast,

burning hot, under your very eyes. But this is our tawny brother at his "top notch"; he is not capable of such a feat every day. With no special inclination towards desperate deeds, it is asserted, by those who know, that his love of lucre, carefully stimulated, will carry him to almost any lengths; that is to say, a bribe, and not a very large bribe, will induce him to commit a murder. Unprompted, Mexican murders are usually the result of passion superinduced by too much red wine, and a long knife is used for that business, in the Italian fashion; or, in company with his kind, the native will track the solitary white man on the lonely desert trail, and strike him down for the sake of the few coins he may have in his pockets, and so leave him to the buzzards for picking and to the sand-storms for burial. Thus do men drop out of the land of the living, and the welcoming fires of home blaze for them in vain. The instinct of the Indian to waylay and kill his victim far from home and friends still lives in the Mexican, and the white man who essays alone the following of the desert trail has only himself to thank for any

possible consequences of his foolhardiness—if any.

Occasionally, as has before been hinted, the Mexican is substantially backed or encouraged, more especially if the case is one of 'politics.' A few months ago a man, conspicuous since the early days of American occupation of the Territory, not only in its small-beer politics, but in its greater history, undertook to cross forty miles of desert *en route* to a neighbouring town, accompanied only by his little son. From that day to this they have never been heard of. They vanished as suddenly and completely as though the earth had opened and swallowed them up. For weeks posse after posse scoured the country—all in vain. Conjectures were rife; charges and counter-charges darkened the air; the neighbourhood was for a while a seething pot of mutual suspicion and recrimination; large rewards were offered by the Governor and private persons, but the secret was well kept, and the vanished tell no tales. The most that was absolutely known was that the father in his legal capacity was engaged to proceed against certain prisoners

in the town for which he was bound, and that his case was a very strong one.

While defending the Far West—and by imputation the South—from accusations of extreme lawlessness, it is only proper to suggest the existence of differing opinions as to the interpretation of the word 'law-abidingness.' The drifting of stray straws proves that the set of the wind is not yet precisely the same as in England or in the Eastern States. For instance, there is a stringent law forbidding the carrying of concealed weapons, yet it is safe to say that the territorial citizens whose pistol-pockets are habitually unoccupied are in the minority. 'Every man must look out for himself' is the excuse offered, if excuses seem to be in even temporary demand. The striking point of the affair to the 'tenderfoot' is, not simply that murders are comparatively rare, but the reason presented by a Western journal—and presented in sober earnest, too—for this condition of armed neutrality, so to speak. 'The carrying of protective weapons by the citizen,' we are thus seriously informed, 'conduces to the preservation of peace.' What a

quaint, ancient-history ring have these and other utterances of the Great Progressive West! *Nous autres*—we of an older civilization—are, then, as those who have been running over a hill and have arrived at the foot again.

As for the discrepancy existing between the moral standards of the Far East and of the Far West, that is too burning a question to enter upon here. That such discrepancy, however, does exist, the Far Easterner realizes by slow but painful degrees. If his ideas concerning certain subjects partake too much of the 'tenderfoot' order, this is his misfortune, not his fault.

Go where we will—east, west, north, or south—read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest all that a great, diversified, and profoundly interesting people sets before the stranger within its gates, the conclusion is invariably the same: This is a law-abiding people, influenced nevertheless largely by its emotions. More than this; to quote a well-known Eastern journal, the organ of the cultured elect: 'Our system of law is exceptionally lenient to persons charged with

crime.' And while acknowledging the purity and justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, we are obliged to allow that to the extreme tardiness of legal action, to the endless quibbling which too often ends in the practical non-enforcement of the law's decree, to what has been neatly styled 'the coddling of murderers,' to the abuses connected with the selection of a jury, does the nation in large degree owe lynchings, lootings of banks and offices in broad daylight, highway and train robbery and wrecking, and other pastimes which have acquired unfortunate notoriety as pre-eminently 'American.' They are pre-eminently South-Western, perhaps, and as such find place in these pages, but assuredly they cannot be laid to the door of the favourite National Cat—the foreign immigrant. He is responsible for much, but not for all.

There are side-issues in the game of life here as elsewhere, and among them the widespread evil of defective home-training plays a large part. The overwhelming mass of the demi-semi-educated delights in fostering in its offspring the spirit of an ill-conceived liberty, License masquerading under

an honoured name. From this class spring miseries great and small—from the petty, nerve-destroying woes laid on the shoulders of the much-enduring American housewife, up to the tragedy of the boy train-wrecker, the hoodlum of the street, the various ills which are the result of uncontrolled, undisciplined homes. That freedom of the boy and girl only too easily degenerates into license, every newspaper daily reveals ; nothing short of a wilful optimism can blind the eyes to certain glaring facts.

Defaulting treasurers and cashiers, dishonest bank presidents—too many of them described as ‘having been prominent in church circles’—swell the ranks of the criminals. Worse still, if convicted by a jury of their fellow-citizens, the court will in numerous instances, and on a mere legal technicality, wipe out the indictment ; or should punishment be awarded, its term is cut short by a too lenient Governor, or even by the President himself. In the words of a righteously indignant citizen concerning a particularly flagrant case : ‘We have put a premium on crime for a long number of

years, until we have lost our money, and our reputation for honesty is a thing of the past. . . . Treasurer after treasurer defaults, and not one is punished. It is a wonder the country stands at all, and a wonder the people have borne it as they have.'

Less prone, on the whole, to the absurd and trivial crazes which too often make the inhabitants of our own tight little isle the laughing-stock of gods and men, the American people is nevertheless subject to attacks of emotionalism or sentimentality unworthy a nation priding itself on its good sense. These attacks are not confined to the undisciplined. Sentimentality obtrudes its inopportune personality in various unexpected spots, confusing with its clamour a difficult foreign policy, encouraging lawlessness and the tramp curse, lending its aid to the maladministration of justice, confounding unrepented - of wrong - doing with unmerited suffering, exalting criminals into martyrs, and largely complicating a problem already sufficiently abstruse—the Labour Question. In England, too, where 'good horse-sense' is said to reign, emotionalism almost as con-

stantly drives reason from the field. It is not long since a perfect furore of excitement was aroused there by the sensational speeches and recitals of a coloured woman in regard to an evil of which only one side could by natural sequence be presented—and that, moreover, to audiences for the most part ignorant of the environment which produces lynch law, still more so of its causes. Carried away, nevertheless, by that form of sentimentalism which is as a lion in the path of the practical reformer, they arose with an impetuosity inflamed by ignorance—to get a snubbing on this side for ‘interference’ and ‘meddlesomeness,’ with the advice thrown in that they would do better to clean out their own stables before howling at the condition of those of their neighbours.

To consider this horrible matter of lynching with a proper amount of dispassionate-ness is indeed no easy task. To enlarge on its horror and wrong is superfluous. But even here the old adage that from wrong is born wrong finds place, and no one personally acquainted with the conditions prevailing in some sections of this country, more particu-

larly in the South and South-West, can honestly declare lynch law to be practised anywhere without some reason for its being. Yet it is just these reasons which are so continually overlooked, even by those who should know better than to ignore them. How much more so, then, by foreigners, unaware of their very existence?

To go backwards. California was settled and made habitable for the decent classes by lynch law. It was the only law which fulfilled its promises to the people and gave them that protection, bereft of which civilized life is impossible. It was in many respects, and certainly in its ultimate results, a beneficent institution, and the judgment of posterity is compelled, however reluctantly, to endorse its work. Now, in presumably civilized times, what are the conditions which can permit of its continued existence in any corner of a great and progressive country?

Let us deal primarily with the legal conditions; or, to be more accurate, with the law as it is enforced. It is, nominally at least, the people's privilege to make their own laws, and once made it is the people's duty

to see that they are enforced, and to uphold the Sheriff in his endeavours to protect his prisoner from the mob. 'So far, so good,' retort the people; 'but the criminal protected, the authorities fail in their part. Astute lawyers find ground for appeal after appeal, and finally, on some purely legal technicality, the prisoner gets off with slight or no punishment, and is soon turned loose again to repeat his vile offence. There will always be found citizens who will not submit to this, and who, if the law fails in its duty, will be unto themselves a law, and protect their own homes and families as best they can.' That this accusation can be made, and in a measure truthfully, is a fact which may well cause those carried away by a natural and proper horror of lynching to pause and consider. Abuse is no argument. The skilful physician probes for the bullet before attempting to heal the wound.

Mention has already been made of the legal delays so common in this country, and it may be added that the opinion of a certain Eastern journal quoted above finds an echo in the hearts of all thoughtful and honestly

patriotic citizens. The editorial alluded to proceeds to point out the necessity the judge is under of ruling all doubtful points in favour of the prisoner, the studied accumulation of confusing evidence, in the sorting of which the jury can expect little aid from a judge, himself beset and harassed by counsel. 'The tolerance of such abuses as now pervert a murder trial with us into an elaborate piece of machinery to secure an acquittal or a mis-trial turns justice into a mockery, and puts a premium on crime.' This is a hard saying, and no doubt has aroused indignant disclaimers, yet it is an open secret that, if justice were done, more than one of the self-appointed rulers of an Eastern city—now temporarily snowed under by the righteous if long-delaying wrath of its best citizens—ought to be looking through prison-bars; and anyone who has lived a few years on this side knows to what divers uses the plea of 'Self-defence,' cleverly and unscrupulously handled, can be put. That the condition of affairs described above is not confined to the State of New York, no one in the full possession of his faculties can deny. Even should the

words quoted be deemed an exaggeration of facts, the influence of corrupt politicians, present in the courts of justice as everywhere else, must always be taken into account; and in an address delivered to a large audience not a year ago, a prominent judge called attention in scathing terms to the inadequate number of convictions as compared with the number of proven criminals.

If it be conceded, then, in regard to this matter of lynching, that in some sections at least exasperated communities have cause for loss of faith in those whose duty it is to protect them from dangerous persons, we must go a little further yet and take into consideration the hideous provocation that turns for the nonce apparently civilized men into brute beasts. Yet hitherto every attempt to confront this difficult question with moderation, or in the spirit of equity, has been looked on with distrust and suspicion by those removed from the scene of action; while at the same time it is admitted that the root of the trouble remains to all intents and purposes untouched. Misplaced sentiment concerning the criminal

combines with the law's miscarriage to obstruct reform ; and it may safely be asserted that the large majority of sober citizens in the 'lynching sections,' while bewailing certain horrible occurrences, bewail also the circumstances encouraging them. Right or wrong, exaggerated or no, this is the prevalent view.

In the crusades against lynching, especially when negroes are the victims, the fact that it is the brutal bestiality of the offender which has aroused the worst passions of his chastisers is overlooked—that is, by outsiders not comprehending the situation. An ill-informed person reading or giving ear to the crusaders' outpourings might well believe the object of mob-violence to be an innocent martyr. In their hysterical clamour against what they falsely term persecution of the poor negro, and in righteous wrath at the sickening mode of punishment occasionally meted out to him, the crusaders aforesaid, hailing from both sides of the ocean, plunge alike into that fatal error of sentimentalism. True, it is but in one or two of the South-Western States—and those, generally speaking, roughly settled—

that mob violence in its most repulsive form has occurred. A short shrift and a speedy end is the common form of procedure. But even at the worst there are circumstances to be considered over and above the loss of faith in legal authority—*redress*, alas! there cannot be—circumstances which, while very far from being extenuating, assuredly deserve attention.

That the negro excites mob violence with considerably more frequency than does the white man is a fact at once accurate and misleading. To anyone familiar with the South it needs no explanation. 'Persecution' is not a factor, the case being merely that the negro is so constant an offender.

From the early days of the exploration of New Mexico, when Black Estevan, the companion of Fray Niza, lost his life at the hands of the original inhabitants, up to the present time, history repeats itself. The Indian braves avenged their squaws in the savage manner, and nineteenth-century civilization continues to record the crime and its punishment in characters as savage. The

particular form of iniquity for which the negro is distinguished is very rare in Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas; but in every step taken Southward and Westward the black mark against his name grows blacker.

That this crime is on the increase, and that it acts as a perpetual menace to society, is, to scientific men, a curious and interesting circumstance, affording data for pathological study lying deeper than the one or two obvious reasons which to superficial observers seem to cover the ground; but to the relatives, or too often the survivors, of the victims, the matter has long since become too serious for calm consideration and inquiry. We may deplore the fury of madness, the agonized rage of grief, which seizes on fathers of innocent little ones and helpless women done to death by worse than fiends; we may shudder and sicken at the awful vengeance taken by entire communities; but should we let this blind us to the magnitude of the provocation? That whole audiences can be wrapped in an exaltation of sympathy for the offender, without apparently a single thought for the

wrecked homes, the ruined or extinguished lives, the blasted innocence—worst of all for the young children—would be incredible were it not for one's familiarity with the apparently inexhaustible fund of sentimentality, *i.e.*, misplaced sentiment, at the command of the two nationalities who have pre-empted a claim on the good, hard sense of the world. Some more drastic and common-sense remedy than hysterical ebullitions must be applied if the evil of lynching is to receive a permanent check. Better is it to inquire into causes than to rail at results.

There is yet another form of emotionalism—if so it may be called. It is that which makes a slave of the servant of the Republic, or at best renders independence of thought or action on his part a matter of supreme difficulty.

In the words of a notable college President: 'The independent thinker or actor, or the public servant, when his thoughts or acts run counter to prevailing popular or party opinions, encounters sudden and intense obloquy, which to many temperaments is very formidable. That habit of submitting to the

opinion of the majority which democracy fosters, renders the storm of detraction and calumny all the more difficult to endure, makes it, indeed, so intolerable to many citizens that they will conceal or modify their opinions rather than endure it.'

In the face of this assertion, the private citizen of the United States exhibits in argument a toleration, a courtesy, which his British contemporary would do well to imitate; and the American people as a whole stand easily ahead of other civilized nations in a good-natured optimism, and a rooted dislike to grumbling, occasionally carried to excess. In the mass, however, it presents but little resistance to any strong wave of emotion—especially if this wave be started by misplaced compassion, and fostered by the proverbial recklessness and irresponsibility of the daily press.

To say that the worshippers of Freedom have created some of the worst forms of slavery is but to repeat a truism. The pages of American history are darkened by deeds which may well come under the head of oppression. The Indian, nay, the Chinaman

of to-day, mention of whom has been made in a former chapter, are not without their wrongs. The Puritan proved himself a past-master in the art of religious persecution, and the working man of this enlightened day pays sometimes with his life for venturing to work out his own salvation. 'The characteristic of the average Congressman which has impressed me most,' observes a member of the House of Representatives—who has himself borne obloquy bravely, 'because his cause was just,' and because he has unlimited faith in 'the sober second thought of the people'—'and which is, I think, at once most striking and most humiliating, is his cringing to public opinion . . . a mad desire to ascertain what is popular, and do it, regardless of its wisdom or its consequences.'

In the excitement of the Presidential campaign it was recently openly announced that it was useless for the District Court of a certain State to attempt to hold a session, for the reason that an honest and impartial jury could not be found until after the election; political bias would influence all verdicts.

Emotionalism, as it affects the application

of the law, has of late presented itself in several striking examples, of which two will serve for illustration.

During the trial of a celebrated murder case in a large Western city, popular opinion affirmed that no jury would dare to oppose its verdict pronouncing the prisoner to be guilty. True or untrue, the result was as prophesied, and the prisoner was condemned, though not without the bitter protests of the small minority, who declared that he had not received fair play.

The other incident took place in a small city of the South-West. Shorn of all vociferous details in no manner affecting the question at issue, the story was briefly this: A wife, whose husband during her prolonged absence from home was faithless, upon her return shot the offending woman. There were, doubtless, extenuating circumstances, but with these, or the sin of the guilty man and his partner in crime, we have nothing to do. The striking feature in the affair was the gush of sentimentality over the murderess in the public prints, the rhapsodies indulged in concerning 'the little

woman' and her 'refined, worn face,' her 'pathetic history,' etc. One would have said that such a fatuous exhibition of misplaced sentiment was enough to disgust all right-thinking citizens. Not at all; the disgusted ones were in the small minority. By far the larger half of the city was at the murderess's feet, worshipping her as an up-to-date martyr and saint.

Now, what were the facts of the case? Had this wronged wife, in a moment of ungovernable grief and despair, caught up a revolver and fired at her enemy whilst frenzied and scarcely responsible? Again, no! Not only had she carefully cleaned and loaded the weapon beforehand, but she had set her son—her young son—to watch for the passing of her rival, and when the child gave notice of the woman's approach, she stepped out and deliberately shot her, seasoning the act with language expressed in the newspaper type by dashes. Instantaneously the city went into hysterics of sympathy; the gruesome incident of the child, the setting of her own selfish instincts above the purer claims of motherhood, passed un-

regarded. Needless to say that not a jury could be found to convict ; and, indeed, who would desire in such a case to see the death penalty inflicted ? But that a murderess should escape, not only unpunished, but rewarded and glorified, is not only a grave reflection upon law and morality, but upon Christianity as it is practised, too. 'Are we, or are we not, a Christian people?' quoth the few. 'Is not the religion we profess that of love and forgiveness, and "Thou shalt do no murder" ? If so, then there can be no compromise.'

As in the evil treated of earlier, here also one wrong springs from another. The custom, almost universal in some sections, of permitting, nay, even encouraging, a wronged husband to avenge himself as he will, without fear of the law, was simply in this case applied to the wronged wife. 'Public feeling' is often quoted as being responsible for many things that hinder the higher civilization in an emotional people.

One who has watched through a score of years the fluctuating fortunes of a great and impressive nation, and has long outgrown

British prejudices as such, may perhaps be allowed to express the opinion that English law is more impartially administered, is less swayed by passion or corrupt influences, than law on this side. The opinion is expressed deliberately, and is the fruit of long observation. It received a curious corroboration, and from a most unexpected source, a short time before the penning of these words. The source was a violently patriotic—in fact, bigoted—American citizen, expecting to remove temporarily from a home in a Far Western State in order to reside for awhile in British Columbia. The letter ran somewhat in this wise: ‘It will be a relief to live under the English flag. One can always be sure then of law and order, and of strict justice impartially administered.’ Nothing was written in reply to this startling observation, but a good deal was thought.

CHAPTER XI.

THE NORTHERN MYSTERY.

'For self-poised they live, nor pine with noting
All the fever of some differing soul.
Unaffrighted by the silence round them,
Undistracted by the sights they see,
These demand not that the things about them
Yield them love, amusement, sympathy.'

M. ARNOLD.

'THE romance of a prehistoric age broods over this wonderful country.'*

A 'wonderful country' indeed to him who has eyes to see, and a mind with which to dream backward. To him who has neither, a poor place, perhaps—of interest only to health-seekers and fruit-growers.

No need here to go to prehistoric times for the finding of romance. The mountains

* 'The Story of New Mexico,' H. O. Ladd.

hold it in their own still hearts; the desert, in its blank, remorseless spaces, covers dry bones of dead men out of mind and forgotten; the wind that bows and sighs through the white nights in the bosks by the errant river's bed breathes the weird, strange tale.

To go back to the beginning of the desert is beyond the imagining of man. Centuries before the advent of the Spaniard, a great tribal people, cunning in the arts, building them dwellings of stone such as they that came after had not wit to build, was even then passing away. But what of the centuries preceding? What of the prehistoric past? The wide and battlemented horizon under the glittering arch of the sky is dumb. It betrays nothing—conceals so much. In that, perhaps, lies part of the secret of its power over us—its pregnant silence.

Those who are sent to this far corner of the earth to seek health know little, really, even of what can be known of the 'wonderful country'; the distances are too great, the desert and mountain tracks too rough for extensive research. Its cañons green with

live-oaks and ferns, and alive with babbling springs, its terrific precipices and lofty peaks, its natural water-tanks surrounded with verdant lawns and leafy trees, and kept filled by mountain-storms—all these may, indeed, be occasionally enjoyed; but its pueblos and cliff-dwellings, and other relics of the historic past—the Indian tribes of the Arid Belt, who yet preserve ancient manners and customs replete with interest for the traveller—all these are not for the health-seeker.

The discovery of New Mexico and Arizona belongs rightly to the age of miracles. Explorations of more recent years pale before those of the sixteenth century. Even the tales of American pioneers—reaching backward a scant half-century, and teeming as they are with peril and hardship manfully endured, while the prairie-schooners toiled painfully, month after month, across the continent—lose something of their glory when we turn to trace the footsteps of the pioneers of Old Spain.

Without guide, without accurate knowledge of the great 'Northern Mystery,'

they set forth in small companies, in the bliss of an ignorance which our later wisdom scorns. Torn by thorns of cactus and mesquite, stumbling with bleeding feet over rocky mountains whose summits they must scale ere the path through the unknown could be discovered, ankle-deep in sand or tangled in dense bosks beside streams too often dry, under burning suns, whipped by sand-storms, always hoping for sight of an ocean far beyond their ken, uncertain whether life or death was to be their portion when by chance they lighted on some native settlement, they attempted the impossible—and succeeded!

Six times the banner of Spain was raised, more often than not by devoted friars, only to fall again. Spanish blood was sprinkled freely over valley, mesa, and mountain; yet finally the sturdy friars and soldiers not only won, but for three centuries—with the exception of, in 1680, a ten-year orgie of native freedom—kept what they had so dearly bought.

In 1538 Fray Niza and the negro Estevan—and later, Coronado—tempted by strange

tales of the wealth to be found in the land of the Northern Mystery, began their explorations ; and, after inconceivable toil and hardship, came upon a fairly friendly agricultural people, living in large communal buildings, or pueblos, made of the same clay bricks with which we build to-day, or else having their homes (as in Southern New Mexico) in separate family houses.

‘Here,’ writes Mr. Bancroft of the Territory within recent years, ‘we find a people far in advance of the savage tribes, if far behind the highest types, retaining many of their original characteristics, and living on the same sites in buildings similar to, or in several instances perhaps identical with, those occupied by their ancestors at the coming of the Europeans, and for centuries later.’ To the antiquary, or the traveller interested in the past, New Mexico and Arizona are full of historic lore and unsolved problems, as well as of romance.

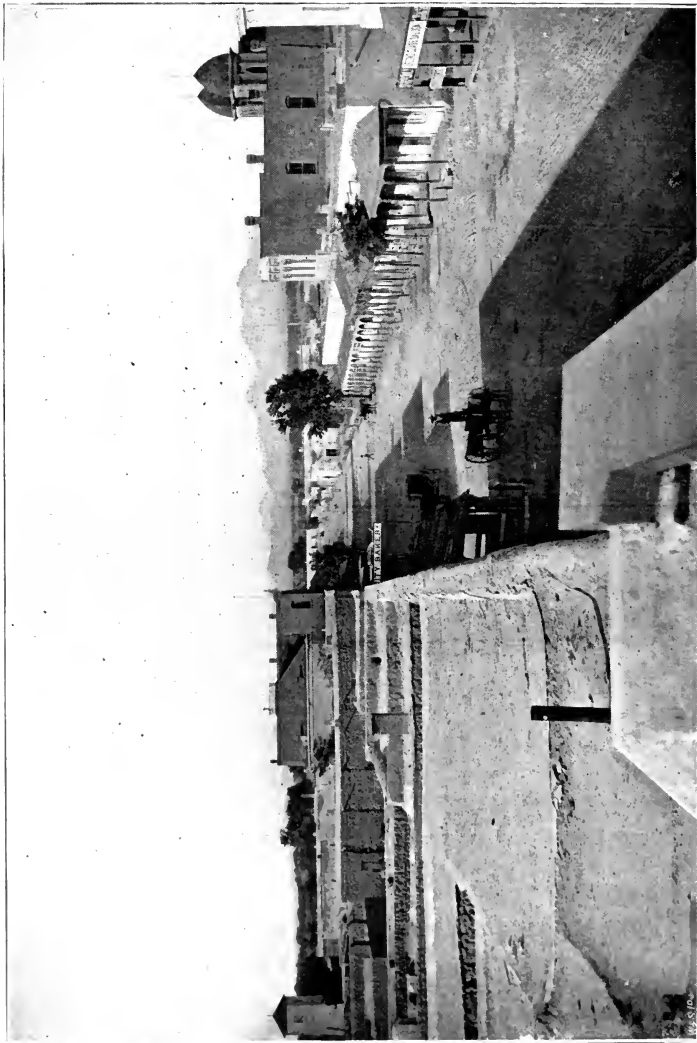
With respect to the early pioneers, native friendliness was not always justified. Greed and cruelty and broken vows marked too often the trail of the conquering Spaniard,

arousing in the Indian terror and anger, with their inevitable concomitants.

The Franciscan friars, while not invested with authority to found missions, as were the Jesuits in California, and acting simply as parish priests, swept, nevertheless, into the drag-net of the Church hundreds of Indian 'converts.'

Following the usual custom of their order, they hurried from pueblo to pueblo, regardless of personal labour or peril, and having extracted by bribes, threats, or cajoleries, permission to baptize the children, proceeded on their way entirely satisfied with what they had accomplished. Above all alluring to the grown Indian was the prospect held out by the Church of continually recurring feast-days and holidays; and as time went on, and the natives became more and more subservient to Spanish rule, and the friars settled down 'to preach, teach, and say prayers,' these fiestas grew to be the strongest hold possessed by Mother Church over an indolent, ease-loving people. And as it was then, so is it now. Mexicans and Indians alike find in their religion much solace for





STREET IN NEW MEXICAN TOWN.

muscles averse to toil, and ready at a moment's notice to relax in slumber beneath the shade of a cottonwood-tree, or to let their owners flop in crumpled heaps against a sun-baked wall.

The old friars were wily, if not always very wise. Above everything, they had the courage of their opinions. They carried their lives in their hands, and yielded them uncomplainingly should the mood of their flock set that way. Betwixt Franciscans and Jesuits there was, during Spanish rule, a perpetual rivalry—if rivalry it can be called, when one side has distinctly the mastery; but with the importation by Bishop Lamy, in 1854, of French priests and sisters, the Jesuits in their turn won the ascendancy.

When, in the course of years of intermittent struggle and warfare, New Mexico was at last conquered by Spain, and Onate, the first Governor, was appointed, his route lay from what is now the border-city of El Paso up the fertile Valley of Mesilla and the Rio Grande to Albuquerque, two hundred miles distant. Paso del Norte, the Pass of the North, was even then a settlement, and

situated, even as the modern city is, between lofty mountains—the gateway at once of Old and New Mexico and of Texas. Along this broad vale, finding comparatively smooth and easy travelling beside the Great River, the feet of bygone generations, ‘whose bones are dust,’ have passed and passed again, within sight and sound of my brown ranch-house; nay, even perhaps through its orchards and meadows, so changeful has been the river’s bed.

Three hundred years ago and more, Indian tribes rejoiced in the fertility of a valley which satisfied their limited wants at cost of so slight an expenditure of tissue, and after them the Mexicans rejoice in much the same spirit. But the Indians had one resource which has somehow failed us of a later generation. When the Rio Grande played them false, there was for them no sitting down in resignation after the American manner, no folding of the hands to sleep after the Mexican manner, but instead they uprose as one man, and, having slain a young virgin in order to propitiate the god of waters, confidently awaited results. At this point

history provokingly stops short, leaving the rest to our imagination.

The system of peonage, or servitude for debt, introduced by the Spaniards, and not abolished until 1867, made of the Indian, and in his turn the composite Mexican, a veritable bond-slave. Curiously enough, however, the records tell of little or no rebellion under the yoke. It appears to have been considered by all parties concerned an equitable arrangement, and as such was recognized by law. The father dead, it was slipped upon the neck of the son, bowed to receive it. The larger number of the Mexicans inhabiting our valley at one time wore this yoke; that is to say, they were peons. The custom, abolished in New Mexico by Act of Congress, still exists, I am assured, in portions of Old Mexico, together with numerous other obsolete manners and customs. Except that the peon could not be sold by his master, his condition was worse by many degrees than that of the negro in the Southern States before the Civil War.

As the years rolled on after the Spanish

settlement, and New Mexico was governed with more or less of tyranny, according to the whims of the acting Governor, whether Spaniard or Mexican, the changes and disturbances in Old Mexico—notably, the revolt from Spanish dominion in 1831—began seriously to affect the colony.

During the war between the United States and Mexico in 1846, General Kearney was instructed to carry his forces into New Mexico and take possession when, where, and how he could, but peaceably if possible. By promising to the Indians and colonists a greater freedom than they had hitherto enjoyed, Kearney, in spite of some opposition from Armijo, the braggart Governor, carried out his instructions almost to the letter, and the Stars and Stripes were soon floating over the capital. But the southern portion of the territory, including the Mesilla Valley, did not come under American jurisdiction until eight years later, when it was purchased from Mexico, together with the southern portion of Arizona; and not until 1863 did the protracted struggle to make of Arizona a Territory separate and distinct end in victory.

The years that followed Kearney's successful expedition, while bringing, as was promised, a larger freedom to New Mexico, were stained on the part of the Americans with deeds of individual brutality and shamelessness. White adventurers and 'bad men' from California and Texas made the names of those States an ill savour in the nostrils of both Mexicans and Indians; and when during the Civil War Texas looked confidently to New Mexico to wave the Southern flag, the sins of her own sons rose to witness against her, and a sullen silence answered her appeals. Without enthusiasm, but likewise without wavering, the Territory retained her grasp on the skirts of the Union, and the Texan Invincibles hastened homewards, a draggled crew, adown the Valley of the Rio Grande, their dreams of conquest buried for ever in the desert sand.

And now we turn to a page scarcely more encouraging, the page that records the well-worn tale of Governmental folly, and worse, as regards the Indians, and which is scarce concluded even at the present hour, though dragging to its end. As late as 1883, that

same folly, to call it by no harder name, resulted in our Valley alone in such slaughter of white settlers that our village then and there earned the ominous title of Las Cruces (The Crosses). Without indulging in false sentiment concerning Indian matters—false sentiment being the form of folly most affected by the average philanthropist (Indian)—no one acquainted with the relations existing for many years betwixt white man and brown can question the justice of Mr. Bancroft's strictures. 'This wasteful and bloody war,' he says, alluding to that waged with the notorious Apache chief, Victorio, 'was the result of the greed of the white settler and the corrupt policy of the United States Government.'

The dealings of the Government with a dependent race have certainly not been either happy or creditable, nor do they afford the desired shining example to older and, to use a popular term, 'effete' nations.

But the time-worn scandal of 'Indian agents,' and Indian affairs generally, needs not to be discussed here; yet whilst abhor-

ring the sickly effusiveness which weeps over a Victorio or a Geronimo, one's sense of justice, or even of ordinary humanity, contemns equally the bad faith, the blundering, the breaking of treaties, which blot the page recording the dealings of a superior race with an inferior ; and which assuredly were not calculated to root out of the savage nature the treachery and cruelty inherent in it by right of birth. Neither is there anything new or original in the observation that the military leaders in the Far West proved themselves time and again more competent to deal at once fairly and firmly with the Indians than did their official superiors in the East. Many a name on the army roll stands out bright and unblemished above the hopeless fog of Governmental ignorance, imbecility, or corruption.

Comparatively few years have elapsed since white settlers and their families faced great and manifold dangers in making their homes in New Mexico and Arizona. Even the Mexican, though mortally afraid of the Indian, was not himself entirely reliable. When carried away by excitement, or when

full of wine, occasions arose on which his feelings were too many for him. Now, on Saturday and Sunday nights, he races his unhappy pony up and down the roads, screeching and firing his pistol into empty air. This is a comparatively innocuous mode of letting off steam, and robs us only of the sleep of peace. But some years back he was not quite such a harmless idiot.

The wife of a Government forage-agent told me that on entering, with her husband and children, the Mexican village in which the store was to be opened, the party was greeted with a volley by the native inhabitants. By a miracle the whole family escaped uninjured, and on being remonstrated with, their assailants excused themselves on the plea of a desire to 'show off'! The first thing the Mexican does when scared or excited is to shoot, and this practice, when he chanced, as in former days, to be in conflict with his more wily and self-contained Indian kinsman, proved often disastrous to himself. Yet it was on such allies as these that the forage-agent's wife and children had to depend when, in one of the husband's

necessary absences on Government business, the store was attacked by Indians.

Her sons too young to be of any assistance, this white woman became in a moment the life and spirit of the defence. It was she who armed and encouraged the Mexicans, steadied their quailing hearts, and herself set them the example of loading and firing through the loopholes of the barricades she had forced them to erect. It was a mother fighting for the lives of her children—incidentally for her own life or her honour.

Sitting listening to the recital in the peace of the warm, bright morning, the big lads, who were then babies, lingering to hear again the oft-told tale, the peal of distant church-bells floating across wide alfalfa meadows, and the hum of bees in the ears, it was given to these listeners to wonder whether the same cool, brave spirit that animated the woman before them would have animated themselves in like emergency.

‘You cannot possibly tell till you are tried,’ was the quick retort; and to this manifest truism what was there to say?

Thereupon up spoke the father and hus-

band in his turn, and told how on that night of terror, riding for home and all that was in it, he drew rein on the ridge above the village, and beheld far below him fire and smoke—the annihilation of his little world.

‘In that moment,’ he said, ‘thirty years were added to my life. Driving the spurs into my horse, and followed by my two companions, I tore like a madman down the hillside, to what I believed was certain death amidst the ruins of my home.’

Then, greeting the thunder of the horses’ hoofs, a challenge rang out into the night—‘And those flames were the camp-fires of United States troopers, and my home was undespoiled, my wife and babies safe, and the thirty years I had gained upon that ridge dropped from me like a mantle!’

Still more recently a mother and daughter, missionaries in a remote Mexican village, were awoke one morning by the terrified natives with the news that a band of Apaches had encamped in the neighbourhood during the night. For over a week the inhabitants of the village dwelt in mortal fear, yielding to the Indians all that they demanded in the

way of food - supplies, but otherwise unmolested. Then the day came on which the Apaches took the warpath, and painted and bedecked up to and beyond the eyes, and ripe for mischief, the braves galloped through the settlement. Trembling, the two white ladies and the Mexicans awaited their return. But return they never did. The United States trooper is rarely caught napping. Untiring as the Indian himself, skilled in all the arts of Far Western warfare, fearless to a fault, he scents danger a hundred miles away, and is soon on the trail of the savage warrior.

Sometimes in those stormy times he came a little late, but come he always did, and many a nameless hero has given his life in Indian skirmishes. On this occasion—and it was one of the very last in Apache history—the rage for blood took so sudden possession of the braves that, before being caught and punished, they were able to raid a white man's ranch outside the village, kill and scalp the owner and his wife, and pin the babies to the wall of the house with their spears. One child—an infant in long clothes

—was found on the following day still quivering with a semblance of life. Who, after such scenes as these—and there were many like them—can wonder at the wail of mingled wrath and grief rending the air of the Territories when the Government determined to spare the life of the captured Geronimo?

* * * * *

But no outline of territorial history, however sketchy in intention, would be complete without some allusion to the Bad Man and the Cattle-war. It is not the Indian only who provides the red paint for our drawing.

Less than twenty years ago an individual, for whom the name of French will do as well as any other, put several thousand head of cattle to grazing in a certain valley of Southern New Mexico. So well did his venture answer that other persons followed his example, among them a young Englishman of high character, and possessed of laudable ambition, who may pass here by the name of Morton. He succeeded also; but, not content with mere money-making, so beautified and improved his ranches as to

excite the envy and malice of the rough cattlemen. In short, his success and himself were displeasing to them.

Just about this time an incident occurred in one of the cities of the Territory, which, slight as it appeared, was nevertheless destined to affect very materially the lives of several hundred human beings. A young dish-washer, ill-used by a big and burly man-cook, drew his pistol and wounded his assailant. The boy then took refuge in flight, and days after turned up, weary and half starved, at the ranch occupied by Morton. The wanderer was none other than he who was soon to become notorious under the pseudonym of Billy the Kid. Sheltered and cared for by the Englishman, the boy repaid his protector with a passionate devotion rarely equalled. The wiseacres assure us that good cannot spring out of evil; nevertheless, we all know how discouragingly often evil springs out of good.

For while these small matters were taking place on Morton's ranch—the blossom and then the fruit of gratitude and affection developing in proper season—the cattle-men

were bringing their devilish schemes to a head. Determined to get rid of their rival, they induced the Sheriff to issue a warrant for his arrest, and served it on him themselves. Conscious of innocence, and anxious at once to clear his character and comply with the law, the young man left his home in charge of Billy, and rode away with the posse.

It was night, and he was somewhat in advance of his companions. Riding into a hollow crossed by the trail, he was fired upon by the men in his rear, and his body abandoned to the crows and buzzards.

From the moment that the news of the tragedy reached the boy on the ranch, he was transformed into an avenging demon. So astutely had the murderers covered up their tracks that the law was powerless, or unwilling—such things have been—to reach them. But the avenger of blood was behind. Here, there, and everywhere the 'Holy Terror' swooped down upon them, and never once was the boy known to miss his prey. One after the other eighteen men fell to his unerring gun. But by this time a regular

partisan warfare had sprung up, and the famous Cattle-war was in full swing. In this history the ancient tale of the monkey and the cat comes to the fore again—the monkey being a well-known territorial politician, about whose name does not cling the odour of sanctity. His cat's-paws were many ; his object was the possession of the murdered Englishman's fine ranches. One of his tools was kept continually riding to and from Santa Fé, misrepresenting matters to the Governor—to the politician's worldly advantage and the confounding of his enemies. Perhaps, in its refusal to admit our Territory to statehood, Government is not altogether the victim of partisan bias. But to return to earlier days.

The politician, having by hook or crook succeeded in possessing himself of part of the dead man's property, yearned for the whole thereof. False causes for the war then raging, libels concerning the Englishman, and carefully doctored accounts of his 'removal,' were industriously presented to the Governor—now an author of widespread fame, Lew Wallace. But somehow the

Governor was not to be convinced ; he persistently refrained from proclaiming as outlaws Morton and his friends, amongst whom were French and Mackintosh, the lawyer who had acted for the murdered Englishman and still acted for French. Nevertheless, the politician was not discouraged. In those days communication was slow and difficult, and it often happened that the Governor was ignorant of events occurring under his jurisdiction until too late for intervention.

Acting on this assumption, the politician and his gang, or the gang without his bodily companionship—it matters not which—hastened to a neighbouring army post, and, representing their opponents as proclaimed outlaws, obtained the support of United States troopers. So far, so good.

Now for the attack, the object of which was a long, low adobe house under the foot-hills, and above the little river flowing past the county town. In this house dwelt Mackintosh with wife and children, and at the moment several other persons, Billy the Kid amongst them—fifteen in all. The

soldiers were stationed upon the river bank some little distance from the house ; their part in the affair was simply passive, their presence being sufficient to interpose betwixt the besieged and outside aid.

The back-door of the house gave on the foot-hills, and against this door the full fury of the attack was directed. A continuous fire kept up from eleven o'clock in the morning until nightfall riddled the door with holes, and deterred the besieged from making any defence, there being, as is often the case in old adobe houses, no windows on that side.

Under cover of the darkness the attacking force sent across to the hotel on the other bank of the river. There they procured a quantity of kerosene oil, which one of their number proceeded to pour through the holes in the door, soaking the floor within, his comrades firing over his head the while in order to distract the attention of the besieged. A few lighted matches finished the business. While the flames, fanned by the draught, gathered strength and volume, shots continued to rain like

hail into the hall-way, rendering it impossible for those inside the house to extinguish the blaze.

Although adobe bricks are practically fire-proof, the woodwork of the dwelling offered no resistance to the flames, and the wretched inhabitants, driven from room to room by the smoke, finally made a dash for their lives, and were all, with one exception, helpless women and children included, brutally murdered. And all this happened less than twenty years ago, and apparently with the sanction of the authorities; though, as has already been told, this sanction was only apparent.

The one exception was the now famous Billy the Kid. He contrived to escape unharmed, and, infuriated still further by this new tragedy, entered upon a career even more lawless and desperate than before. No means were left untried to procure his arrest, but for long all efforts were in vain. Banned now as an outlaw, the Sheriffs sought him untiringly, and at last ran him to earth in a lonely house, where, without

food or fuel, he was in the end obliged to surrender.

Billy lodged in gaol, the denizens of that section of country drew a full breath; but they knew not Billy. It was not long before he was at large again, well armed and mounted, free as the desert winds. The 'woman in the case' had done her work well, as his gaolers with shame acknowledged.

But his day was a short one. Once more he was captured, after a desperate resistance, tried, and condemned to death. This time he was guarded night and day by two Sheriffs, and for better security was put in irons as well as hand-cuffed. Now follows the most extraordinary history of carelessness in connection with the guardianship of one who, mere boy as he was, was nevertheless a notoriously daring criminal. He was in the habit of playing cards with his keepers, and often warned them, with a laugh, not to be too sure of him; that he would escape 'as sure as they were born.'

Notwithstanding his reiterated assurance,

both men went out to dinner one day, leaving him alone. True, he was in irons, but that was a mere circumstance to Billy the Kid. Unobserved by his gaolers, he had long ere this succeeded in filing—though how he obtained his tools no one knew—the fetters confining hands and feet; most likely he had no tools at all, but only pieces of old iron, picked up and worked with as opportunity served. It was now but a matter of a few minutes before he was free. He then took the loaded gun of one of the Sheriffs from a corner, and awaited results. Sheriff No. 1, unlocking the door, found himself covered by the weapon in the hands of his prisoner, and forced to open to him the room in which the firearms were kept.

His submission, however, availed him nothing. Billy speedily made an end of him, and proceeded to help himself to a couple of superb pistols and a fine Winchester. Perceiving Sheriff No. 2 crossing the yard, he threw up the window and shot him dead. Then he ran downstairs, and holding off a small crowd, chiefly com-

posed of Mexicans, he compelled one of them to saddle the fleetest horse in the corral, and throwing himself across its back, galloped away into space, cool and undisturbed as ever.

The friends from whom I obtained the story of this all-too-marvellous youth told me how one nightfall, when the whole country was ringing with the escape of Billy the Kid, a poor boy, representing himself as making his way on foot to some point to obtain work, knocked at the door of their somewhat lonely habitation, and begged for food and shelter. Obeying the customary command to 'hand up' his guns—the pair of pistols to which allusion has been made—he was allowed to enter and take his seat at the family supper-table.

So quiet and inoffensive, and also so young, did he appear, that not the faintest suspicion was aroused, and the conversation turning on the outlaw, the notice of his escape was produced, to which a so-called likeness of the fugitive was attached. Billy inquired of the mistress of the house if she

thought she would recognize the original in the event of meeting him. She replied confidently in the affirmative. Soon after the guest was provided with blankets, and withdrew for the night to the shelter of some wool-sacks on the porch.

When he joined the family at breakfast the following morning, he had tied his head up in a handkerchief, and complained of headache, the fact being, of course, that by means of the handkerchief he hoped to change his appearance. The father and eldest son were off betimes to round up some cattle, and the women and children were alone. The mother and daughter were engaged in cleaning house, and the young stranger made himself useful in moving furniture, etc.

After awhile, however, the mother took alarm at the thought of a bucketful of silver money in the store—the father was a Government agent—and pretending that house-cleaning was over for the day, she dismissed her visitor, bestowing on him ample provisions, and receiving in return

profuse expressions of gratitude. Her feelings can more easily be imagined than described when she learned later of the identity of the wanderer; and not only that, but how, scarcely two miles on his way from her home, he had killed a man. His horse and his Winchester had remained hidden all night in the foot-hills, his pistols having naturally been returned to him upon his departure.

But the career of even a Billy the Kid has to close at last, and the present Sheriff of this county was the man to close it. Hearing that the youthful desperado often took up his quarters at the ranch of a certain cattleman, he rode thither one night, prepared to 'take chances.'

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The house, after the manner of adobe houses, was one-storied, and finding an open window, the Sheriff quietly entered, to find himself in the room of the owner, who challenged the intruder from his bed. The Sheriff explained his errand in whispers, and, taking a seat on the bed, continued the conversation in the same tone.

Now, it happened that the redoubtable Billy was actually in the house at the time, and finding himself attacked with the pangs of hunger, arose from his couch, and, taking a knife, was proceeding to the storeroom to cut himself some meat. Hearing voices in the room of his host, he opened the door and demanded to know who was there.

Of course the Sheriff made no reply, but while the other man was explaining, he took careful aim at the young outlaw, as he stood in the doorway with a lighted lamp in his hand, and shot him through the heart. And that was the end of Billy the Kid. His career had lasted for five years, and in that space of time three hundred persons had met with death by violence. History does not relate the number that fell by the hand of the Kid alone.

It has been well said by one* intimately acquainted for years with the inner life of the Territory, that, despite her imperative claims to recognition as a State, she has herself

* H. O. Ladd.

closed the door to statehood in her own face. To quote this authority :

‘As we look back over the strange history of New Mexico through three centuries and a half, since Europeans first trod her plains, there will be impressed upon the thoughtful mind the conviction that her people have lacked certain qualities which have quickly built up States east and north of her boundaries.’

Intelligent immigrants, untrammelled by ecclesiastical control; a public education ‘that shall train her youth to loyalty, independence of thought and vote, and to self-respecting industry and enterprise as citizens’—these, our author truly remarks, are among the qualifications necessary for admission to statehood. To conclude in his own words :

‘With these conditions fulfilled, New Mexico will be welcomed to the American Union, to share the future greatness and glory of the nation, to whose possessions she will add her fair country, from whose lofty plateaus rise shining peaks like gems in

the crown of the vast domain which lies between the two oceans.'

* * * * *

Going westward, far from our quiet green vale, while the laden train climbs serpentwise the long grade, lean from the window, and take into your own the spirit of the desert's very self. Put from you the commonplaces of 'barrenness' and 'monotony,' open wide the gates of the divine, and the wonder, the majesty, of this matchless scene will enter in. It will be yours for all time. It will flash upon the soul in the waking of troubled nights, in the breathing-spaces of life's driving storm, or when the cry of the human, without or within, urges too fiercely. And it will bear on its spread wings a great and awful calm; for it is the Spirit of the Desert.

Yet, pressing closer to Nature's breast than ever before, we are further from her heart. She has neither part nor lot in us. Never was she more aloof, more self-sufficing.

All that is mortal is behind us, a mere

jangle of voices submerged in this tremendous calm. Even the thunder of the wheels—bearing, as the ship across the ocean, all that nineteenth-century civilization demands on its voyage from port to port—is lost in the low breathing of the desert wind.

Here no green thing, changing with the changing seasons, grows. The gramma of the high ranges bends and darkens not here beneath the rolling summer cloud; but to the motionless billows of a desolation complete and unspeakable cactus and Spanish dagger cling solitary. The Indian in his dug-out—a speck of mortality set in leagues of living death—finds no place here. No travel-worn cattle limp painfully, seeking water, neither is the trail marked by written forms which have yielded life in torture; for water is not.

Piled on the desert's circling edge, above the undulating plain, rises range after range of mountains—lofty, fantastically shaped—sentinels of nothing. Yet in forgotten ages it may be that the waters of a lake, now but a rare desert mirage, rippled high over the knees of those pyramids and pinnacles, and

that then, the supreme hour having come, the Voice having authority spoke, and the waters fled, ploughing in their course deep furrows in the everlasting hills, and so sinking into the earth, until in very truth there was no more sea.

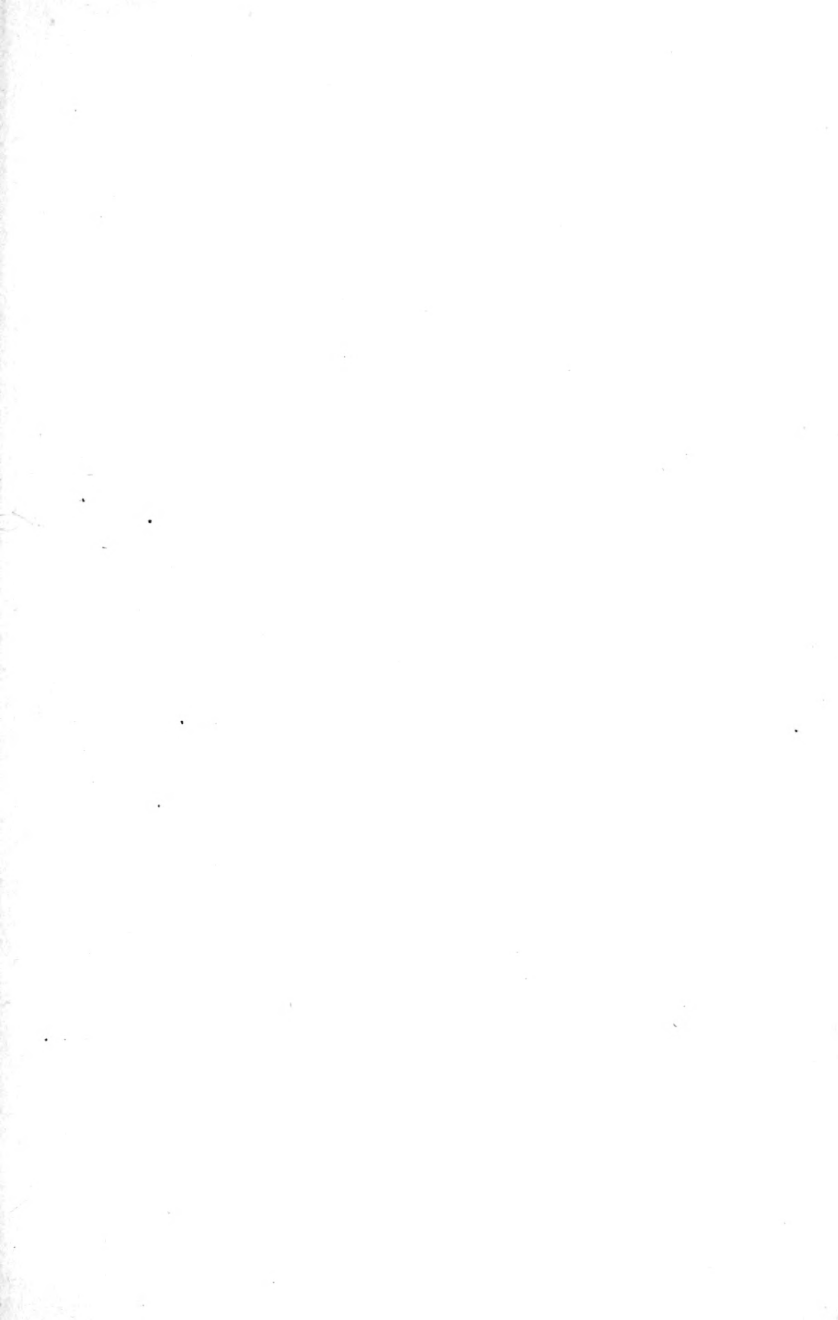
No ruthless Apache or mild Pueblo crosses now the still and solemn plain on which we gaze. All is peace, while the sun declines to his appointed place. There, where for uncounted ages he has rested in his passing—there he leans now, marshalling to his own the banners of his serried hosts, who the long day through have followed him in light array from the hither brim to the further of the earth's wide cup.

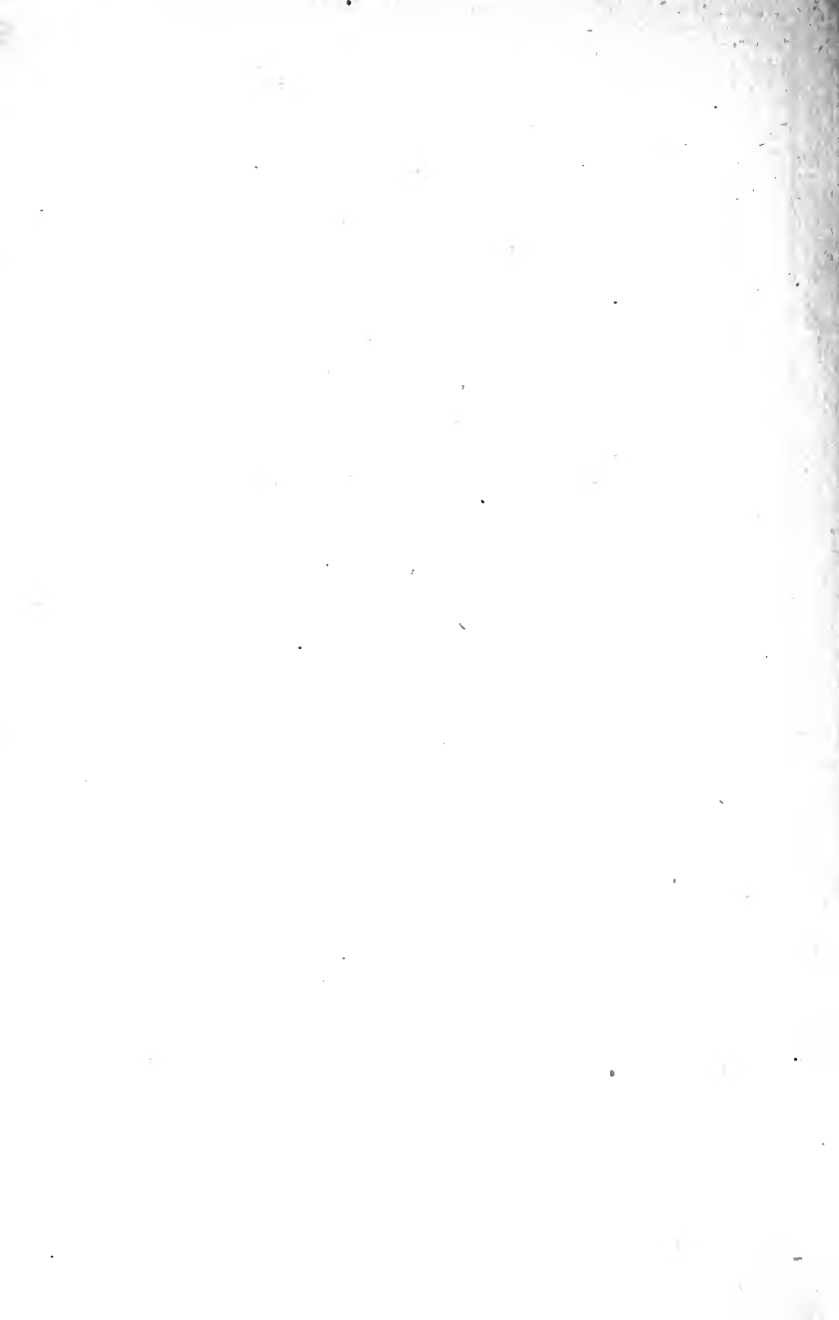
Twilight blurs the remote radiance of heaven with a hurried trail of garments, upon whose hem Night has already laid a hand wrapped in a mantle of sable pierced with the flash of stars. Back to the world that is too much with us we creep from the vast and solitary waste. Undisturbed by our coming, indifferent to our going, Sphinx-like still she broods and watches from her pyramids and towers. But her spirit, the

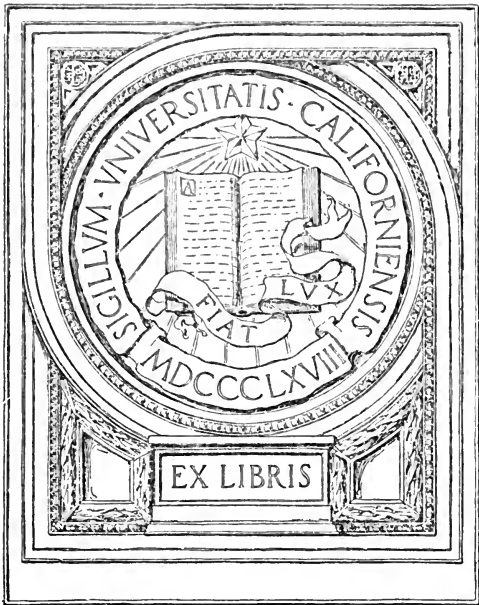
Spirit of the Great Desert, has entered in.
It is ours for all time.

‘ Our petty souls, our strutting wits,
Our laboured, puny passion-fits—
Ah, may she scorn them still, till we
Scorn them as bitterly as she !’

THE END.







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