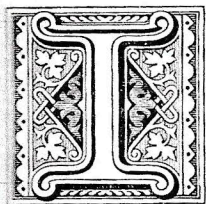


A TRIP TO WESTERN TEXAS.

By G. Scott Locke.



LEFT Concord on Thursday, October 25, for Texas, via Chicago, Kansas City, Trinidad, Col., Albuquerque, New Mexico,

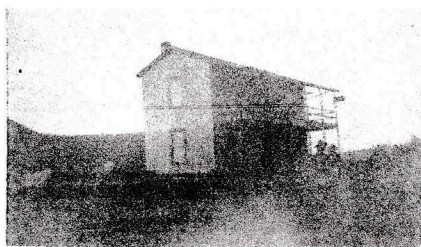
to El Paso; thence on the Texas & Pacific Railroad for Kent, a place consisting of one building, the railroad station, 2,908 miles from home. We had Wagner and Pullman sleepers, with dining cars, as far as Kansas City, then the eating houses on the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fé route. There is not much style in serving at these eating houses but the bill of fare is excellent. The trip was without any unpleasant incidents, and there were plenty of sights to interest an eastern man.

As the travel to California was heavy, our train consisted of ten tourist and Pullman sleepers, three day coaches, and three baggage cars, these being run in two sections. After leaving Chicago, for a thousand miles this route runs through a rich farming and grazing country, but after passing La Junta, Col., and following the old Santa Fé trail, made noted by the "forty-niners," there is a sameness in the scenery that soon fails to interest one. It is a long stretch of grazing country without a building in sight, and for many miles is but a slight trail beside the railroad.

A young man riding a bicycle bearing a sign on which was painted, "On to San Francisco," created a good deal of interest. He wore knickerbockers, sweater, etc., and presented the appearance of some adventurous college lad. It seemed a Herculean task, "kicking a bike" over those rough roads, against a heavy wind and through thick clouds of dust. The passengers waved handkerchiefs and hats, which he graciously acknowledged.

At Trinidad, Col., we began to climb the Raton mountains, with two heavy Mogul engines, pulling seven cars through the tunnel to the state line, where we reached an altitude of 7,622 feet. Here the old Wooten Ranch ruins were visible, where toll was expected of travellers over the Santa Fé trail when railroads were unknown through this desolate country.

Leaving cold weather and ice in Colorado, we descended through New Mexico to the banks of the Rio Grande river and El Paso. Here we had a temperature of 80 in the shade; flowers were in full bloom and everything was suggestive of mid summer. At 4 p. m., I took the train for Kent. One car bore a placard, "For Whites," another, "For Negroes," and these regulations are strictly enforced, as I realized, when I entered the wrong car and was requested to "Take a seat in the white car, sah."



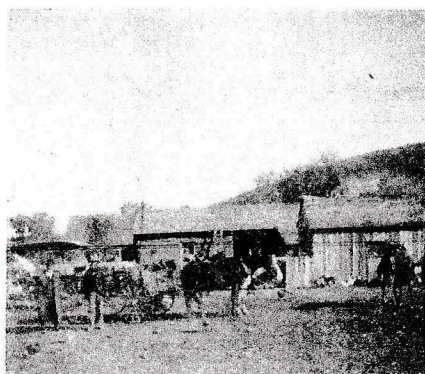
The Railway Station.

Fearing that my man would not reach Kent in time to meet me, I was somewhat uneasy. The train was due there at 11:30 p. m., and as the station agent has orders not to allow strangers inside, the prospect of walking the platform in a heavy thunder storm was not a pleasant one. I was relieved of my anxiety, however, by meeting Mr. Newman, a ranchman, and our only neighbor between Kent and my ranch. An attempt to "hold up" the passenger train at this station had caused the railroad officers to be suspicious of strangers, hence extreme caution is used, but Mr. Newman introduced me to the station agent, who kindly offered me hospitality and took me inside.

Having no blankets with me, as is the custom when travelling through a ranch country, I was puzzled as to how I should pass the night with any degree of comfort, when, to my surprise, I discovered Mr. Perkins, the foreman of the ranch, asleep on the floor behind some boxes. After greeting me in hearty Texan fashion, he offered to share his blankets with me, and I "turned in." Despite the non-elasticity of the floor, these men fell asleep at once and snored in perfect unison until daybreak. As for myself, even though I like harmony, so much of it became tiresome and I realized that I had forgot to leave

my nerves at home. I counted black sheep and white sheep vaulting high walls, spelled Mississippi backwards, and resorted to other old-time remedies for insomnia without avail, and when day dawned I rejoiced with exceeding great joy, and punched my melodious companions with unnecessary vigor.

After "rustling the horses," we



The Nearest Neighbor.

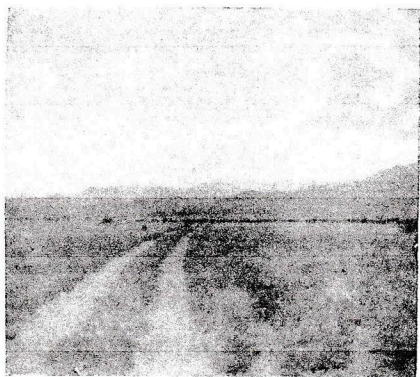
started for the ranch, thirty miles distant, passing but one house on the route. As the travelling was heavy, on account of the recent rain, we were nearly all day in making the journey. On arriving we found the cow-boys busy shoeing horses, getting their blankets ready, and bustling about generally. On inquiring the cause of the unusual commotion, I was informed that they were preparing for a trip to the mountains in search of wild steers. Most of the cattle are gentle, but a few steers will stray to the highest mountains and become as wild as deer, causing the other cattle to become unmanageable. We have good-sized mountains out there. The ranch has an altitude of 5,900 feet, and "Old Baldy," or Livermore Peak, towers 8,382 feet.

As I entered camp one of the cow-boys shouted, "Wall, Mr. Tenderfoot, you're jest in time for the picnic. We air sure goin' to get Old Midnight, Lightning, and Break-away this time. The critters have caused us a heap of trouble. They got away last year and year before, and now we air goin' to camp on their trail until we get 'em."

With fifty saddle-horses, three mules, six cow-boys, a "horse-wrangler" (herder), and a cook, we started wending our way through canyons and over mountains to the head of Lympia canyon, where we struck camp at Grubbs' spring. Long before daybreak we rolled up our blankets, and eating breakfast by moonlight, started for Livermore Peak. Seven men and seven horses,

and when your horse gets to sliding, as mine did, on this slippery mountain side, instinctively you would pull up on the reins. Not so here, for as my horse started to slide, some one shouted, "give him the rein, tenderfoot, and let him see where he is stepping!" As we stopped a moment to rest, Mr. Perkins said,— "Now we missed them yesterday, we must sure land them to-day! You and Jim Nunn," he said, turning to me, "go to the head of this canyon and turn northeast. Here, Rob, you and Lee go up Goat canyon and turn to the right. You, Buck, and Jersey, head up Ghost canyon for Pinery trail. Now work easy, don't talk if you strike the trail, and stay with 'em!"

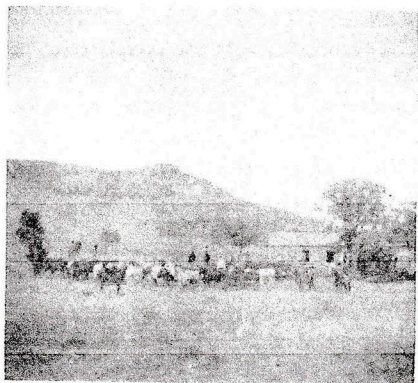
After riding and walking for about two hours, Mr. Nunn and myself found Old Midnight and his pals with a "bunch" of twelve head. In a whisper Nunn said, "there they are!" Through the brush they went, snorting and roaring like a steam engine, we giving chase, with horses running for their lives over rock and *arroyos*, through brush and trees, until I rode into a treetop and



Prairie View.

in Indian file, began the ascent, occasionally stopping to rest or to get down and lead their horses along the side of the mountain, where a misstep would mean death to horse and rider. I must confess I rode when I preferred to walk, for I had a boyish dread of showing the "white feather."

These mountains in places are nearly covered with loose, flat rock,



Ready for the Start.

pulled up, with hat off, face bleeding, and Jim and cattle out of sight. I certainly found out what rough riding was. After following the trail for a long distance I lost it, and not only that, I discovered that I was lost with it. The mountains everywhere were so much alike that it was impossible to determine where to go.

Finding that my horse objected to going my way I let him go his, and in about two hours I struck a trail that led me to the cattle we found the day before. While resting, "Jersey" came in on a hard lope. "Come on!" he shouted, "the boys are up the Pack canyon, they have the steers surrounded and want help." Riding for a couple of miles, we found one of the men, who said, "get down and look to the left of that juniper tree yonder. There's Midnight and Lightning. Breakaway has gone over the divide."

Directing two of the men to go on to the other canyon, he gave me instructions, which, you may be sure, I followed closely, and soon came in sight of the runaways. Away they flew at full speed, but we managed to turn them over the mountain where the boys were ready for them.

For six miles they raced, followed closely by Rob and Jim, and as they turned up Lymphia canyon they passed our camp, where Lightning was roped and tied down after a hard fight.

Up the canyon Midnight flew, with Rob in close pursuit. A wire fence spread across their path, and Midnight, with head close to the ground, roaring, made for it. Down went the steer for a moment, then up and away again, through the fence, Rob following at full speed, until, a mile above, he succeeded in roping the steer, which he held until help came. Imagine a wild, fighting steer attached to a half-inch rope thirty feet long with one end fastened to the pommel of your saddle, and that steer rushing at you and roaring like a wild beast. The cow-boy's horse is all attention, eluding the attacks of the rushing steer. The horse must brace himself to throw the steer, and by keeping the rope taut hold him down. The cow-boy must dismount to tie the steer's legs, knowing if his horse fails to do his duty that he will have a "close call."

Later in the day the other wild steer was captured, and with fifty head of cattle we moved "the outfit" five miles down the canyon to Dolan's ranch where we "made down" for the night, after the most exciting day's ride I ever experienced. As the cow-boys fell asleep under their blankets, I watched the camp-fire cast its shadows, and listened to the roar of the cattle, raised by an occasional dismal cry of the coyote, and I could but wonder what tempted those brave men to such a life of danger and hardship.

