

# Mountain Sentinel.

"WE GO WHERE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES POINT THE WAY;—WHEN THEY CEASE TO LEAD, WE CEASE TO FOLLOW."

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## MISCELLANEOUS.

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SCENES IN TEXAS.

SAN ANTONIO DE BEXAR, WITH THE ALAMO, WHERE THE LAMENTED CROCKET FELL.

FROM THE RECONNOISSANCE OF AN OFFICER OF THE U. S. ARMY.

The city of Antonio de Bexar, which was founded more than two centuries past, occupies a fertile plain on the west shore of the Antonio river, and now, even in its curtailed condition, reaches fully a mile along that beautiful stream, while in width it extends perhaps to more than half that distance. It seems to have been regularly laid off in streets, crossing each other at right angles, with an oblong space in the centre, about midway of which stands the cathedral and other public buildings, dividing it into two equal divisions of some eight acres each, the eastern being denominated the civil, and the western the military square. Around the whole extent of these squares are erected a continuous wall of stone houses, which from the exterior, with their rough walls, their flat roofs, and their port-holes, resemble nothing but an impregnable fortification, while on the interior, with their plastered fronts, large windows, and spacious corridors, they present at once an appearance of comfort, uniformity, and security. The other buildings are miserable huts, built of crooked musket-logs stuck endwise into the ground, the crevices filled with clay, without windows, with dirt floors, and generally thatched with prairie grass or bull-rushes. The surface of the ground being level, the streets, which are without pavement, appear to have been prepared by the hand of nature for the especial purposes to which they had been appropriated by man. The suburbs on the eastern bank of the San Antonio, where a considerable portion of the population reside, yield to the curvatures of the river from the Alamo to the full extent of the city.

The river San Antonio, which is formed by some half-dozen springs that burst up within a small compass, is perhaps one of the coolest and purest little rivers on the American continent. Besides affording an abundance of water to supply the numerous diverging ditches for irrigation, it sweeps on with a bold current, and with its flowery banks and its meandering channel winding gracefully through the city, may be considered as its most valuable and interesting ornament. From early evening till the hour of midnight the inhabitants flock to it in crowds, for the purpose of bathing, and then the forms of hundreds of young and beautiful nymphs may be seen joyfully gamboling amongst its limpid waves. It is by no means an unusual sight to behold the forms of three or four young brunettes come dashing down the current, with their dark hair floating over their shoulders; and gliding like dolphins on the sea. The writer describes an incident which came within his notice during his visit to this beautiful river. He says:—"As I stood gazing on the various forms before me, I beheld one younger and more delicate, rolling, curveting, and sporting among the waves, whose tapering limbs and well formed figure shone amidst the sparkling waters like alabaster when exposed to the sunlight. She was the only female of light complexion I saw in San Antonio, and as she passed her flaxen ringlets fell wantonly about her white neck and half-developed bosom. She seemed ardent and sinless as a child of the coral caves of the deep, deep ocean—but when her full blue eye turned up and its glance met, in wild surprise, with ours, a blush of modest consciousness passed over her cheek, when she darted to the bottom to rise no more till distance had deprived us of the powers of discrimination."

The population of San Antonio is divided into three classes. The third is the connecting link between the savages and the Mexicans, and are termed *Rancheros*, (or herdsmen) a rude, uncultivated, fearless race of men, who spend a great part of their lives on the saddle, herding their cattle and horses, and in hunting deer and buffalo, or pursuing mustangs, with which this country so fully abounds. Unused to comfort, and regardless alike of ease and danger, they have a hardy, brigand, sun-burnt appearance, especially when seen with a broad, slouched hat; a red or striped shirt, deer-skin trousers, and Indian moccasins.

The second are a link between the Mexican and the Spaniard, or Castilian, and are somewhat more civilized, more superstitious, owing to the influence of the priest, and yet possessed of less bravery, less generosity, and far less energy than the former. They reside in the city, with but scanty visible means of support, and without the least effort to procure the comforts of life; still they vegetate, and appear to be perfectly independent and

contented. Their usual dress is a broad-brim white hat, a roundabout, cañico shirt and wide trousers, with a red sash or girdle around the waist. At an early hour of the day they go to mass, then loiter out the morning, sleep through the afternoon, and spend the night in gaming, dissipating and dancing—but they drink but little liquor. Almost entirely uneducated, completely cut off from all intercourse with the world (for except a few paths and Indian trails, there is no appearance of a road to San Antonio,) and therefore deprived of the common means of intelligence—they have no enterprise or public zeal, no curiosity, but little patriotism—know nothing of government and laws, and seem incapable of feeling themselves, or appreciating in others, those lofty aspirations which fire the brain, warm the heart, nerve the arm, and burn in the bosom of a free man.

With apparent good nature, and much awkward courtesy, they are yet treacherous and deceptive, and can no more stand the frank honest gaze of a real white man than a fox can the eye of a lion.

The wives and daughters of the *Rancheros* are as rough and uncouth as their husbands and fathers, and disdain those light and polite amusements that generally amuse their sex. But the females of the second class are agreeable, handsome and fascinating—although not particularly accomplished. They dress plain and tastefully, and in a style best calculated to develop the elegant proportion of their persons.

Generally poor, they of course wear but few costly jewels; yet with much good sense seem to consider their own natural charms as the richest ornaments that can adorn a woman, and as those surest to attract the notice and secure the attention of the rougher portion of humanity.

This class are the votaries of the *fandangos* for which San Antonio is so justly celebrated. Nightly, while yet frost and buoyant with the exhilarating effects of a *sicaria* and bath, they flock by hundreds to those dirt floor saloons which are the scenes of mirth and music.

Conducted with much decorum, and yet without such useless restraints as announcements, bows and introductions, the *fandangos* were well calculated to afford rare sport for a company of young volunteers fresh from the United States; and so omnipotent was their influence over the ladies, and so terrible their appearance with pistols and bowie-knives to their brown-skinned neighbors, that the arrival of a single platoon was sufficient to clear the room of every Mexican, except a few who stood around as silent and disinterested spectators. The English language is but little spoken at San Antonio, and not much Spanish is understood by a single trooper.

It is frequently diverting to observe the sighs and soft glances of the gentlemen, and the smiles of recognition and nods of assent reciprocated by the ladies—and it is still more diverting at the end of the *fandango*, after each dancer has paid the fiddler, and treated his partner to some simple beverage prepared for the occasion, to see them pairing off by consent, and silently, though not sentimentally, striking off by the light of the stars to every quarter of the city.

The first class, now reduced to a limited number, is composed of the direct lineal descendants of Spanish dons and Castilian nobles, who, though stripped of the titles and prerogatives which they enjoyed under a royal government; yet retain their dignity, their royalty, and their fortunes, and keeping aloof from the two degenerate and subordinate classes already described, are content to live in ease and aristocratic retirement. While a bench or two, a *mitate*, for grinding corn, a copper kettle, an earthen jar, and a few cow hides and Mexican blankets spread on a dirt floor, with a shelf of clothes, and a saddle and harrieto, are the articles of furniture usually found in the thatched hovels and stone huts of the two first classes, the comfortable dwellings of the first are supplied with most of the comforts, and many articles of taste and elegance.

In this class may be found gentlemen of education and talents, of polished manners and refined and hospitable feelings; and if the females in the second class are handsome and fascinating, those in the first class are splendid and irresistibly captivating. Having been educated either in the city of Mexico, the United States, or Europe, they have, with perhaps a very few exceptions, travelled much, seen much of the world—and those superlative advantages with which nature has gifted them, have been cultivated, cherished and embellished until they exceed in appearance, and equal in capacity, any women of the present day. And when collected within the luminous walls of a ball-room, as they were the evening preceding our departure, with graceful figures floating with elegance and

dignified ease through the cotillon and waltz, while the flashes from beneath the long drooping lashes of their dark eyes, eclipsed the dazzling lustre of the diamonds and costly crescents that clustered amongst the jet black braids of their hair, the belles and beauties of San Antonio looked like a band of houries from some fabled land of the East, or like an assemblage of young princesses of some romance.

They were all so young, so lovely, and so noble, and yet so very natural and unaffected—they smiled with such exquisite sweetness, laughed with such delight, their voices possessed so much melody, their mien so artless, they danced so divinely, and spoke broken English so prettily, that more than a dozen of our troopers lost their hearts, while the heads of one or two were so completely turned that they have looked westward ever since our return to America.

This city has been the theatre of so many skirmishes, and so many revolutionary scenes, that not a house has escaped the indelible evidences of strife. The walls, windows and doors on all sides, are perforated by thousands of balls, and even the steeple of the venerable church was penetrated by a shot from the ordinance of the Texans during the first memorable action in December, 1835. The noted spots where the lamented Alamo fell, where the fearless Ward lost his leg, and where the intrepid Beldin, after rushing out to spike the cannon, was deprived of an eye by a ball from the enemy were all pointed out to me.

The traces of the ditches across the streets, and along which they advanced from house to house, are yet visible, and the unrepainted wall, then demolished by their hands, yet stands the proud monument of their patriotism and their prowess.

We next visited the Alamo, on the east bank of the river, and opposite the northern extremity of the city. It stood in ruins as it was left by the Mexicans, and was occupied by a few hundred soldiers, and as many thousand chattering swallows forever passing in and out like bees around a hive.

By a broad archway through the centre of a fortress which fronts the south, we entered an oblong square of some twelve acres extent, and turning obliquely to the left, we had passed all but the last of a long row of soldier's quarters, which form a part of the western wall, when our guide exclaimed, "Here perished poor Crockett." We then followed along the wall on the north and east until we came to an edifice of great strength, two stories high, and divided by thick walls and archways with many apartments, some of which are in good repair and others in ruins. This building stands detached from the wall, and it was in one of its rooms that Colonel Bowie was murdered, while confined to his bed by sickness. Extending from its southeastern corner to the wall in the rear is seen the splendid ruins of the cathedral, a building of beautiful proportions, entered by a large ornamented door fronting the west, on either side of which, between two deeply fluted stone columns, stands a figure of some holy saint, executed and finished with taste that would do credit to some of the best European sculptors. The roof had fallen in, but the high columns and part of the archway remained, and the cells and chambers that were once the abode of priests and bishops, were filled with Caracache prisoners and mutinous soldiers, while an armed guard stood upon the rear wall, directly over the seat of the holy altar.

Within a short distance, and very similar in appearance to the Alamo, stands the mission of St. Jose. Here, too, the hand of time and destruction is visible, yet the walls and the numerous edifices are more perfect, and the church is in a good state of preservation, although every thing about them is touched with a cast of great antiquity. This establishment, with its towers and steeples, and buttresses and spires reminds the traveller of an old baronial castle in the feudal times; and as the ditch around its walls, which once served to irrigate the fields around it, answers for the "deep moat," nothing but a drawbridge across the San Antonio is wanted to complete the delusion.

The front of the church is embellished with a rich vine, within the curvatures of which are hearts and darts, the moon, the sun, and the globe; then there are cherubim and seraphim, with trumpets and garlands, and with mandates in their hands, who seem ministering to the wants, and worshipping around the wrought figures of St. Jose, the Virgin Mary, with the infant in her arms. The whole is cut in stone, and stands out boldly from the wall. Within we found remnants of rich tapestry, fragments of images and crosses, and very natural-looking figures of St. Jose, and Jesus, with his bandages and wreath of thorns, as he was seen after he was taken down from the cross. The vase for the holy water is chaste, and must have

been beautiful indeed. Like every thing else, it is of stone, and represents four winged angels seated on a rich pedestal, and bearing in their hands a bowl resembling large convolvulus leaves, diverging from the centre, which with their pointed edges, form a beautiful brim. Here again were the evidences of warfare, which called to mind the events of the bloody revolution of 1835-6. On every side nature had been bountiful in her gifts—the fertile soil still freshened by irrigation, and the multiplicity of bright flowers and fragrant shrubs flashing among the waving grass, like the rays of a prism whenever agitated by the slightest breath of wind.

The climate was pure, the air sweet, the breeze fresh, and the sunbeams warm, though not sickening—yet the thousands who once lived and moved and were happy upon this spot, had passed away, and witness extended from the missions to the very walls of the city. It was then we wished for the genius, the fire, and the conception of a Byron, a Scott, or a Stephens, that we might give vent to our feelings, and pourtray the beautiful prospect which surrounded us. T. W.

Oregon at the Close of 1850.  
Correspondence of the New York Tribune.  
PACIFIC CITY, Oregon, }  
Friday, Nov. 8, 1850. }

I have seated myself on the Pacific coast, to give you some idea of this truly interesting country. The day (Nov. 8, lat. 46 north) is mild and pleasant; the air is soft as Spring, and very invigorating; the leaves of some young, thrifty apple trees, in the verge of Baker's Bay, are not tinged with the frost. Probably there is not a more healthy, agreeable, and even temperature on the globe than here at the mouth of the Columbia river—no extreme of heat and cold.

There are two entrances into the River—the North and South Channel. The Northern contains more water, and is the only one by which ships of any considerable draft can enter at low tide. The mouth of the river, to the unpractised in navigation, presents quite a formidable aspect—breakers on every side. But the chief difficulty is the necessity of waiting for a favorable wind. As you approach the entrance of the River, your eyes are greeted with a most imposing and beautiful spectacle. Mount St. Helens, in the form of a sugar loaf, and white as the spotless snow, rises on your view—an emblem of innocence, an enduring monument of silent eloquence—as though it said to the dwellers on all the immense prospect it overlooks, "Be pure, be truthful, and be just, and you will be beautiful and happy."

As you enter the mouth of the River, on a small peninsula formed by the expansion of the river in the form of a half moon into a large bay, (Baker's) and the Pacific, on the north side is situated Pacific City—the embryo (as many think) of the Queen of the West. The City was commenced last March. The Bay on which it is located is spacious and safe, as though Nature intended it for the depot of the extensive lumber and agricultural regions of the Columbia valley. A hotel which, well furnished, will cost twenty thousand dollars is nearly completed. A large saw-mill is already commenced, and the site begins to attract the attention of the capitalists. Almost every vessel is bringing to it the sturdy adventurer. It certainly has many advantages, but you will see it has also a good number of rivals. Across the River and a little higher up, is situated Clatsop Plains, a low, sandy district, but remarkably productive in vegetables. The claims here (mostly containing a full section) are nearly all occupied. They are now selling their potatoes at four dollars per bushel, and other vegetables in proportion; consequently the farmer is making his heap with great rapidity. And soon must continue here for years to come. There is no region that presents a higher prospect to the agriculturist than that about the mouth of the Columbia.

Astoria, also on the opposite side of the river from Pacific City, is situated about fifteen miles higher up. At present it is the only port of Oregon, except one. The custom-house and distributing Post-Office are here. Gen. Adair, the Post Collector has moved the offices about one mile higher up, and commenced a new Astoria. Nature has not been as profuse of her advantages to this place as to Pacific City. No large and beautiful bay is spread out before her, and the prospect around it is not so magnificent. Still Astoria hopes to be first in importance on account of her age. In point of population, the two places are nearly equal.

The claims near the mouth of the river are being fast taken up, and are estimated in value from two hundred to five thousand dollars—those near Pacific City being considered most valuable. Proceeding

up the river about sixty miles, you come to the mouth of the Cowlitz river. In its valley the French have a settlement. But the Anglo-Saxons are crowding into their possessions and establishing their claims. The banks of the river on both sides are high and precipitous, covered with a dense forest, the lofty tops of which shoot up arrow like, three hundred feet and more towards the heavens! As you leave this place, the general course of the river inclines a little to the south of east.

Cattle Poodle, another small tributary and on the same side of the river, is fifteen miles from Cowlitz. Here we find another settlement, in a rich and beautiful valley.

As you proceed eastward you soon arrive at the mouth of the Willamette, which enters the Columbia on the south side. In the basin of this river is located the principal part of Oregon's population. This valley, consisting of rich and beautiful prairie, interspersed with patches of clean and magnificent timber land, is truly delightful. It is without doubt the best wheat country yet known. The climate though mild, pleasant, and remarkably even, is not sufficiently warm to mature corn except the yellow flint. The grass, with which the prairies are richly carpeted, unlike that east of the Rocky Mountains, is fine in quality and very nutritious. Cattle subsist on it and thrive during the whole year. It affords to the husbandman without any culture, a perennial pasture field.

Proceeding up the Willamette some fifteen or twenty miles, you arrive at Portland. This is the second port, and may be considered the head of ship navigation. An effort is making to make this the great port of Oregon, and were it not for the application of steam, for a time this might be. Still Portland, without doubt, is soon to be a place of importance, a mart of no inconsiderable trade.

Milwaukie, near the falls of the Willamette, is the next point of importance. Here a steamer is building, and is expected to be ready for business by Christmas. This boat is designed to ply between Pacific City and Milwaukie, ascending as high as Oregon City, when the state of the river will permit.

The river at this point spreads out into a beautiful cove, making a convenient harbor for quite a number of vessels. Mr. Whitcomb, the proprietor of Milwaukie, is a liberal, enterprising man, and it does appear that his place shall be the head of ship navigation for all the extensive valley of the Willamette.

Six or seven miles above Milwaukie we arrive at the falls of the Willamette, and Oregon City, at present the capital of the Territory in point of population and advancement. The perpendicular fall of the water is sixty feet, presenting a grand and picturesque scene. The city numbers about 1,500 inhabitants, and is most rapidly increasing. The most thickly settled portion of the Territory is still higher up the valley. Wheat is the great staple, forty bushels to the acre where the ground has been well prepared, an ordinary yield, and sixty bushels no extraordinary one. Many of the farmers have eight hundred or a thousand bushels garnered up.

In water-power and timber, Oregon stands unrivalled. Her water-power could supply the wants of the world. There are in the Territory some thirty or thirty-five saw-mills now in operation, and several more building; but not one good flouring mill.

The mineral wealth of Oregon is not yet ascertained. Her great resources are yet undeveloped. Marble, fine and rich as Parian, is known to be abundant, and it is confidently believed that in the Klamath district, and other parts, are richer mines of gold than California has yet manifested. For the present we will say nothing of the fishery, her oyster beds, her wild game, and her native productions.

Oregon now contains twenty-five or thirty thousand inhabitants; a hardy, intelligent, and enterprising people, fond of reading and determined that their children shall be educated. Though possessing unequalled advantages as a grazing and sheep growing country, it will require time to stock her natural pastures and supply her with manufactures. Hence the people have numerous wants, which, for some years, must be supplied from abroad. She already presents a rich and inviting field to the capitalists of the East. Merchandise of almost every description commands a high price and ready sale. Books in Oregon are estimated more valuable than gold.

But the most grand and imposing feature which Oregon presents, is an asylum for the multitude which the delusive hopes of California have ruined.

Thousands and tens of thousands in California are now destitute and suffering. Many from the States have mortgaged their farms, and left their families in the expectation of realizing a rapid fortune in

the mines of California. Not one in a hundred of these has been successful, and there they are, far from their homes, without means, hopeless, and in prospects ruined.

To all such, Oregon spreads out her ample arms and invites them to seek shelter in her rich and protecting bosom. And thousands whom the encagements of California's Gold have ruined, are seeking, and will seek and find their salvation in Oregon. There, there efforts, if well directed, will surely be crowned with success.

Gold can be obtained faster, and far more surely by agricultural pursuits near the mouth of the Columbia, than in the mines of California. The potatoes grown on one acre with very little cultivation on Clatsop plains, were sold in the ground this Fall, for eighteen hundred dollars.—The numerous vessels which will enter Baker's Bay must be supplied with provisions, and the thousands who will seek the gold mines must be fed. Oregon is Nature's preparation to supply these wants. J. M. H.

## Happy Home.

A young man meets a pretty face in a ball room, falls in love with it, courts it, "marries," goes to housekeeping with it, and boasts of having a home to go to, and a wife. The chances are nine to ten he has neither. Her pretty face gets to be an old story—or becomes faded, or freckled, or fretted—and as that face was all he wanted, all he "paid attention to," all he sat up with, all he bargained for, all he swore to love, honor and protect, he gets sick of his trade; knows a dozen faces he likes better; gives up staying at home evenings; consoles himself with cigars and oysters, whiskey punch, and politics, and looks upon his home as a very indifferent boarding house. A family of children grow up about him; but neither he nor his fair "face" know anything about teaching them; so they come up hater skelter—made toys of when babies, dolls when boys and girls, drudges when men and women; and passes year after year and not one quiet, happy, homely hour is known throughout the whole household. Another young man becomes enamored of a "fortune." He waits upon it to parties, dances the polka with it, exchanges *billet doux* with it, paps the question to it, gets "eyes" from it, is published to it, goes to the parsons with it, calls it wife, carries it home, sets up an establishment with it, introduces it to his friends, and says (poor fellow) that he too is married, and has a home. It's false. He is not married; he has got no home; and soon finds it out. He is in the wrong box; but it is too late to get out of it; he might as well escape from his coffin. Friends congratulate him, and he has to grin and bear it. They praise the house, the furniture, the cradle, the new bible, the newer baby; and then bids the "fortune" and him who "husbands" it, good morning! As if he had known a good morning since he and that gilded fortune were declared to be one. Take another case. A young woman is smitten with a pair of whiskers. Carried her never before had such charms. She sets her cap for them they take. The delighted whiskers make an offer, first one and then the other, proffering themselves both in exchange for one heart. The dear Miss is overcome with magnanimity, closes the bargain, carries home her prize, shows it to her Pa and Ma, calls herself engaged to it, thinks there never was such a pair (of whiskers) before, and in a few weeks they are married. Married! Yes, the world calls them so, and we will. What is the result? A short honeymoon, and then the unlucky discovery that they are as unlike as chalk and new cheese, and not to be made one, though all the priests in Christendom pronounced them so.

The following beautiful thoughts are from the pen of George D. Prentice:—

"There is but a breath of air and a beat of the heart, betwixt this world and the next. And in the brief interval of painful and awful suspense, while we feel that death is present with us, that we are powerless and he all powerful, and the last faint pulsation here is but the prelude of endless life hereafter; we feel, in the midst of the stunning calamity about to befall us, that earth has no compensating good to mitigate the severity of our loss. But there is no grief without some beneficent provision to soften its intensity. When the good and the lovely die, the memory of their deeds, like the moonbeams on the stormy sea, lights up our darkened hearts and lends to the surrounding gloom, a beauty so sad, so sweet, that we would not, if we could, dispel the darkness that enshrouns it."

Will be the root; knowledge the stem and leaves; feeling the flower.