

### The Journey of Death.

"JORNADA DEL MUERTO."

For those who have not yet forgotten the geography in use in our schools in the early sixties, or even before the war, I will call to remembrance the great tract then known as the American Desert, said to be inhabited by numerous tribes of Indians. That tract of land is now what might be called the "Lost Desert." Thriving towns and even cities have almost miraculously appeared, where only a few years ago the brave frontiersman kept keen eye and cool nerve in a struggle for existence against the cruel aboriginal. Following down the Great Divide far to the southward for many days' journey in New Mexico, we arrived at the little village of El Parage del prn Cristobal. Here is the peaceful flowing muddy stream of world-wide celebrity, the Rio Grande, and beyond is the gloomy *Jornada del Muerto* or Journey of Death. This is a tract of desert plain had south of Fort Craig and north of Fort Selden, New Mexico, nearly 100 miles long. It is bounded on the east by the distant Sierra Blanca Mountains, and on the west by the Sierra Caballe and Sierra de Frey Christobal. For seventy-five miles it is devoid of wood, water and grass. A veritable "deadly way" it used to be, and on its flat surface the Indians in the mountains could easily discover a train or party of immigrants, and plan to intercept or capture them with little, if any, danger to themselves. For the white men there was no possible chance of escape. The Apaches never take prisoners except for purposes of terrible torture, unless we except the fate of women and children.

There used to be three halting places on this desert in the old times of stages and mail wagons, called the "Aleman," "Waterholes" ("Laguna del Muerto"), and "Point of Rocks." The last and most southerly was the most dangerous and the most dreaded. The water holes, after a rainy season, sometimes held a little water, and the "Aleman," the northern halting place, was once inhabited by a German family, who dug a well and built a cabin, but they were all massacred by Indians and the well filled up. A lonely, terrible journey it used to be, as its name suggests, and on its road side could be seen the graves of many a poor traveler who had been murdered by Indians and buried later by succeeding travelers.

I started from Fort Craig, one afternoon, to cross the Jornada—the only passenger in the mail coach. We had no conductor, so that the driver and myself were quite alone.

In front of us rode, on a spring wagon, a guard or escort of colored soldiers. After crossing the Rio Grande, below Fort Craig, I noticed the driver was getting more and more under the influence of liquor, and a full bottle of some vile compound from the post trader which he had purchased just before starting did not seem to promise well for any chance of his return to sobriety. To my dismay, the colored escort kept far in advance, and the distance between their wagon and ours was momentarily increasing. Once I thought I would hail them and request their non-commissioned officer in charge to stay nearer the stage. The driving of our stage became more and more careless, and after an

hour or two of this misery, a shower came up accompanied by thunder and lightning. The mules behaved badly, and when at last a sharp squall struck us, they turned suddenly to the left, and in spite of the clumsy efforts of the driver to restrain them, broke the tongue of the stage short off, and not till then would they come to a standstill. The last I had seen of the escort, they were huddled together with their blankets over their heads, to keep off the rain, and after the mules had quieted down I looked up for them, but they were then nearly out of sight. I fired my pistol several times to attract their attention, but they neither halted or looked around. The situation was gloomy in the extreme. I was practically alone on the terrible Jornada, and in the condition best suited to attract Indians, i. e., in distress, with a large target in the shape of the stage to attract attention. My escort was worthless, and my only companion in the shape of a human being was now sound asleep. I soon jumped out and unharnessed the mules, hitching one to each wheel, and having succeeded in capturing and demolishing the cursed whisky bottle and what remained of its contents, I went to work to try to repair the damage received by the stage. A rope being at hand, I tried to splice, first tying one end to the axle and then to the end of the tongue, and then trying to splice the broken portions together. I kept my eyes well open and feared that I should soon be another victim for Apache cruelty. Looking up in the midst of my work, I saw, to my horror some figures approaching from a direction which did not suggest the road. I tried to rouse the stupid and worthless driver, but all my efforts failed, and even the words: "The Indians are coming," seemed to have no terror for him. I got in and carefully loaded my only revolver, determined to die bravely and also determined never to be taken alive. Anxiously I watched the bold advance of the enemy, who approached without any caution, and I accounted for this in believing that they knew how weak our party must be and feared not to approach. A turn in their course and a rising of the ground disclosed to my eye the waving of a cape. No, it must be a blanket! No, it is a cape! They are soldiers! And I sprang out, and in my youthful joy and gratitude ran forward to meet them, and ready to weep at my deliverance. The newcomers were of the regular army; a cavalry officer and trooper crossing the lonely Jornada to their post, Fort McRae—established by Captain Grant in 1863—a little off the road to the right of the Point of Rocks, not far from the celebrated *ojo del muerto* or spring of death. How glad I was to see them, and they, when the stage first came into their sight, had hastened on, wondering what had happened. The escort had not turned back, but my new found friends took hold and repaired the broken tongue, and as the driver came to his senses he got a precious sharp lesson from the officer for his miserable conduct. We started again on our journey, and at Water Holes found our escort calmly waiting for us. When we reached Fort Selden, the non-commissioned officer lost his stripes for neglect of duty, I believe, and so the experience on the Jornada was ended much more satisfactorily than it promised at its beginning.

—W. T. PARKER.

### Maverick Bill.

THE RISE AND FALL OF A WESTERN CATTLE TRUST.

Over the Range the Sun is setting,  
Lending the hills a ruddy glow;  
He is lost to sight, and the darkness gathers—  
Over the Range we all must go.

The first cattle trust ever known in the West was organized by Maverick Bill, with a capital stock of one Texas cow, a bulld-faced broncho and a corporate seal. The seal, instead of being impressed upon the certificates of stock, was first heated and then impressed upon the stock itself.

The officers of the trust were Maverick Bill, president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, general manager and board of directors.

The aims and objects of the organization were to stamp the letters M.B. on all cattle that were roaming around without any trade mark or hieroglyphic to indicate to whom they belonged. It is unnecessary to say that the stockmen were opposed to the movement, but it flourished, nevertheless, and as the property of the trust increased and multiplied, there was corresponding falling off in the census of the herds ranging in that locality.

The propagators of Pollock-Angus, and other stock which was not on the poll books, became alarmed at the proportions attained by this giant monopoly and determined to crush it. Yet no one seemed to be willing to take the initiative, for it must be confessed that the president and his self-cooking articles of incorporation were regarded with a mingled feeling of fear and respect in the community.

The people had a delicacy in speaking to Bill about the numerous progeny of one poor, friendless Texas cow. He was such a sensitive and impulsive man that people hesitated about wounding his sensibilities or aggravating his impulsiveness. One man spoke to him about it, but received such an unsatisfactory reply that he never spoke to Bill again. He quit speaking to people altogether.

About that time, a rival organization sprang up in the community. It was known as the Anti-Trust Slip-Knot Society. It was organized in the dark of the moon, and had its headquarters under a large pine tree, with a stout limb suspiciously near the ground.

A temporary set of rules, originating with that distinguished Western jurist, Judge Lynch, was adopted to govern all meetings of this rival society.

The A-T-S-K Society got up an impromptu midnight school at headquarters, at which Maverick Bill was the guest and orator of the evening. It was one of those little social gatherings so prevalent in the West, where the rules of etiquette are reversed, so that, instead of there being one host and twenty guests, there are usually about twenty hosts and rarely more than one guest. Western people are nothing if not original, although an attempt to follow some of their social customs often proves fatal to those with bad eyesight and unsteady nerves.

On this particular occasion, after the secretary had ornamented the stout limb of the pine tree with a larlat, and the president had