

were cold enough to freeze ice half an inch thick, while the days were warm enough to allow one to sit in a hammock out of doors. The breeze is always cool, and the sun is almost too warm for comfort at times. To-day is one of the few windy days that we have, and is quite cool, although, as I said, the sun is warm.

To describe this country is a difficult task, because it is so unlike any other place I ever saw, that I can make no comparison. The valley is narrow, but quite long and very flat. The River Grande is scarcely a mile distant, yet we would not know there was a river there had we not been told so. I have not seen the river except from the car window, therefore could give but a poor description of it.

There are few natural trees, and those are cottonwoods, though not the cottonwood of the north. Here they are truly a beautiful tree, with their dense dark foliage. The tops are very large, although the tree grows very slowly, the climate being so dry. In the fall the leaves turn yellow—a deep golden yellow—and hang on the tree until away into the winter. Growing thickly on a great number of these trees is the mistletoe, which stays green the whole winter. There are a number of beautiful fruit orchards in the valley. They have all dropped their leaves now, and look quite wintry. The fruit, they say, is fine, here, but all the watering is done by irrigation. In about ten days water is expected in the canals, then no irrigation is done again until in Second month.

The most noticeable thing is the utter disregard of order. The roads run in all directions and the houses are built by them. There is considerable waste land, and on that grow the native weeds and mesquité bushes, while our own Nebraska sunflowers and cockleburrs grow in abundance.

At this time of the year it is truly a dreary looking country, but they say in the summer it is very pretty. Just now it is all of one color, not except-

ing the houses even, for they are built of the soil itself and are called adobes. There are two kinds of soil, sandy loam and "do be," the former is used for making the adobe bricks, while the latter is more fertile. The bricks are composed of the sandy loam and fine straw mixed together with water and dried in the sun. They are about four times the size of burnt brick. The walls are from one to two feet thick, and are plastered with the same mixture minus the straw. We are living in one of these strange houses for the winter. The most of the houses have no windows. The people sit in the sun to warm themselves. However, those are the Mexicans who compose the greater part of the population of the country. They are a shiftless, slouchy, harmless people, who are happy for a week if they have a bushel of corn or twenty-five cents in their pockets. That is the poorer class, however; there is a better class, who are respectable and honest. They are in the minority. The lower class will do petty thieving and are cowardly. You are safe, however, if you have a large dog, though he be perfectly harmless. A Mexican himself never has less than two dogs and oftentimes half-a-dozen, that are just as lazy and worthless as he. They have no ambition other than to get enough to eat, and that consists of corn cakes, chilli and large, brown beans. Chilli is a kind of red pepper, of which they make sauce. Their dress is any old clothing that they can put on. Their hats are something wonderful. He will pay out the last cent he has for a hat, which, perhaps costs him all the way from two and one-half to twenty-five dollars. They are wide brimmed and tall crowned, with a fancy band, which makes them cost.

Their language is Spanish, though oftentimes mixed with the Indian. Their houses are mostly small and are low and flat-roofed, being built of adobe, while many are made partly of willow branches.