

TRAVELING THROUGH SOUTHERN UTAH INTO ARIZONA.

[NINTH LETTER.]

To a stranger in the country, the topography of southern Arizona presents many interesting features. The mountains do not attain the height that they do with us at the north, and instead of being parts of one continuous chain, they are grouped together in small ranges insulated and separated from each other by wide stretches of plains. The valleys stretch out into extensive plains, which for the most part are without water except in the rainy season. Between the Salt and Gila rivers the plains present the aspect of a barren desert covered with tree cactus and Mesquit brush, but eastward from Maricopa on the Southern Pacific railroad we found the great plains everywhere covered with a rich carpet of green, a result of the recent rains.

The Southern Pacific Company has a branch line running from Maricopa to Phoenix, a distance of thirty-four miles.

At Maricopa my attention was called to one of those freaks of nature that I had occasion to mention in a former letter. I refer now to the underground channel of the Santa Cruz river. This river rises in the mountains way off in northern Mexico and after flowing on top of the ground until after it passes Tucson it sinks and is supposed to flow underground until it finds an outlet with the Gila a few miles north of Maricopa. Many of the rivers in this part of the territory sink in the sands, rising again at points where the bed rock approaches nearer the surface. The courses of these underground rivers can often be traced for many miles across the plain by the growth of trees and brush above them. In some parts of the territory efforts have been made to tunnel down and by a system of piping intercept and utilize the underground rivers for irrigation purposes. We understand that these efforts have in part been successful.

After leaving Phoenix, our next objective point was Tucson. I wanted to see the old city of which I had heard so much, and after having walked all over it and viewed it from every side, I do not hesitate in pronouncing it one of the most interesting and most novel little towns in the country. It is thoroughly Spanish in every respect. Spanish in plan, Spanish in architecture, and Spanish in language. The little old Spanish town that was visited by the Mormon Battalion 47 years ago stood at the lower edge of the present town and was little more than a fort. The walls that surrounded it have nearly all either fallen down or been removed, so that I was only able to find one or two small traces of them.

While viewing these remnants of the old wall I was reminded of a bit of romance that took place here many years ago in which a gentleman who has since become quite prominent in our part of the world, and a Spanish beauty figured as the principals. It seems that our friend had made considerable money out of the mines in California and in casting about for some way to increase it had hit upon the idea of going to Mexico and buying up cattle which he proposed to drive overland and sell at a profit in the California market. He had been to Mexico and was at Tucson on his return trip when he met his fate in the person of the aforesaid Spanish

beauty with her wealth of raven locks, large black eyes, heavy lashes, and all the other perquisites that go to make a perfect heroine for a dime novel. Well, the result was that when the time came for him to continue his journey his friends left without him. The days went by one after another and still he lingered. He seemed to live in the light of her eyes. There was never another being on earth half so lovely. It was plain that he could not live without her. Money, cattle, was nothing in comparison. In a word, he had completely lost his head and heart.

Thus matters went on for a number of days. One night he had a dream. He thought he was traveling over a prairie beyond which were a hill and a grove of trees in which he espied a house. Being tired he turned his footsteps thitherward. The door was opened to him by a young lady of exceeding rare beauty by the side of whom the Spanish beauty waned into insignificance. He was given to understand that this lady was to be his wife. He awoke. The warning was enough. He arose quickly, quietly donned his clothes, stealthily scaling the wall secured his horse from a neighboring pasture, and rode forth into the night. He has never been back since, but afterwards found and married the lady of his dream. What became of the Spanish beauty he never knew. Probably she pined and died or shut herself up in the convent out at the point of Sierra Tucson. I would rather believe that she was among the many matron ladies that I saw hurrying to vespers, and that her posterity were among those I saw kneeling before the images during mass at the church of St. San Francisco. But to return to my narrative.

Tucson is said to be the third oldest town in the United States, having been settled way back in the sixteenth century by a party of Jesuit priests who came here from the City of Mexico and located for the purpose of propagating the doctrine of Catholicism among the wild Indians that inhabited the country at that early date. How well they succeeded is known from the fact that they were able to live and maintain a settlement in the midst of such a barbarous, warlike people as the Apaches are known to be, and for so long a time. We could learn nothing of the history of the place for the first 250 years. Probably the little fort found here by the Mormon Battalion represents the growth of the place during the long dark night of viceregal rule. Way back in the early days of the settlement two churches were built, one just across the creek from the town, the other that of San Xinte at the point of the Sierra Tucson about nine miles south east of the city. Both were erected more than three hundred years ago. The former was built of adobe, and has long since fallen into disuse and is now a mere ruin, in no better state of preservation than the old Indian Temple at Casa Grande. The latter is still kept in repair and a museum of old relics has been collected there, which any visitor to the place can go in and see by contributing fifty cents to the coffers of the church.

Tucson is laid out much after the plan of all Mexican towns. The streets are narrow, the blocks small, the houses low one-story buildings built of adobe, plastered on the outside and white washed, so that they present at least a

bright, cleanly appearance from the streets; they are usually built out to the sidewalk line all around the block, leaving an open court in the interior of the block. There are very few windows opening out on to the street, so that to the eye looking up or down the street is presented a long row of white walls with here and there a small door to break the monotony. On the interior, though, the appearance is different. There are a great many windows and doors, with a wealth of lace curtains and flowers, and other things that render the contrast between the street side and the court quite pleasing. You must not think because the outside appearance of the houses is so dismal that the interior is also. On the contrary, as you walk along the streets at evening time your ears are saluted with the music of the organ and piano, the guitar and the harp, and if you are so fortunate as to enter into the residences of some of the better class of the people you will be surprised at the luxury and taste displaced in the adornment of their homes. You will find large rooms, broad halls, and high ceilings, Brussels carpets on the floors, costly paintings on the walls, and every sign of taste and refinement to be met with in other parts of our country. While up on the dome of the court house looking down on the sea of mud roofs and narrow streets I met an American gentleman who had come to Tucson many years ago. I was introduced to his wife, a pleasant looking little lady, whom I would have taken for an American but for the reason that I could not converse with her, not being able to *habla Espanol* well enough. I called his attention to the absence of houses on the American plan and asked why there were none. He said the Spanish houses were particularly adapted to a hot, dry climate; that they were cool and comfortable in the interior, and that after a person became reconciled to their ungainly exterior he would prefer them to the average American house.

The Catholic cathedral occupies a site near the center of the town and faces a small plaza, which is fenced in and planted with umbrella trees and lawn grass. Seats are provided so that a person can make himself comfortable while studying the scenes about him. The old church looks as though centuries of storms and sunshine had come and gone since the last hod of mortar had been placed upon its walls, but I was told that it had been built less than forty years ago. I never had been in a real Catholic cathedral, and wished very much to enter it. So I went and stood near the door, and racking my brain for all the Spanish I had ever known, I fired it at the first person that came in sight. It was a man. I said, "*Habla Ingles?*" He stood sort of mystified for a few moments—probably my pronunciation was at fault; I was just about to try it again when he said "no, señor," and passed on. Then I tried it on a young lady. She shook her head and went on. After a while a rather bright-looking Mexican came up, I advanced and said deliberately, "*Habla V. Ingles?*" He said, "*Si poco*," I said, "Is there any objection to my going inside of the church?" He replied, "Why no, certainly not; walk right in." I walked in.

The church was built in the shape of a cross. The nave was only partially supplied with benches, leaving a large open