

It was nearly midnight before I could find a resting-place for myself and horse. Late as it was, the sound of a violin drew me across the *plaza*, or principal square, and up one of the narrow streets leading to it. Poor Power, in one of his plays, used to say that "wherever you hear a fiddle you are pretty sure to find fun;" in the present instance I found a *fandango*. As I entered the room, which was destitute of other floor than the hard earth, and lighted by two or three coarse tallow candles, a single couple were shuffling away, face to face, and keeping time to a cracked violin. Ever and anon the woman would sing a verse in Spanish, both herself and male partner standing until its completion. Then they would shuffle away again, using a species of break-down, negro step, entirely devoid of grace and ease. Another verse and then another shuffle, and the dance was over. The woman was as destitute of beauty as an Egyptian mummy—in fact, if dried, would have made a very good counterfeit of one of those curiosities; her partner was even more ugly. Some half dozen slovenly, badly-dressed Mexican girls were sitting upon benches at either end of the room, while an old woman in one corner was selling paper cigars and vile whiskey.* I passed through an open door, leading into a back room, where were a small party of men and women betting at *monte*. I lost a couple of dollars "just to get the hang of the game," as the facetious Sam Slick would say, and then retired to my lodgings. Here I had no other bed than my own blankets and the hard earth floor; if anything can be harder than such a couch I have yet to find it, and my

* This was but a fandango of the lowest order. The reader must not suppose that there is no better society among the Mexicans of San Antonio than I found at this place.

experience has been rather extensive. A plank really seems to have a "soft side," and those who have tried both, as I have, will say that there is a species of "give," if I may be allowed the expression, to a stone floor; but a Mexican, hard-trodden, earth floor has a dead solidity about it which fairly makes the tired bones ache again. The experience of the few past days now came like an unpleasant panorama across my mind, and I began to reflect that I had a rough life in perspective; but as every one said "it was nothing after getting used to it," I resolved to "go ahead."

CHAPTER III.

Description of San Antonio.—Fondness of the Women for Bathing.—Climate.—Irrigating Canals.—Fruits.—The old Spanish Missions.—Objects for which they were constructed.—The Alamo.—Concepcion.—San Juan.—San José.—La Espada.—Bowie and Crockett.—Church of San Antonio.—Anecdote of General Cos.—Mexican Merchants from the Rio Grande.—Return to Austin.—Incidents upon the Road.—A Texan Leather Stocking.—An Adventure.—Out-tricking a Party of Indians.—Another Night at the St. Mark's.—Fruitless Chase after Camanches.—Hog-wallow Prairie.—Arrival at Camp.—More of the Camanches.—Plain Supper and good Appetite.—Insight into Astronomy.—Once more at Austin.—A Fall in the Dark.—Speculations while falling.—Broken Bones.—Dancing Days over, or the "Jig up."—Consolation under Misfortune.

By far the most pleasant as well as interesting town in Texas is San Antonio, or Bexar as it is frequently called by the inhabitants. The San Antonio River, which heads a short distance above the town, meanders through its streets, and its limpid waters, by the different turns it makes and the irrigating canals, are brought within a convenient distance of every door. The temperature of the water is nearly the same all the year

through—neither too hot nor too cold for bathing—and it is seldom that a day passes in which all the inhabitants do not enjoy the healthy and invigorating luxury of swimming. I say *all*—for men, women, and children can be seen at any time in the river, splashing, diving, and paddling about like so many Sandwich Islanders. The women in particular are celebrated for their fondness for bathing, and are excellent swimmers.

The climate of San Antonio is pure, dry, and healthy; so much so, that the old but rather hyperbolic saying, "If a man wants to die there he must go somewhere else," appears specially to apply to the place. During the summer months, a cool and delicious breeze is almost continually blowing, bringing health and comfort. But little rain falls; and to supply this defect the rich and fertile bottoms of the river are intersected in almost every direction by irrigating ditches, which carry the limpid waters in every direction. Whenever the ground requires a moistening, the water from the canals is let over it at once; so that even should the summer pass without a drop of rain, the crop is invariably abundant. Peaches and melons arrive at great perfection, and I have little doubt that many other species of fruit could be cultivated with success. The prairies in the vicinity afford the finest pastures for cattle and horses to be found in the wide world, and so mild is the climate that they thrive at all seasons.

By far the greatest curiosities in the neighbourhood of San Antonio are the *missions*. Before I describe these immense establishments it is necessary to observe that early after the conquest of Mexico a main object of the Spaniards' policy was to extend the authority of the Roman Catholic Church. The conversion of the Indian and the promulgation of Christianity were as

eagerly sought by them as the gold and silver which first lured them to the Western World; and this missionary zeal produced some of the most remarkable incidents in the history of the country. The new doctrines were first inculcated by force and cruelty, but subsequently in a more humane temper, by allowing the superstitions of the Indian to mingle with the rites introduced among them; and to this day, the anomalous consequences of this policy are to be seen in the Indian ceremonies, some of which I will describe when I shall hereafter speak of our journey through the Mexican country. For the purpose, however, of affording protection to the Roman Catholic missionaries, there were established, at various times, settlements which still bear the name of Missions. They are very numerous throughout California, and in Texas there are several. The Alamo, at San Antonio, was one of much importance, and there were others, hardly of less consideration, in the neighbourhood, called the Missions of Concepcion, of San Juan, San José, and La Espada. They were all most substantially built; the walls are of great thickness; and in their form and arrangement they were frontier fortresses. They have generally, though not always, a church at the side of a square having one entrance. Seen from without, they present the form of a blank wall surrounding a square enclosure; within is a large granary, and the wall forms the back of a series of dwellings in which the missionaries and their converts lived. There was a large appropriation of the surrounding district for the support of the mission, through which small canals were made for the purpose of irrigation. Such, at least, is the case with the missions which I have mentioned. The Alamo is now in ruins, only two or three of the houses being inhabited. The

gateway of the church was much ornamented, and still remains, though deprived of the figures which once occupied its niches. But there is enough still to interest the investigator of its former history, even if he could for a moment forget the scenes which have made it celebrated in the history of Texan independence. The exact spot where the eccentric but brave Crockett fell, surrounded by a ring of Mexicans whom he had killed, is shown, as also the quarter where the heroic Bowie breathed his last. About two miles lower down the San Antonio River is the Mission of Concepcion. It is a very large stone building, with a fine cupola, and, though plain, magnificent in its dimensions and the durability of its construction. It was here that Bowie fought one of the first battles with the Mexican forces, and it has not since been inhabited. Though not so well known to fame as other conflicts, this fight was that which really committed the Texans, and compelled those who thought of terms and the maintenance of a Mexican connexion to see that the time for both had passed. The Mission of San José is about a mile and a half down the river. It consists, also, of a large square, and numerous Mexican families still make it their residence. To the left of the gateway is the granary. The church stands apart from the other buildings, in the square, but not in the centre; the west door is surrounded with most elaborate stone carving of flowers, angels, and apostles. The interior is plain. To the right is a handsome belfry tower, and above the altar a large stone cupola. Behind the church, and in connexion with it, is a long range of rooms for the missionaries, opening upon a covered gallery or *portales* of nine arches. Though the Texan troops were long quartered here, the stone carvings have not been in-

jured. The church has been repaired, and Divine service is performed in it. About half a mile farther down is the Mission of San Juan. The church forms part of the side of the square; it is a plain, simple edifice, with little ornament. The adjacent buildings are poor and out of repair. The granary stands alone in the square, and on the northwest corner are the remains of a small stone tower. The other mission, that of La Espada, is also inhabited, as well as the last. The church, however, is in ruins. Two sides of the square consist of mere walls; the other sides are composed of dwellings as in the other instances.

The church at San Antonio was built in the year 1717; and although it has suffered much from the ravages of time and the different sieges which the city has undergone, is still used as a place of public worship. When San Antonio was attacked and taken by Colonels Cooke and Milam, in 1835, General Cos made the belfry of this church his headquarters. A well-directed cannon-shot from the Texans struck just above his head, inducing him to evacuate the place with his staff immediately. The hole made by the ball is still visible, and, in fact, all the houses in the principal square of the town are marked more or less by shot.

San Antonio is laid out and built with some little regularity. The houses are all of one story only, with few windows and thick walls. The town probably contained, at one time, a population of some twelve or fifteen thousand; but the different revolutions, the many bloody battles which have been fought within its walls, and the unsettled state of the frontiers, have combined to lessen this number materially. It is still, however, a place of no inconsiderable trade, and should peace be concluded with Mexico, will regain its former standing. While I

was there a company of Mexican merchants from the other side of the Rio Grande arrived, who were allowed to trade and depart in peace; and had the expedition to Santa Fé been given up, as was at one time anticipated, I should have joined one of these companies and entered Mexico by way of Laredo.

After spending some six or eight days very agreeably at San Antonio, I set out on my return to Austin. Two days before I left, a number of wagons, loaded with goods by the merchants of San Antonio and destined for the Santa Fé market, left the former place; these we overtook at the Guadalupe, and thence journeyed towards Austin in company.

While "nooning" on our third day's march from San Antonio, or in plain terms, while stopping a couple of hours in the heat of the day to rest, I set off, in company with an original named Tom Hancock, in the hope of being able to kill a deer. This fellow Hancock was a perfect "character," as much so as the celebrated Leather Stocking of Cooper's novels. In person he was spare and gaunt, with a loose, shambling carriage of body that ill betokened the firm-set muscles and iron powers of endurance he really possessed. When standing erect, his height may have been five feet seven or eight inches; but he had a lazy, listless stoop, which shortened his stature two or three inches and gave him the appearance of being misshapen and round-shouldered. His limbs were anything but symmetrical, and seemed to hang dangling about him—this on ordinary occasions; but when the muscles were nerved, and the body straightened in the excitement of adventure, it was then that Tom appeared in his true light, a wiry, knotted imbodiment of action, power and determination.

Decidedly the best point about him was his eye, a small twinkling orb, of no definable colour, but which never allowed any object within the farthest reach of human vision to pass unnoticed. And yet, one might journey with him for days, might be in his company even for weeks, and never suppose that he was looking at or for anything. But not a footprint, not a trail, escaped the notice of that quiet-rolling eye—Tom could tell you the animal that made it, the direction in which it was going, and the time that had elapsed since it was impressed upon the surface of the prairie.

In every species of backwoods, border, and prairie strategy Hancock had his gifts, and they were such as have been vouchsafed to but few. An Indian he could circumvent and outmanœuvre at his own games, and at killing every kind of animal known in the woods or on the prairies, at fishing, or at "lining" bees, the oldest and best hunters acknowledged Tom's supremacy. He could lie closer to the ground, creep farther, expose less of his person and get nearer a deer, bear, buffalo or enemy's camp, than any other man, and these qualities made him invaluable not only as a mere provider of meat for a camp, but as a spy. He had been in frays innumerable with the Mexicans, as well as Indians, and invariably performed some exploit that would furnish his companions with a topic for conversation. He had been a prisoner, among the Camanches, but had got away from them—in short, had made hair-breadth 'scapes innumerable. Yet he never, on any occasion, boasted of his feats—never even adverted to them. Such is a rough and imperfect picture of Tom Hancock—of one nurtured amid the solitudes of the woods and prairies—whose days had been spent in the excitements and dangers of the chase or of Indian frays, and

whose nights had passed amid serenades of prairie wolves and owls. He had been hired at San Antonio by Mr. Falconer—not as his servant, for Tom would scorn being the washer of dishes or brusher of clothes for any man—but simply to accompany the Santa Fé Expedition. His obligations to Mr. F. extended this far—he was to find him if lost, and to keep him in provision should other supplies fail. Such was the singular contract.

Tom's ordinary weapon, and the one upon which he most "prided" himself, was a long, heavy, flint-lock rifle, of plain and old-fashioned workmanship, for he could not be made to believe in percussion caps and other modern improvements. In the adventure I am about to describe he was armed with one of Colt's repeating rifles, which he had borrowed, his own being out of order. The spot where we had stopped to pass the heat of the day was a little prairie on the eastern side of a small branch, the borders of which were skirted by a narrow fringe of timber, running nearly north and south, and ranging in width from one hundred yards to a quarter of a mile. Tom and myself skirted along the eastern side of the trees until we had travelled nearly a mile, without seeing a living thing save two or three large prairie rabbits, which would suddenly jump up and leap off as we approached.

Thinking we might meet with deer on the opposite side of the timber, Tom noiselessly led the way through while I followed closely upon his heels. We put up two or three turkeys near the branch, but the underbrush was so thick it was impossible to get a shot at them. When through the timber, Tom descried a couple of deer quietly feeding in the prairie. He attempted to get a shot, and laid his plans for that purpose with great

judgment and every prospect of success; but the animals appeared extremely shy, and discovered him before he was within reach of them. A little farther up the prairie another deer was discovered; but like the others, it was timid and on the look-out for danger, and ran off before my companion was within two hundred yards. "There's been Injuns round here lately, I know by the way the critters work," said Tom in his quiet way, at the same time pointing to the last deer we had started, which was rapidly bounding away in the distance.

The hunter now hesitated a moment, took a hurried but careful survey of the surrounding scene, and then kept on his course up the prairie, in an opposite direction from that in which our party were encamped. We had not proceeded a quarter of a mile, and were within about the same distance of the wood on our left, when an abrupt roll of the prairie brought us suddenly in sight of a large, and, to all appearance, recently deserted Indian camp, for the embers of some of the fires were still smouldering. "I knew it," said Tom, and pausing a moment, and circling the prairie with his eye, finished the sentence with "and some of 'em are close by, now." I said not a word, but watched every movement of the hunter. That danger was lurking near I was well aware, and if any one could combat it successfully I felt equally confident it was my companion. Although the movement appeared singular enough to me, Tom kept directly on nearly in the same direction, only so far varying his course as to leave the Indian camp fires on the right. We had advanced but a few steps before the footprints of men were plainly visible on the prairie grass. That they were footprints, and of five men, I could see myself; but which way they had gone,

and what time had elapsed since the prints were formed, were matters to me of the most profound mystery. My first impulse was to hasten immediately to our camp, keeping on the same side of the wood until opposite, or nearly so, to our party; but I said not a word. Tom hastily threw himself upon his hands and knees, bent his head close to the ground, and attentively examined one of the footprints. As he rose to his feet he quietly remarked, "The grass ain't done risin' yet," his eye in the mean time following the fresh trail until it was lost in the wood at a point directly opposite where we then stood. That the Indians had but just passed was a fact brought home to my senses by the superior craft of my companion, and eagerly did I watch his farther movements. He ran his eye along the line of timber in either direction, lifted his rifle from the ground and hastily examined the lock and caps, and then, as if his mind was fully made up for any emergency, started at a fast walk for a point of the timber still farther from our camp. I followed him in silence, and I must say in astonishment, for to my understanding there was the utmost danger in the course he took; but with all my astonishment I still felt the utmost confidence in Hancock, for there was a decision in his movements that gave assurance he fully understood the nature of the dilemma in which we were placed, and had adopted the wisest measures to extricate us from it.

At a long, steady stride, and without apparently turning his eyes either to the right or left, Tom kept a straight line for the timber. The wood was soon gained, and at a pace even increased we struck directly through. I had not noticed the circumstance before, but now that we were among the trees I saw that at this point the belt of timber was much narrower, more

open, and presented fewer facilities for an ambuscade. Arrived on the eastern side, Tom did not slacken his pace until we had left the woods some three hundred yards in our rear, when placing the breech of his rifle upon the greensward, giving one long breath, and casting his eye along the thicket we had just passed, he quietly remarked, "We needn't be afraid of 'em now—five foot Injuns ain't goin' to attack us in gunshot hearin' of camp, 'specially when there ain't no place for 'em to hide." Not another word did he utter, but lifting his rifle from the ground with a slight jerk, and catching it as it fell with his right hand, he leisurely took the direction back towards our camp. This little adventure, which certainly would have been fraught with some danger had it not been for the craft of Hancock, impressed me more fully than ever with a belief in his superior skill. Another fact I ascertained from our little hunting trip: the Indian camp we had discovered was the same from which ascended the different smokes that we saw while journeying from Austin to San Antonio, and undoubtedly was the general rendezvous of the large party who had killed Moore and wounded Hunter near the St. Mark's. Where the main body was, when Hancock and myself visited their premises, it is impossible to conjecture, but it was probably engaged in some marauding expedition. We were certainly fortunate in not falling in with it, and some of the warriors who composed the party were unfortunate so far as the missing a couple of scalps may go.

We arrived in camp as our companions were saddling their animals and preparing for departure, so that we had no time for rest after the fatigue of a two hours' march in the hot sun. Our nags, however, had enjoyed a rest, if we had not, and were fresh and ready for the

journey. That night we spent at the St. Mark's, and after enjoying a bath in its cool waters, I had a sound and refreshing sleep. In the early part of the ensuing afternoon, some three or four of us who were ahead descried three Camanches ascending a distant roll of the prairie on horseback. We gave chase at once; but finding, after a race of some ten minutes, that they were going at least three yards to our two over the *hog-wallow** prairies, we reined up and returned to the trail.

On arriving at the spring where we were to encamp that night, we found two of our young men, who had gone out early in the morning in quest of game, busily dressing a fat buck they had been lucky enough to kill. We told them the circumstance of our having given chase to a small party of Camanches, and after we described to them the route the Indians were taking when we first discovered them, our hunters at once said they were following on their trail. They also stated that in their morning hunt they had noticed fresh Indian "sign"† in many places, and had little doubt the Camanches we had chased had been hanging upon their path and waiting an opportunity to cut them off. They even deemed our appearance providential in saving their lives, as they had exhausted all their ammunition, and must have been massacred if the Indians had overtaken them.‡

* So called from the roughness of the prairie in many parts. In some places the ground has every appearance of having been torn up by hogs—*rooted*, I believe, is the expression—and hence the name. The Indian horses are early trained to run over these rough places with freedom.

† Any evidences seen upon the prairies of the appearance, whether recent or otherwise, of animals or men, is called "*sign*." If the marks appear recent the term is "fresh sign"—if otherwise, "old sign." The term will very likely appear often in this work, and I have therefore given this short explanation.

‡ It may be considered singular that both these young men, before the

By the time our main party reached the spring where we had come up with our hunters, it was near six o'clock in the afternoon. As I had eaten nothing since daylight, and had had no little exercise in the way of riding and walking in the interim, the reader will readily imagine that I had a tolerably sharp-set appetite. At all events, I ate venison enough to satisfy a half-famished wolf; there were no other accompaniments than red pepper and salt—but at that time I thought it the most delicious meal I had ever swallowed. Since then I have made a meal of the flesh of a poor, broken-down horse with far keener relish.

The next morning, after a brisk ride of some three hours, we reached Austin again in safety, having been absent nearly a fortnight. More than half of this time I had "camped out" upon the prairies, with no other bed than the ground, no other covering than the sky—blue or black, according to the state of the weather—and a Mexican blanket. I had already made considerable advancement, practically, in the science of astronomy, being able to tell the north star with much accuracy after first occupying some ten minutes in arranging the "pointers" so as to bear upon it. A friend had also promised to hunt up and make me acquainted with the "big bear" some fair night. Farther than this, I could now easily distinguish the howling of a prairie wolf from

Santa Fé Expedition reached the settlements of New Mexico, met a violent death. One of them, a young man named Lockridge, shot himself on Little River—whether by accident or not was never ascertained. He was a native, I believe, of Louisiana, a lawyer by profession, of good manners, excellent education, and modest, retiring deportment. He was much beloved by all who knew him, and was buried with military honours near the spot where he breathed his last. The other, Doctor Bell, was an assistant surgeon, and a brother of his is said to be a captain in the United States army. The doctor was killed by Indians on the Grand Prairie, and his loss was deeply regretted by those who knew him best.

the screeching of an owl, points upon which I was sorely puzzled the first time I heard one of their concerts. But to speak seriously, I had found no bad effects from exposure so far, and was every day growing more and more reconciled to the long tour which still lay in prospect before me.

The evening after my return to Austin, however, an accident occurred which not only came near preventing me from leaving for Santa Fé, but for any other place in this lower world. The day had been hot and sultry, threatening rain, and when night came the sky was shrouded in clouds of pitchy blackness. A man's hand could have been seen as plainly had it been in Kamtschatka as when held before his face at arm's-length; but notwithstanding the darkness, some four or five of us made up a little party for the purpose of bathing, and started for the Colorado with that intention. As the river is approached, the traveller meets with a fork in the road, one trail leading directly down a cut-way excavated in the high steep bank, while the other conducts to the bluff and then turns abruptly off along its edge. I happened to be ahead, and unfortunately took the wrong trail; yet so confident was I that I was right, that I walked directly up to and over what may emphatically be called the "jumping-off place" of the Rio Colorado. It was no stumble, no pitching head first over a steep precipice, but on the contrary I walked directly off the giddy height—to use a common expression, went over "all standing."

It is to be presumed that a man's feelings are by no means pleasant when he suddenly finds that his feet have no footing, and that his gravity is carrying him, with a velocity absolutely uncomfortable, to say nothing of the attendant danger, from a third or fourth story window

to a sidewalk, with every brick in which he is perfectly familiar; but his feelings border upon dissatisfaction and distrust when he ascertains that he is standing upon nothing, with an unknown destination before him, and has time to reflect, while descending, upon the distance he has already come and to indulge in speculations as to the distance he has yet to go. My experience in falling from high places is limited to one or two flights of this kind, and that the world may have the benefit of it, I will return to the height from which I first started, and give a plain recital of the fall and the injuries I sustained in consequence.

The distance through which I passed I have never been able to ascertain, but it was far from inconsiderable. I was fortunate in retaining an upright position while falling, and had presence of mind to brace myself strongly, thinking that I should be better enabled thereby to meet the shock of striking the bottom, whether of earth, or stone, or water, I was at the time ignorant. My right foot reached terra firma first, the concussion shattering the ankle badly, and, as I then thought, breaking every bone in my body. My back, in particular, was so severely injured by the shock, that I was entirely bereft of the power to move. My friends hurried back as fast as the darkness of the night would permit, groped their way until they had found the road I had unfortunately missed, and were finally successful in reaching me. I was excessively faint, and called for water. One of the party soon returned from the river with his hat full, sprinkled my face and neck, and gave me a draught. They next lifted me, with as much care as possible, to their shoulders, and carried me back to the hotel we had left but a few minutes before in high and buoyant spirits; but it seemed as though every faculty of my

body was paralyzed. Doctor Brenham, who was boarding at the same hotel, immediately called upon me and did everything in the power of a physician or surgeon. The next morning I was enabled to ascertain the extent of my injuries, which, though severe, were not so bad as at first supposed. My back was still weak, and pained me so much that I was unable to move without assistance; my ankle, in the mean time, was extremely swollen and entirely useless, and in addition gave me much pain. Yet my friends, one and all, said that I should be on my feet again in three or four weeks, as well as ever, and able to run down a buffalo bull on an open prairie. I could not feel quite as sanguine, but still thought that six weeks, or two months at farthest, would restore my bruised and shattered limb to its original strength. But even my expectations were wide of the mark, for some two months elapsed before I could even bear the least weight upon my lame foot, and it was three before I could walk without much pain.

Even to this day, and some two years have slipped away since I sustained the injury, the ankle is weak and far from being cured. Time was when I was able and willing to essay a cotillon with the sprightliest—when I could cut pigeon-wings and extras, and perform the double shuffle with no inconsiderable precision and activity; but those days are over now—the “jig is up.” I still have one consolation, however, and one which I freely recommend to all who may be similarly situated; when a man breaks his leg he should always be thankful it is no worse—for instance, not his neck.

CHAPTER IV.

Visit from General Lamar.—Preparations for a Start.—Pleasant Anticipations.—Northers.—Bright Side of the Picture.—Speculations as to the Reception of the Expedition at Santa Fé.—No Thoughts of Fighting the New Mexicans.—Señor Navarro.—A Jersey Wagon provided.—Departure from Austin.—Adieu to Civilization.—A modern Athens.—Its sudden Rise, and more sudden Fall.—President Lamar in Camp.—Arrival at the Brushy.—General Joy among the Pioneers.—Reviewed by the President.—Order of March.—Tricks of young Oxen.—Upsets.—Arrival at the San Gabrielle.—Camp Stories.—Opossum Creek.—Scene of a Fight with the Camanches.—Anecdote of two Brothers.—A night Storm.—Buffalo in Sight.—Petri-factions.—Stories of Buffalo.—A Youngster caught.—Methods of Hunting the Buffalo.—A regular Chase.—Buffalo on every Side.—Fitzgerald, and his Zeal.—Falconer among the Buffalo.—Returns of Killed and Wounded.—Arrival at Little River.—Buffalo Calves in Camp.—Manner of taking them.

THE day succeeding my unfortunate accident, I was visited, at my room, by crowds of friends, among whom was the President, General Lamar. The only topics discussed had some relation to the expedition. Preparations were going on in every quarter. The merchants were packing their goods, and mending and strengthening the heavy wagons upon which they were to be transported. Volunteers were cleaning and preparing their arms, as we were to enter an Indian and buffalo range almost immediately—in a word, all was hurry, bustle, and excitement. Every one was anticipating an exciting, a glorious frolic, the wild gossiping tales of old hunters and campaigners tending, not a little, to increase the fever of impatience to be upon the road. Not a word was said of the hardships, the dangers, the difficulties we were to encounter—the biting “north-