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AN OVERLAND JOURNEY.

XV.
WESTERN CHARACTERS.

DENVER, June 21, 1859.

I know it is not quite correct to speak of this region as "Western," seeing that it is in fact the center of North America and very close to its backbone. Still, as the terms "Eastern" and "Western" are conventional and relative—Casting being "Western" to a Bluenose and Carson Valley "Eastern" to a Californian—I take the responsibility of grouping certain characters I have noted on the Plains and in or about the Mountains as "Western," begging that most respectable region which lies east of the Buffalo range—also that portion which lies west of the Colorado—to excuse the liberty.

The first circumstance that strikes a stranger traversing this wild country is the vagrant instincts and habits of the great majority of its denizens—perhaps I should say, of the American people generally, as exhibited here. Among ten who you successively meet, there will be natives of New-England, New-York, Pennsylvania, Virginia or Georgia, Ohio or Indiana, Kentucky or Missouri, France, Germany, and perhaps Ireland. But worse than this: you cannot enter a circle of a dozen persons of whom at least three will not have spent some years in California, two or three have made elms and built cabins in Kansas or Nebraska, and at least one spent a year or so in Texas. Boston, New-York, Philadelphia, New-Orleans, St. Louis, Cincinnati, have all contributed their quota toward populating the new Gold Region. The next man you meet driving an ox team, and while as a miller with dust, an ex-banker or doctor, a broken merchant or manufacturer from the old States, who has scraped together the candle ends charitably or contemptuously allowed him by his creditors on settlement, and risked them on a last desperate cast of the dice by coming hither. Ex-editors, ex-printers, ex-clerks, ex-steamboat men, are here in abundance—all on the keen hunt for the gold which only a few will secure. One of the stations at which we slept on our way up—the rough tent with a cheering hope (since blasted) of a log house in the near future—was kept by an ex-lawyer of Cincinnati and his wife, an ex-actress from our New-York Bowery—she being cock Omnibus drivers from Broadway repeatedly handled the ribbons; ex-Border Ruffians from civilized Kansas—some of them of unblemished memory—were encountered on our way, at intervals none too long. All these blended with veterans Mountain men, Indians of all grades from the tamest to the wildest, Half-Breeds, French trappers and voyageurs (who have generally two or three Indian wives apiece) and an occasional nigger, compose a medley such as hardly another region can parallel. Honolulu, or some other of the South Sea Islands could probably match it most nearly.

The old mountaineers form a caste by themselves, and they prize the distinction. Some of them are Frenchmen, or Franco-Americans, who have been trapping or trading in and around these mountains for a quarter of a century, have wives and children here, and here expect to live and die. Some of these have accumulated property and cash to the value of \$200,000, which amount will not easily be reduced, as they are frugal in everything, (liquor sometimes excepted), spend but a pittance on the clothing of their families, trust little, keep small stocks of goods, and sell at large profits. Others came years ago from the States, some of them on account each of a "difficulty" wherein they severally killed or savagely maimed their respective antagonists under circumstances on which the law refuses to look leniently; whence their pilgrimage to and prolonged sojourn here, despite enticing placards offering \$500 or perhaps \$1,000 for their safe return to the places that knew them once, but shall know them no more. This class is not numerous but is more influential than it should be in giving tone to the society of which its members form a part. Prone to deep drinking, sored in temper, always armed, bristling at a word, ready with the rifle, revolver or bowie-knife, they give law and set fashions which in a country where the regular administration of justice is yet a matter of prophecy, it seems difficult to overrule or disregard. I apprehend that there have been, during my two weeks sojourn, more bristles, more fights, more pistol shots with criminal in-

tent, in this log city of 150 dwellings, not three-fourths completed nor two thirds inhabited, nor one-third fit to be, than in any community of no greater numbers on earth. This will be changed in time—I trust within a year, for the empty houses are steadily finding tenants from the two streams of emigration rolling in daily up the Platte, as well as down Cherry Creek, including some scores of women and children, who generally stop here, as all of them should; for life in the Mountains is yet horribly rough. Public religious worship, a regular mail and other civilizing influences, are being established; there is a gleam of hope that the Arapahoes—who have made the last two or three nights indescribably hideous by their infernal war-whoops, songs and dances, will at last clear out on the foray against the Utes they have so long threatened, diminishing largely the aggregate of drunkenness and justifying expectations of comparative peace. So let me close up my jottings from this point—which circumstances beyond my control have rendered too voluminous—with a rough amnotype of

LIFE IN DENVER.

The rival cities of Denver and Auraria front on each other from either bank of Cherry Creek, just before it is lost in the South Platte. The Platte has its sources in the South Park of the Rocky Mountains, a hundred miles S. W. of this point, but Cherry Creek is headed off from them by that river, and winding its northward course of forty or fifty miles over the Plains, with its sources barely touching the Mountains, is a capricious stream, running quite smartly when we came here, but whose broad and thirsty sands have since drank it all up at this point, leaving the log foot-bridges which connect the two cities as useless as an ice-house in November. The Platte, aided by the melting of the snows on the high mountains, runs nearly full-backed, through the constant succession of hot suns and dry winds begins to tell upon it, while Clear Creek, (properly Vasquez's Fork) which issues directly from the Mountains just above its crossing on the way to the Gregory Diggings, is nearly at its highest, and will so remain till the inner mountains are mainly denuded of their snowy mantles. But, within a few days, a foot-bridge has been completed over the Platte, virtually abolishing the ferry and, saving considerable time and money to gold-seekers and travellers, while another over Clear Creek precludes not only delay but danger—several wagons having been wrecked and two or three men all but drowned in attempts to ford its rapid, rocky current. Thus the ways of the adventurer grow daily smoother, and they who visit this region ten years hence will regard as idle tales the stories of privation, impediment and "hair breadth escapes" which are told, or might be, by the gold seekers of 1859.

Of these rival cities, Auraria is by far the more venerable—some of its structures being, I think, fully a year old, if not more. Denver, on the other hand, is so boast of no antiquity beyond September or October last. In the architecture of the two cities there is, notwithstanding, a striking similarity—cottonwood logs, cut from the adjacent bottom of the Platte, and roughly hewed on the two perpendicular sides, and chinked with billets of split Cottonwood on the inner and with mud on the outer side, forming the walls of nearly or quite every edifice which adorns either city. Across the center of the interior, from shorter wall to wall, stretches a sturdy ridge pole, usually in a state of nature, from which "shooks" or split saplings of cotton wood, their split sides down, incline gently to the transverse or longer sides; or on these (in the more finished structures) a coating of earth is laid, and, with a chimney of mud daubed sticks in one corner, a door nearly opposite, and a hole beside it representing a prefiguring a window, the edifice is complete. Of course, many have no earth on their covering of shooks, and so are liable to gentle inundation in the rainy season; but, though we have had thunder and lightning almost daily, with a brisk gale in most instances, they have had no rain worth naming such here for weeks, and the unchinked, barely-shook-covered houses, through whose sides and roofs you may see the stars as you lie awake nights, are decidedly the cooler and drier. There is a new hotel nearly finished in Auraria, which has a second story floor; beside this, mine eyes have never yet been blessed with the sight of any floor whatever in either Denver or Auraria. The last time I slept or ate with a floor under me (our wagon-box and Mother Earth excepted) was at Junction City, nearly four weeks ago. The "Denver House," which is the Astor House of the Gold Region, has walls of logs, a floor of earth, with windows and roof of rather flimsy cotton sheeting, while every guest is allowed as good a bed as his blankets will make. The charges are no higher than at the Astor and other first-class hotels, except for liquor—25 cents a drink for whisky, colored and nicknamed to suit the taste of customers, being the regular rate throughout this region. I had the honor to be shaved there by a nephew (so he assured me) of Murat, Bonaparte's King of Naples—the honor and the shave together costing but a paltry dollar. Still, a few days of such luxury surfeited me, mainly because the drinking room was also occupied by several blacklegs as a gambling hall, and their incessant clamor of "Who'll go me

XX! The ace of hearts is the winning card. Whoever turns the ace of hearts wins the \$20," &c., &c., persisted in at all hours up to midnight, became at length a nuisance, from which I craved deliverance at any price. Then the visitors of that drinking and gambling room had a careless way, when drunk, of firing revolvers, sometimes at each other, at other times quite miscellaneous, which struck me as inconvenient for a quiet guest with only a leg and a half, hence in poor condition for dodging bullets. So I left.

"How do you live in Denver?" I inquired of a New-York friend some weeks domiciled here, in whose company I visited the Mines. "O, I've jumped a cabin!" was his cool, matter-of-course reply. As jumping a cabin was rather beyond my experience, I inquired further, and learned that, finding a cabin deserted and tenanted that suited him, he had quietly entered and spread his blankets, eating at home or abroad as opportunity might suggest. I found, on further inquiry that at least one-third of the inhabitants in Denver and Auraria were desolate when we came here, (they have been gradually filling up since); some of the owners having gone into the Mountains, digging or prospecting, and taken their united supply of household goods along with them; while others, discouraged by the poor show of mining six weeks ago, when even the nearer mountains were still covered with snow and ice, rushed pell-mell down the Platte with wild reflux of the Spring emigration, abandoning all but what they could carry away. It is said that lots and cabins together sold for \$25—so long as there were purchasers; but, these soon failing, they were left behind like campfires in the morning, and have since been at the service of all comers.

So in company with a journalizing friend I, too, have "jumped a cabin," and have kept to it quite closely, under a doctor's care, for the last ten days. It is about ten feet square and eight feet high, rather too well chinked for Summer, considering that it lacks a window, but must be a capital house for this country in Winter. I board with the nearest neighbor, and it is not my landlady's fault that the edible resources of Denver are decidedly limited. But even these are improving: To the Bread, Bacon and Beans, which formed the staple of every meal a short time ago, there have been several recent additions: Milk, which was last week twenty five cents per quart, is now down to ten, and I hear a rumor that eggs, owing to a recent increase in the number of hens within five hundred miles from four or five to twelve or fifteen, are about to fall from a dollar a dozen to fifty cents. On every side, I note signs of Progress—Improvement—Manifest Destiny—there was a man about the city yesterday with Lutetia to sell—and I am credibly assured that there will be Green Peas next month—actually Peas!—provided it should rain soakingly meantime—whereof a hazy lowering sky would seem just now to afford some hope. (P. S. The hope has vanished.) But I—already sadly behind and nearly able to travel again—must turn my back on this promise of luxuries, and take the road to Laramie to-day, or at furthest to-morrow.

HORACE Greeley.

Things We Have Seen.

We have seen the most worthless and lazy fellows dress the most fashionable.

We have seen the most talented young men turn tipplers and die drunkards.

We have seen men who have boasted of their wealth, who were not able to pay their tailor.

We have seen men who have made much noise about their bravery and daring exploit—and

We have seen the same run away from a goose.

We have seen men run in debt without any probability of being able to make payment.

We have seen men urging another to become a candidate for some office—and

We have seen the same fellow vote against him at the election.

We have seen parents urge their inclinations and

We have seen a lovely young girl marry a rich old bachelor merely for wealth; and

We have seen the same girl die broken hearted within a year.

We have seen talented young men marry bashy, brainless girls and

We have seen them even after dragging out a wretched, miserable life.

Losing a Day.

"I say Pete, in gwine round de world, trabblers tell us dey lose one whole day."

"Dat am nuffin, Sam, when you can make em up again."

"How you gwine to make em up agin—tell me dat?"

"Why, turn round and go back agin, nigger."

"A Greek maiden being asked what fortune she would bring her husband, replied—"I will bring him what gold cannot purchase—a heart unspotted, and virtue without a stain—which is all that descended to me from my parents."

"Out West, the law gives damages for apparent breach of promise. The bachelors, however, obviate the difficulty by having their cards labelled, "Good for this call only."

Three Thousand Miles of River Navigation.

A steambot has recently returned to St. Louis, from a trip up the Missouri River to Fort Benton, a distance of three thousand miles from its mouth, and only seventy miles from the sources of the Columbia River. It is, therefore, evident that a steambot may go from Pittsburgh to Fort Benton, and were the navigation of the Ohio and Missouri Rivers improved, as it readily might be, travel and transportation might be carried on throughout this extensive route during the greater part of the year. Facts like these, show in a strong light the wretched policy which our General Government pursues in refusing to encourage works of internal improvement. There is an abundance of unemployed labor in the country which would rejoice to find employment in such works, and the expenditure would in a few years be returned a hundred fold in the increased value of the land in our great western territories. The wealth which would be produced by the settlement and exploration of that vast region, between the Mississippi and the Pacific, is incalculable; and yet all of its immense resources lie dormant, while those who administer the Government amuse themselves with schemes for the purchase of Cuba and the absorption of Mexico.

Were the industrial capital of the country protected from the European drain, which so injuriously affects all American interests, and keeps enterprising men in a continual fever of anxiety, improvements, which would so largely increase the value of property, would be gradually undertaken by private individuals or corporations formed for the purpose. The labor, the skill and energy are here in abundance, and all that is wanting is the pecuniary means and that confidence which regularity in the operations of business always creates, to enable our people to accomplish enterprises of a far grander and more important character than any which have yet been undertaken. But at the present time men live in continual dread of those panics and revaluations which result from our slavish dependence upon Europe for all the pecuniary capital with which business is carried on in this country. If the tariff of 1842 had not been disturbed, the gold from California would have remained in the country, instead of being sent to Europe to pay for useless manufactures, and many branches of industry would have been so much improved that other nations would be tributary to us, instead of drawing our best currency in the world, and enough of it for all the business wants of the community. That the uncultivated portions of our Western Territories contain untold mineral wealth, no one can doubt; and that the land in many of them is rich, in an agricultural point of view, is equally evident. To subdue, to develop, to cultivate, and to make available the resources of this vast region, would be a work of which the mightiest nations might be proud; and the large scope for the exhibition of the genius and enterprise of the American people, which such a work would afford, and the improvement in the condition of the people, consequent upon the large demand which would be made for labor of every kind, would do more to exalt the American people amongst the nations of the Earth than any work which has yet been undertaken. When we consider what our country has already accomplished while struggling with so many difficulties, we can well imagine what she would do if those obstructions were removed, and the industry of the people encouraged.

The country traversed in this steamboat expedition of three thousand miles, is almost an untrodden wilderness. At the present time it is almost valueless; yet all the materials of wealth are there, inviting industry to come and take them. Myriads of unemployed or poorly paid mechanics, operatives and laborers, pine in our Eastern States for lack of the means to open those mines of wealth in this distant region, which would so abundantly reward their industry. Our country is like a huge machine which stands still for want of an engineer to set it in motion, and manage its operations. A vast part of the people live in ignorance while wealth is buried all around them. We need not look to the far West to see the results of the wretched policy which paralyzes the arm of industry, and deprives the useful man of a proper reward for his labor. Here in Pennsylvania, we have in abundance the rich treasures of the earth sleeping in our hills and forests, while industry goes without reward. There is abundance everywhere, but for want of motion in the industrial machine the people suffer in the midst of plenty.

The cost of the construction of a railroad to California would have been repaid in the value of property twenty times over in a few years. The bonds of union would have been strengthened, and the nations of Europe would have been compelled to pay us tribute for their intercourse with the Pacific. The funds for the construction of such a work as well as for the improvement of the navigation of the great rivers of the West, could have been raised by increased duties on foreign manufactures, which would have been a benefit instead of a burthen to the country. Nay, the mere adoption of specific duties in the place of the fraud-inviting ad valorem system which now prevails,

would afford an increase of revenue sufficient in ten years to complete a Pacific Railroad and make easy navigation of the Missouri to Fort Benton.

Wisdom in the management of our public affairs is all that is wanting to make our country the greatest and most powerful of nations, and to increase the prosperity, happiness and independence of the people in an incalculable extent.—*Daily News.*

Something to Impart and Something to Learn.

It is related of a reverend clergyman who lived in Vermont some forty years ago, that he was on such friendly and intimate terms with his parishioners that he would sometimes indulge in freedoms not altogether in character with the gravity of department so essential to the maintenance of clerical dignity and respect. On one occasion, previous to commencing religious worship, he called the attention of his hearers to a subject which weighed heavily on his mind.

"I have," said he, "something to impart and something to learn. There is one thing which I know that you do not know; there is one thing which you know that I do not know; and there is one thing which neither of us knows. First, as I was coming over the hedge I tore my breeches—this I know, but you did not know. Second, whether you will give me cloth enough to make a new pair—this you know, but I do not know; and third, what will the tailor charge to make them. This latter is what neither of us knows."

A Fast Girl.

Mary Butler, a servant girl was arrested at the Five Points, N. Y., for stealing a quantity of clothing from her mistress, Mrs. Clarinda B. Hazeltine, who was boarding at Orange, on the 16th ult.—The girl first got partly drunk, and then breaking open her mistress's trunk, put on a \$49 silk dress, \$50 shawl, \$20 hat and other apparel to match, making about \$150 worth of goods and jewelry, and went to New York. She had disposed of the whole stock for \$5. The servant was sent to jail, and the man who bought the goods was held on a charge of receiving stolen goods.

A Fast Boy.

The Worcester (Mass.) Spy relates the criminal adventures of a boy twelve years of age, whose precocious rogueries and cunning escapes would form an interesting chapter in the Old Bailey Chronicle of the Police Gazette. This young rogue, Isaac B. Patch by name, commenced his career in Worcester by stealing from his uncle, Mr. S. F. Towne, \$250, with which he went to Boston. There he fell into the hands of a police officer, and was sent home in charge of the conductor. He evaded the vigilance of his guardian, however, and left the train at Groton junction. After various hair-breadth escapes and wily stratagems, he stole a horse, wagon and harness belonging to Elijah Gross, of Athburnham, and made his way to Bellows Falls. Here he was overtaken by the owner of the team, and taken back to Fitchburg, where he was committed for trial at the next Criminal Court for Worcester county.

Queer Matrimonial Freak.

A letter from a citizen of Livingston county, Kentucky, to the Danville Tribune, relates the following bit of family history in that neighborhood: "A widow lady took an orphan to raise, quite small, and when arrived at the age of eighteen, she married him, she then being in her fiftieth year. They lived together many years, as happy as any couple. Ten years ago they took an orphan girl to raise. This fall the old lady died, being ninety-six years of age, and in seven weeks after, the old man married the girl they had raised, he being sixty-eight years old, and the girl eighteen."

A Living Head on a Dead Body.

Mr. Archibald Campbell, a respectable farmer in the township of Camden East, while engaged in finishing a new dwelling on his premises, the scaffold gave way, and he was precipitated head foremost to the ground, and dislocated his neck; but very fortunately and mysteriously it did not kill him. When his head was brought to its proper position, the vertebrae of the neck returned to their place with a dull but distinct snap. The whole body is paralyzed and dead from the neck downward. He is not capable of moving a muscle or experiencing the slightest pain. Fortunately the nerves supplying the muscles used in respiration were not paralyzed, and he can breathe and live; had the injury of the spinal cord been a little higher, he would have died immediately. The sense of sight, hearing, smelling, &c., are normal, and intellect is unimpaired.

When last heard from however, there were some indications of a return of sensation and the power of motion, and it is just possible that Mr. Campbell may partially recover.—*Newburgh (C. W.) Index.*

"Don't expect to be called a good fellow a moment longer than you consent to do precisely what other people wish you to do."

"Beggars always find one kind of provision plenty—the cold shoulder."

Inclined to be Quarrelsome.

There was once a little, slim-built fellow, rich as a Jew, and independent as old Scratch, riding along a highway in the State of Georgia, when he overtook a man driving a drove of hogs by the help of a big, raw-boned six-foot two-specimen of humanity. Stopping the last named individual, he accosted him:

"I say, are these your hogs?"

"No, sir; I'm to work by the month."

"What pay might you be getting, friend?"

"Ten dollars a month and whiskey thrown in," was the reply.

"Well, look here; I'm a weak, little inoffensive man, and people are apt to impose upon me, d'ye see. Now, I'll give you twenty-five dollars a month to ride along with me and protect me," said Mr. Gardner. "Bat," he added, as a thought struck him, "how might you be on a fight?"

"Never been licked in my life," rejoined the six-footer.

"Just the man I want. Is't a bargain?" queried Gardner.

Six-footer ruminated.

"Twenty-five dollars—double wages—nothing to do but to ride around and smash a fellows mug occasional when he's sassy."

Six-footer accepted.

They rode along, till, just at night, they reached a village inn. Dismounting at the door, they went in. Gardner immediately singled out the biggest man in the room and picked a fuss with him—

After considerable promiscuous jawing, Gardner turned to his fighting friend and intimated that the licking of that man had become a sad necessity. Six-footer peered, went in, and came out first best.

The next night, at another hotel, the same scene was re-enacted—Gardner getting into a row with the biggest man in the place, and six-footer doing the fighting.

At last on the third day, they came to a ferry kept by a huge, double-fisted man, who had never been licked in his life—

Whilst crossing the river, Gardner, as usual began to find fault and blow. The ferryman naturally got mad, throw things around, and told him his opinion of their kind. Gardner then turned to his friend, and gently broke the intelligence to him that he was sorry, but that it was absolutely necessary to thrash that ferryman.

Six-footer nodded his head, but said nothing. It was plainly to be seen that he did not relish the job, by the way he shrugged his shoulders, but there was no help for it. So when they reached the shore, both stripped, and at it they went. Up and down the bank, over the sand, into the water they fought, scratched, gouged, bit, and rolled, till, at the end of an hour, the ferryman gave in. Six-footer was triumphant, but it had been tough work. Going up to his employer, he scratched his head for a moment and then broke forth:

"Look here, Mr. Gardner, your salary sets mighty well, but I'm—of—the-opinion—that you are inclined to be quarrelsome. Here I've only been with you three days, and I've licked the three biggest men in the country! I think this firm had better dissolve, for you see, Mr. Gardner, I'm afraid you're inclined to be quarrelsome, and I reckon I'll draw."

A Fine Thought.

A French writer has said that "to dream gloriously, you must eat gloriously while you are awake; and to bring angels down to converse with you in your sleep, you must labor in the cause of virtue during the day."

"J. B." tells a good 'un. While riding in one of the Philadelphia cars, recently, he asked an elderly uncle if he had seen any of the newly medicated paper.

The reply was in the affirmative. Just then an elderly Quaker lady, sitting opposite, addressing the elderly gentleman, said, "Friend, what newspaper did these speak of?" Here was a poser; but instantly recovering his equanimity, after a few a-bem's and a-ha's, he replied, "A new paper, started in opposition to the New York Herald!" The old lady then subsided, apparently satisfied with the explanation. About this time there was a general explosion.

Mr. Marsh, an able chemist, found that iron long under water when reduced to powder, invariably becomes red hot, and ignites anything it touches. A general knowledge of this is important, as it accounts for many spontaneous fires. A piece of rusty old iron, brought in contact with a cotton bale in a warehouse or on shipboard, may occasion much loss of life and property.

If you love others, they will love you. If you speak kindly to them, they will speak kindly to you. Love is rapid with love, and hatred with hatred. Would you hear a sweet and pleasing echo, speak sweetly and pleasantly yourself.

Some of the savage tribes wear bells on their noses. We have sometimes, at crowded soirees, had bells on our toes—and didn't like the fashion.

Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much; wisdom is humble that he has learned no more.

Marriage is a feast where the grace is sometimes better than dinner.