

We have said a good bye to New Mexico, and have entered the largest state in the union. A good idea of the breadth from east to west may be had by trying to grasp in your mind that it commences at Ogden and ends at a point sixty miles west of Omaha. The length of track in a continuous direction from the western boundary to Sabine river in Louisiana is 960 miles—It is a wonderful state, and I must be pardoned if I say that size is its greatest recommendation. Why, you can gather up old England, Ireland, Scotland and throw them upon one corner of Texas and lose yourself trying to find Great Britain.

El Paso has a population of 11,000 people, and is more modernized than Tucson, boasting fine blocks of buildings and many of the features of a progressive city; across the river is the city of Juarez—once called El Poso del norte—the northern outlet from Mexico into the United States. Everything here is Mexican, with its old cathedral and other objects that go to make up a town whose language and people are in every respect the antipodes of the English speaking Yankee. Western time, Mountain time and Middle States time come to a focus here and in order to settle the difficulty you must put your watch ahead two hours and vice versa going west. But of course the days are just as long in El Paso as any other point in the same latitude.

This letter is getting too long for a newspaper. I must be excused for omitting much that would suit a magazine better. So we will start across the broad open plains of Texas, once known on the map as the Staked Plain (el Llano Estacado). Some of the country is passed during the night skirting the Rio Grande. Most of the soil is covered with a plentiful growth of grass but treeless; the soil on the line of the railroad in western Texas is thin, covering a layer of hard sandstone. The highest point on the road crossed by the railroad is Pecos Pass 5,180 feet, and a gradual descent to tide water can be made from here.

The viaduct over the Pecos bridge is an object of wonder. It has the reputation of being the second highest bridge in the world. It crosses the Pecos river canyon, and is 280 feet in length and 321 feet high from the water below. The weight of metal in the structure is 3,640,000 pounds. It looks fragile but is equal to all the demands made upon it. In this region the famous resurrection plant is in great abundance and many kinds of cactus sought after by horticulturists, but away from the few rivers all is dry and waterless.

A beautiful stream is next crossed called the Devil's river, a very unfortunate misnomer, for it is the clearest, purest body of water to be found anywhere and at Spofford is another gateway into Mexico via Eagle Pass and the Mexican International. All along this stretch of desert the only places that are attractive to the eye are the section houses, most of them enshrouded in a wealth of trees and flowers all neatly fenced, and in the same enclosure can be seen the flat-roofed houses of the section hands. The Chinese and white men are all disposed of and the whole line from Los Angeles to the negro line is given over

to the Mexicans, who seem to be happy and contented in their houses built with any material easily obtained. The traveler can get complete glimpses of the lower classes of natives from across the border who have brought with them their wives and families, if they will look around. Look at the notices on the cars after reaching El Paso. You will see "negroes" on one and "whites" on another. The law requires each passenger car to have the same accommodation for one race as for others, but a border line is set up on the inside. The darkeys take one place and the poor whites the other—they cannot both use the same place. This will remind us all that we are in what was once a slave state, and that we are approaching the land where grow the rice, cotton and cane. And when we reach San Antonio we are on the edge of the great cotton belt, and in the land of the Alamo and the country full of interesting historical incidents.

Near this beautiful city is found the noed building, the Alamo, celebrated as the one where 185 brave Americans were butchered by the Mexican army under Santa Anna on March 6, 1836; and here at the same time fell Col. Bowie and David Crockett—not a soul was spared—all died—until the floor was covered with gore and the remains of the brave band that stood out against overwhelming numbers lay in heap. Old missions and other objects well repay the tourist in stopping over one day in this noted city; as far as statistics are necessary to convince the reader, a whole column could be produced to show that we are now in the heart of one of the most attractive parts of mother earth—a region full of undeveloped wealth and but sparsely settled.

We must, however, hurry on, and reach the next city of importance, Houston, pronounced Youston, the center of immense resources, notably cotton, while all around us are endless pines and cypress forests. The Mexicans have disappeared and in their stead the negro race swarm in every place where labor is needed. Going eastward we pass rice fields, and further the immense cane fields, sugar mills, and plantations with the rows of white cottages for the negroes employed around the mills are on every hand. Old fashioned homes embowered in groves of live oaks, with the epiphytes, or Spanish moss, hanging from the limbs, give one the idea that we have left the interior and are approaching the Gulf of Mexico. Nearly everybody speaks French as well as English. The negroes live in all sorts of tumble-down shanties—are never worried about fashion plates, dress and talk as they please, are full of frolic and fun, and seem to be having a never-ending picnic. Just notice in the swamps as you pass the lantanas growing wild, palm plants that are nursed and cared for in our homes in the north with so much care and attention.

At Morgan city, on the Archafalaya river, or Berwick bay, is the pier from whence start the Morgan line of steamers for foreign ports, and here also is the point where the famous oysters of the gulf are canned and shipped and where the stranger can get a glimpse of alligators and the pretty garden near the railroad depot; for we are now in

the land where alligators float in the sluggish waters of the net work bayous that are found all along the Gulf coast—and the lands of the Acadians, and near the points where the Confederate and Union armies met in deadly conflict during the war for the Union.

From this place on to New Orleans the same features prevail—cane, rice, peanuts and other products are raised and splendid bodies of fine timber are abundant. The hills are left behind—all is flat, mossy and close to the water line. There are no cellars in this part of Louisiana. Graves are built above ground, and most of the houses are prepared for a rise of water. The air is damp; the rain-storms last from two to three days, sometimes in torrents and at other times a penetrating drizzle. Nothing looks more wretched than the forests hung with the wet drooping moss on the trees and all around the leaden skies, while the soggy earth makes you feel that there are some things more enjoyable than life in the swamps.

As we near the Mississippi we feel a sense of relief after a continuous ride of four days and nights on the regular trains; but if we were either drummers or millionaires we could take the famous sunset limited that makes the run in a little over three days. This train is the acme of railroad accommodation, and makes about 800 miles every day on the trip.

Our railroad rides ends at Algiers; opposite is New Orleans. The train runs on to an immense transfer steamer and, presto, we are in the most unique city in America. It could easily be converted into another Venice. There are sights and scenes to be enjoyed here that cannot be found elsewhere. The grand old river, the father of waters, is about half a mile wide, and the banks on each side of it are lined with vessels for miles. Ocean steamers pass up and down through the bay and river crafts of every kind are loading and unloading day and night. Thousands of negroes are hanging around the levees waiting for a chance to work at twenty-five cents an hour—a feast today, a famine tomorrow, is their usual experience. I watched for hours to see if I could find any well-dressed darkey, but very few were in sight. Their clothes were of every hue—the patches on them never in harmony with the ground work. They gather in groups around the cotton bales and sugar hogsheds. They are full of fun; they hold the fort against imported labor. You may see two or three hundred running, jumping and moving on and off the steamers, with freight of every kind—the mate keep them earning their pittance. And don't they work! It was a warm day and the sweat ran down lively as they rolled up the barrels and carried the boxes on and off.

I found the streets and the old part of the city very dirty and narrow and devoid of architectural beauty. I was disappointed in the markets; they do not compare at all with San Francisco. Oysters are cheap here, \$1 per bushel. It is one of the sights to see the fleets of oyster boats at the levee. This industry is in the hands of Italians. The rig of their boats conforms to the Mediterranean type. A perfect electric street car system is adopted here—all