

CORRESPONDENCE.

Written for this Paper.

TRAVELING THROUGH SOUTHERN UTAH INTO ARIZONA.

[TENTH LETTER.]

The population of Tucson is estimated at about 6,000, of which 1,500 are American, the balance are Mexicans and Indians. The town seems to be enjoying a degree of prosperity, attributed to the fact that the Southern Pacific has extensive shops here and employ a large force of men. The agricultural college of Arizona is also located here, but does not seem to be a very pretentious affair, and in no way compares with the noble institution of which the people of Logan are so proud. Tucson enjoys a splendid climate. It is not as warm here as at Mesa, while the same fruits can be grown.

The train that bore me eastward left Tucson in the night time, a fact which I very much regretted, as I was particularly anxious to see the country about Bowie and the upper Gila valley. Many Utah people have settled there, and from what I could learn they have a very good country and are therefore enjoying a degree of prosperity beyond settlers in other parts of the territory.

Morning found us at Lordsburg, a little town in the western part of New Mexico. The country there presents the aspect of a great plain covered with a luxuriant growth of grass on which herds of cattle are seen feeding. Here and there can be seen wind-mills which raise the water for the stock. Around the wind-mills are the houses and corals of the cattle-men, and these are the only evidences of civilization that greet the eyes as it wanders over the wide stretches of plain to the distant mountains that are so far away that they only form a dark blue line upon the horizon. This region was formerly the favorite battle ground of the Apaches, and the railroad men do not tire of telling of the exploits of Geronimo and the Kid, who for a long time rode over these plains and mountains triumphantly, bidding defiance to the blue-coats that Uncle Sam sent down against them. They will point out to you the peak on which Geronimo kept his principal lookout and which commands a view of more than a hundred miles in every direction and from which a signal fire can be seen at night far beyond the Mexican border. Then they will tell long stories of Indian depredations, and daring deeds of scouts, that may or may not have ever had an existence in fact.

Deming is a pretty little town situated on a wide plain three or four miles northwest of the northern point of the Victoria mountain, which rises to a considerable altitude above the plain, and stretches off away to the southward toward Mexico. It is from Deming that John W. Young contemplates building his railroad into Mexico. The Mormon settlements are south of Deming, about ninety miles distant. Should Mr. Young ever be successful in contemplating his projected railroad it will prove a great blessing to the settlers in Northern Mexico, and will open up for settlement

a large district in Sonora that is now almost inaccessible.

From Deming the railroad bears off to the southeast and as you approach the Rio Grande the country becomes more hilly, and after a while you see on your left a deep narrow valley covered with willows and mesquit brush, and in which you can get an occasional glimpse of the winding channel of the river. The railroad skirts along the edge of the mesa for a considerable distance and then descends gradually past a succession of great sand banks to the valley below. The valley of the Rio Grande is more like a broad canyon than anything else that I can compare it to. It is from a mile and a half to two miles wide and walled in on either side by benches several hundred feet high. Just below the point where the Southern Pacific railroad reaches the river the valley narrows to less than half a mile. At this point foothills break off from the mountains and fall off quite abruptly to the river, leaving only a narrow pass. It is from this that the town El Paso, or "the pass," derives its name. As we wound down the pass we saw the great smelter where they employ Mexican labor almost altogether, for the reason that they can get it at about 70 cents a day, while American labor costs them about double that amount. Just below the smelter you pass old Fort Bliss where the government keeps a considerable garrison. The old fort is soon to be abandoned for the new one that is now being erected about two miles southeast of El Paso. The new fort stands on a high mesa and when completed its guns will command the entire valley for ten miles around, including El Paso and the Mexican city of Juarez across the river.

El Paso is built principally on what we might term the bottom land of the Rio Grande and looks as though a large portion of it would be subject to overflow in the season of high water. It claims a population of 10,000 a large portion of whom are Mexicans. The town is laid out irregularly, the streets being narrow and crooked. There are some fine public buildings, notable among which are the court house, custom house, and district school buildings. Some of the streets are lined with fine private residences on the American plan, while others again can boast only of the mud house of the Mexican.

The Mexican town of Juarez lies at the foot of the mesa on the opposite side of the river from El Paso and about a mile distant. Two street car lines connect the two towns. I had never set foot on foreign soil and was a little anxious to see how it seemed to breathe the air under the tri-colored standard of Mexico, so I took a car labelled "Ciudad de Juarez," and rode over to make the acquaintance of our neighbors of the rattlesnake and eagle. The street car fare is five cents in American money; then you have to pay the bridge company five cents more for the privilege of riding over the bridge.

As you enter the town you see a number of houses on the Mexican plan with heavy iron gratings over the windows and doors. At first you wonder if they

are the city prisons, but as you wander about the town you see that almost all of the residences of the better class are protected in that manner. I could account for it only that a few years ago revolutions were of periodic occurrence and it was advisable for every man to make his house his castle. On your right as you enter the town you see a large brick building standing within a walled enclosure. This is the Mexican custom house. If you have a valise along it is advisable to call at the office. If not you can pass on to the main street a little way beyond. And now your interest increases. The sight about you is a strange one. The people you meet are not your countrymen. The language you hear you cannot understand. The signs over the shop doors you cannot read. Over the meat market you read "Juan Martinez, Carnicero." On one window I read El Banco de Mejicano and something about American money being compravende. Then there was the old familiar sign of the bock beer, but the words were beyond my ability to translate.

As I wandered about the town I came to a very ancient-looking church that stood on a little hill near the west end of the town. In front of it was a little plaza with its trees, grass, and seats for the loungers. In Mexico the church and the plaza are one and inseparable. The plaza would not be complete without a church, and the church would be lonesome without a plaza. As I strolled up the hill I noticed that the open space about the church was covered with slabs of marble and granite, on which were engraved something in the Spanish language which I made out to be an epitaph, recording the birth, death, and deeds of some good monk who had died way back in the olden time, for the lettering on many of the slabs had become entirely obliterated by the tramping of the many feet upon them and by the action of the elements. Others were badly worn, but dates going back more than two hundred years could be traced upon them. On the post of the church there was a placard in English requesting that due deference be shown the place as a house of worship, and that visitors remember the contribution box. This church is much older than the one that I visited at Tucson, but its interior decorations are very inferior. The images are very crude affairs. Some of them were hard enough looking to elicit the sympathy of the toughest sinner. The church was named after the patron saint Guadeloupe, and is very old—older perhaps than any building in the United States, having been built before the church at Santa Fe, which is considered the oldest in the country. The adobe walls are worn and frayed by time and the elements. Here and there are great cracks in them as though at some time in the long ago they had been treated to a dose of earthquake. The wood posts that support the roof and the ceiling joists were all carved by hand, and when we consider the time, and the tools then used, the work must have been an exceedingly difficult one. In the plaza there is a well which I was told was as old as the church, and to which fact I can testify, for I tasted the water.

After leaving the plaza I wished to go to the Mexican Central depot and inquired of the first man I met, the direction. I said "Where is el depot de