

THE DESERET WEEKLY.

Truth and Liberty.

NO. 21.

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, MAY 7, 1898.

VOL. LVII.

THE WRECK OF THE MAINE.

In the harbor of Havana,
When the winds their night-watch kept,
Lay the Maine in peaceful slumber
While the sailors calmly slept.

There perhaps in dreams they drifted
Back to homes where loved ones dwelt—
Little did they think of danger,
Till the fearful shock was felt.

Starting then from bunk and hammock,
With his arms to heaven raised,
Each man heard his death knell sounded—
Then the flames about them blazed.

Ordes for help from wounded sailors,
Mingled with the dying groans,
Sped across the troubled waters,
Carried by the wind's low moans.

But alas! was there a refuge,
From the strangling waters then?
Could the roaring flames be smothered,
By the feeble hands of men?

Just a moment, ah! one moment,
And the sailor's soul had fled
To his Maker, to be numbered
With a nation's unknown dead.

O'er the scene no moon was watching,
Not a star looked forth to tell,
For the clouds—the night's dark curtains—
Round about the great ship fell.

On the sea lay—a frightful picture—
'Twas a photograph of pain,
Framed in blood, which Spain had taken
To advance a Spanish gain.

Spain—thou cruel, treacherous nation,
Dost thou smile at such a fate?
Ah! 'tis God who shall reprove thee,
When thou enterest His gate.

Father, guard and guide our people
Who will suffer from this loss.
Strengthen them in times of battle,
Teach them how to bear their cross.

NINA WINSLOW ECKART.

OVER THE DESERT ON A HAND CART

[Copyrighted, 1898, by Frank G. Carpenter.]

Pacasmayo, Peru, April 2, 1898.—I have just returned from a ride across the desert of Peru in a hand cart. There is at this point a railroad which goes over this great South American Sahara on its way up the Jequetepeque valley. The officers of the road loaned me a car made at Kalamazoo, for the trip, and a couple of native Peruvians furnished the motive power. With them behind and Mr. Rudolph D. Kauffmann, a young American who lives here, and myself, in front, we rode out from the shore and wound for miles in and out over these wonderful Peruvian sands which lie at the foot of the Andes. Now and then we stopped to examine the black volcanic rock with which much of the desert is covered, and again we went off to photograph the traveling sand hills which I shall describe further on. Since then I have spent much time on the desert. I have ridden for miles over it on horseback, and have visited the queer little towns which are found in the short irrigated valleys which run here and there through it. This desert extends from the borders of Ecuador, 2,000 miles southward, along the Pacific

coasts of Peru and Chile. It is as long as the distance from New York to Salt Lake City, and in no place more than eighty miles wide. I have seen something of the other great deserts of the world. From the top of the Pyramids I have looked over the dreary white rocks and sands of Egypt; I have sailed along the deserts of Arabia in going through the Red sea, and from the Mount of Olives have cast my eyes over the bleak wastes between Jerusalem and the Jordan. I have traveled extensively over the dusty plains and rocky highlands of our western territories, and have had my eyes dazzled by the alkali deserts of Mexico. This Peruvian desert is like nothing else in the world. Its formation is a wonder to the average man.

I can explain it best by saying that the atmosphere forms the clothing of the earth, and that old Mother Earth works well only when her clothes are decidedly wet. The mountains are great clothes wringers, which squeeze the rain out of the air and by the difference in temperature cause it to fall upon the land. The Andes kiss the sky at higher points than any other mountains on the globe, with the single exception of the Himalayas. The direction of the winds which sweep over South America is such that they all come from the east. I am now not as far from the equator as I was a few weeks ago, when I waded through the tropical mud amid the dense vegetation of the Isthmus of Panama. The sun is continually drawing up vapor from the sea in front of me, but the winds are carrying it northward and westward, and the air we have is the cool, dry, rainless ozone which sweeps down upon us from the Andes. This air started on from the west coast of Africa. As it swept over the Atlantic it pumped itself full of water, and when it reached the coast of Brazil it was well loaded. As it crossed the continent it dropped its moisture, feeding the great rivers of lower South America, and covering the land with tropical verdure. It dropped more and more as it climbed up the eastern slopes of the Andes until when it reached the top it left its last water there in the form of snow. The result is that all of the water that comes down to the west coast is from the melting of the snows. This is enough to form a river here and there through the desert, and it is in the valleys of these rivers that you find the habitable parts of the coast region of Peru and northern Chile.

There is another habitable region further up in the mountains, between the two ranges of the Andes, which here run almost parallel, and a wild strip on the eastern slope, which will, by means of the railroads of the future, some time be one of the most productive parts of the globe. Peru altogether is a very large country. It would make more than nine states the size of New York. It runs from north to south in the shape of a great wedge, which, if laid upon the surface of our country, would go as far south as New

Orleans, at which point it would be about as wide as the distance between New York and Washington.

One of the wonders of this desert is its traveling sand hills. Back of where I now am there are great mounds containing hundreds upon hundreds of tons of fine gray sand. These mounds are always moving onward under the influence of the winds. They are in the shape of a perfect crescent and their little grains, not so large as a mustard seed, are ever rolling up, up and over the top of the crescent, going always toward the north. They climb over hills, they make their way through valleys, as uneasy but as steady in their march as was the Wandering Jew. Here at Pacasmayo there is a railroad which crosses the desert on its way up the Jequetepeque valley. When it was built the engineers thought nothing of these sand hills, which were far to the southward. The sands, however, are no respecters of railroads. They moved onward and swallowed up the track so that it had to be taken up and relaid on the other side of them. In the ride which I took on the hand cart up the valley I saw one place where a mound of sand containing some thousand of tons was encroaching upon the track. A stream of water from the river had been let in through a ditch at the side in a vain attempt to carry away the sand, and men were at work shoveling the dirt away from the rails. As I passed I saw the sand coming down in a stream like that of thick molasses, and I could see that it was almost impossible to conquer it.

This morning I went out and took photographs of some of these moving hills. I climbed to the top of one of them, expecting to find myself sinking down to my neck in the sand. I discovered, on the contrary, that the hills were quite hard, and that even my shoes were not covered by sand. Some of these sand hills are stopped on their course by what are known as the algaroba bushes or trees. They gather about them, making hills, which spot the desert in places with patches of green. There are, you know, no roads here such as we have at home. The chief animals used to carry freight are donkeys, mules and horses, though the latter are mostly for riding. The ways across the desert are bridle paths, and the people go long distances. Sometimes one of these moving sand hills covers up the paths, a storm spreads the sand over them and travelers are lost. No stranger could travel over this desert without a guide, who generally directs his course by the stars at night and during the day by the wind, which always blows from the south. I can imagine no more terrible place in which to lose your bearings than this desert. You might travel for days without finding anything to eat or drink. You would see the long lines of skeletons of animals which had been lost, upon some of which the gallinazos or buzzards might be still picking at their bones. I passed a cord or so of human skulls, many bones of