

LIFE ON THE PLAINS.

A Northern—The Character of Mr. Le-Dev... The following extract from a private letter written by an officer of the army stationed at Fort Hill, Indian Territory, under date of Dec. 11th, 1870, is of interest.

We are having a "norther," but I imagine you are as much in the dark concerning the significance of the expression as I was the first time I heard it. To fully appreciate what a norther is, you should be dropped on a good wide, level prairie, twenty or thirty miles from any eminence, trees, or what might act as shelter, time, reviville, en route, north. In this situation you would fully appreciate what a norther is in about fifteen seconds. Owing to the difficulties to be surmounted in the way of time, distance, gravitation, and the approaching holidays, I am afraid you will have to be left in Philadelphia, and with the combined energy of infinite faith, maddest imagination, and inexhaustible credulity, produce a mental picture that may possibly portray the idea.

The prevailing winds of this country are southerly—generally southeast—and bring us the warm breezes of the Gulf. Consequently we wear the same clothing the year round, provided it is summer clothing. The day will be as pleasant as your beautiful June weather, about sunset, but just as the great illuminator is giving a farewell touch of gold to the tops of the purple mountains, while the smokeless prairie fire, away off against the sky, makes an awe-struck Shadrach, Measach and Abednego, and the sun sets as quiet as though the sun was going down never to rise again, there will be a little leaden cloud, perhaps, off in the northwest. Should you see such a cloud, and be away from shelter, it is time you were ascertaining what sort of stock you ride, and how many more observations the bottom of your flank will stand. If you happen to be "home," not a moment should be lost by your "special artist" in transferring the woodpile from behind your house to the interior, for long ere it might be dark, a norther will be settling down with a madness as if it had a million furies behind, lashing it on with hail and sleet. Northers are not the clear, cold, bracing winter winds of the north, laden with the snow-flakes; falling so softly and putting their victim into a cheerful, dreamy sleep as they cushion him as their sacrifice. They are the furious north winds, rebellious brothers of Boreas, conquered and expatriated—driven from home never to return till they have washed out in the vapor bath of gulf or ocean. You can imagine what a temper they are in, and how remorselessly cruel they are to any unfortunate whose life or happiness may be at their mercy. They do not numb; they hurt, that is the word—"hurt" just like toothache hurts, with no undulations of pain—granting once in awhile an imaginary reprieve. As for defending one-self against them, it is perfectly impossible, except behind a fortification wall of eight or ten feet, and a roofing for one constantly replenished with fuel. Buffalo robes, blankets, clothing, or anything that offers a passive resistance is of no avail. Their only redeeming feature is their short life, for they seldom live more than three days. But you will never know what a "norther" is till you encounter one, and I can only mention as an addition to my wishes for many returns to you of Christmas, and an unlimited number of New Years, that you may also rest in profound ignorance of the "norther."

I see Commissioner Parker has been giving our neighbors the Kiowa and Camanches, quite an unflattering testimonial in his late report. What a pity to treat the "poor Indian" so! Some people ungenerously call them "poor beggars," in a tone of pity that modulates itself into contempt. "If they are poor, is not that their misfortune? And whose fault but the white man's, driving away their buffalo with his steam-horses? Beggars! They will never beg, if a good opportunity offers to steal. Not petty sneak-thieving, but wholesale or highway robbery. They are accused of killing people, too. Once on the way to the contemplation of J. Penniman Cooper might have been so addicted, but now they never do anything else than murder. They are as vile and cowardly as they are mean and villainous-looking. They don't even profess to be friendly to the union still. In fact, they go so far as to say it never was in, and murdering any one found unprotected in Texas is perfectly legitimate slaughter. "Heep scalps—good medicine. A heep" applied internally would be much better medicine. In the winter, when grass has become hay, their ponies have to be foraged, and they are "good Indians," living up to their treaties so far as to eat all the rations the Government will give them or they can beg, forage their stock, and restrain from hostilities that are not *les affaires d'honneur*. In the spring, when grass is good, and their ponies can take them where game can be found, they are off like the wind, till they are on you like a whirlwind. I have an idea of his late method in conducting private vendettas. I will relate a case that has occurred lately. Satank, one of the Kiowa chiefs, lost a son in a fight with Captain McClellan last spring—three hundred and fifty Indians against sixty soldiers. In order to assuage the paternal grief incident to such a calamity, last summer, at the head of some twenty of his tribe, he attacked a mail-stage going to Texas, killed two men, and one of the mules; the other mule and the mail were captured. According to the custom among some of the redskins, he brought his captives here. The mail *en* enclosure was given up, and the mule taken away from him. He got his mad up at this, also his back, and "made big talk" of what he was to do to conciliate the shades of his departed son and the mule. He told up here, over in the store, only last Friday, how he did it, exhibiting one of three scalps he had killed down in Texas. Last night news was brought by a messenger from that State of how this murder was accomplished, and whom this detached capillary excrescence once adorned. It appears Satank's Biblical education has been sadly neglected, or the tree did not bend as the twig was inclined, or the admortory fate of Ananias and Sapphira for the moment slipped his mind, or he did not cross his breath and give as an addenda, "the truth, whole truth, and nothing but the truth," for a ranch was attacked at night with the following loss of inmates—One man killed and scalped, two children killed outright, a boy aged two pierced with a lance through the shoulder—afterwards escaped—and two women pierced with arrows, scalped, and left for dead. A little while after the rest of the inhabitants were butchered. These things are better listened to than read; one hears such that cannot be written. The next day three more were killed and scalped while

travelling south in a wagon—they were cattle-drover returning from a successful trip to Kansas. The Indians got their scalps, as Satank said, but they did not get the \$30,000 they had on their persons.

The little disagreement among the Democratic officeholders in Congress has been removed, and the Hartford Post says Lieutenant-Governor Hotchkiss has been mollified, and has withdrawn his refusal to accept a re-nomination.

A lady was fatally poisoned in Mount Pleasant, Iowa, on the 7th inst. It is the old story of carelessness. She was ill, and asked her son to hand her the medicine prescribed for her; there were two bottles, neither labelled, and she handed the wrong one to the Postmaster.

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PHILADELPHIA AND READING RAILROAD DEPOT, THIRTEENTH AND CALLOWHILL STREETS.

PHILADELPHIA, WILMINGTON, AND BALTIMORE RAILROAD.

PHILADELPHIA AND BALTIMORE CENTRAL RAILROAD.

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SALE OF REAL ESTATE AND STOCKS.

SALE OF VALUABLE OIL PAINTINGS AND ENGRAVINGS.

SALE OF REAL ESTATE AND STOCKS.

SALE OF VALUABLE MISCELLANEOUS AND SCHOOL BOOKS, PHILOSOPHICAL APPARATUS, MANIKIN, SKELETON, ETC.

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