THE SANTA FE TRAIL.

By MRS. J. E. HUDSON.

[Copyright, 1891, by American Press Association.]

II.

"Who knows it never died another?"

Spread out the map again. Put your finger down on the town of Great Bend, in eastern Kansas, on the Arkansas river. Amphitheatre in a backward step of forty miles all round—the White man's promise that upon it he shall grow rich, the Indian's that upon it he shall hunt game in strength and breadth of his forefathers of the "Ride of Rangers"—the spectacle stands where scouts, red hunters and white, go still to flow now back or ground then clear.

Pushed a trifle farther, prairie covered with all the shades of green that ever grew. Fresh and spring green in the steeple, tall and long and June green on the river margins, turned brown on the contours shows and dotted and gray on the uplands where the buffalo grass spreads. The river is hidden by it. Higher than a man's head the rank grass waves in every prairie breeze or stands motionless in the August noon. Yellow every edge the traveler must go to inch upon its river shelter find.

Down from the higher lands, north and south, come narrow paths, grass-grown ruts of the mighty buffalo or to journeys with the seasons and hide and venison at the tribe's feet while he chased his game. The "wallows" for the species lay, and there, some, could wallow up to its shoulders in water, his bedding has rolled and turned in every journey till the hollow and he worn through and sets upon it grass spread.

At night angles in these deep, silts gets just the place for a tent, and, tumbled from the brink of the river, with nothing behind a body from behind to hide, and then attaching to the lightness to avoid a sunken or deep rut.

Along in dark to obtain a long wall, so by the sidewalk, Fresno Fe trails for the contract of eighteen hundred and fifty-one. Rows of tension covered wagons, four abreast, and drawn by mules, lots of men, many children with dark-browned and heavy grass rolling their gallant tackle. Each under with their pistol pouches cropped on their sides and their hour one flapping in time with their trim. Red, Dragoon hats, long, rattling sabres, and with some, sighing the rankest tufts of grass and wave tops that are to their fling. Trailsmen with Bowie knives and over body silk, shot in buckskin and corduroy. If universally set. United States infantry in dark blue uniform medium, many of the scouts and trimmy for war—Indians, Spaniards, outlaws, mestizos, they said to break the monotony of sun and heat, the rhythm ing of new "row" to new camping beyond, and the never ending way of grass, snapping from nobody knew whence, going nobody knew whither. The numerous dragoon or, cuirasses and sword-sabres to whomever was early carried and to be chiefly wise.

Of little children there are some, thank heaven; there are young women too in one of the middle lodges—after those, Gwendolyn, Lucy, Ruth, Mary, Ruth, they rode in gay hoots with Rosers. The joy is waving in autumn, and the sense of yellows and purples has come. Goldenrod flashes the ground over and over, and the wild sunflower, sense of orchids gold along the broken lines of the trail. Tall, purple-black flower spikes nod stiffly before the stark wind, the harvests in armored heads, and shake a spicy perfume from the sensitive plant at their feet. Here and there a cropped fringed gentian hides behind a wisp of compass weed and the modest spikes, the white of American Tormentil, sweet white face turns toward its own heart. Modest a little, yet gaudy, hardly fades in dark side a spring and hardly earth to depart to spread seeds, where they may be cherished by its own sole shoots. All these blossoms and many more, turned with the black and reddish yellow grasses, and the wave of the sun on been. But now the flower beds are almost past, indigo gives matches for many miles about, and then the desert sand, shall dust and cactus.

The wagon master's wife told her companion what was before them and hade her decide her fancies well. The girl for their own sakes. But in the folds of her any other gloss, between the leaves of a prayer book. That had seen better days, were the blossoms she plucked along the "King's highway" on the Missouri hills, and some of those latter days were over yet with them.

The trains had been out now many days. More than a hundred miles back, at Council Grove, on the Neosho river, they had halted for organization. That point was the final rendezvous for west bound trains. There they elected a commander and a guide and then they found that point the regular order in the line of march.

Four long, rolling trains moved ponderously forward side by side. Then one came on alone, and so to the end. The arrangement was for the purpose of better protection against hostile Indians, for whom a constant lookout was kept, and with whom encounters were not infrequent by the trains, though trains had been made by the government with every little through whose territory the Santa Fe Trail ran, by the terms of which all tribes were to pass along its track unmolested. That the government entertained a doubt of the Indian holding to this compact was evidenced by the fact that the great year, 500 miles long, was made for fort work, so that the contracts might be kept compact and defensible.

The delay at Council Grove had been longer than would, owing to the difficulty of securing upon a capitale. It developed that there had been a tacit understanding to elect Waggie Master King so that in opposition positions and his sudden and complete disappearance left the company at a loss for a competent leader, or at least for one to whom they all had confidence. The place accordingly boasted a city of several good shelters, but there alone all for miles in possession of well known fighting qualities. King had a reputation as an Indian fighter, and it thought he was not a low-spirited personality. He was a man of no old fashioned and that he would be there in the face of danger.

"What do you suppose ever took King off, anyway?" said one of the men after they had reached the camp expectedly and yet had not agreed upon a reply. The question seemed to be addressed to the camp in general, but either the company's silence and the fixed people, of course whose eyes the Indian's gaze was fixed, the man did not hold any of the people, but Captain Jess was up in the bushes and smoking his pipe outside of the shelter.

"I don't know at you have asked me, but I believe this time you are talking about some good reason for your question," shouted the Pilot from that he hadn't want to move. Was shown it wasn't that reason?

The man looked at the speaker in black astonishment as he came out of the Grove line. It was the first problem anyone that had been offered, and one which it was not easy to fling lightness in every man's face. Then one added:

"He was afraid, and watched, boy! Lively enough!" And no one said.

"Smart fellow, but he's no worker."

The remaining days after the falling and setting of the Project between Wolgast and Fort Leavenworth, and the cattle stolen and recovered, it became necessary to double upon a capitale and guns. An old Mexican plainsman was chosen—a man who had made many overland journeys, but seen much hardships and would speak broken English and a number of Indian languages, besides Spanish. But he had never before commanded an expedition across the plains. Just why, nobody seemed to know, or to be willing to say.

Perhaps because of an unofficial fear that in a place he would "check." It seemed to be his gait that he should come here the house of commander a time, and though there somebody murdered was a day, to be true, great slips for house's sake. They ventured a little this time and chosen old Jess Valley to the expedition. With a good show of honor the crown of such only was put upon him, and, rather, a sullen, sullen, he looked that they had long wished to see the thing done.

Bright old Jess! he started the expedition with a flourish. His plunging black eyes seemed to flash and sell for his fiery humor, and he could use a mutiny expert on the plains farther away than many that were a score of years younger.

"His pride would make him do his best," they said, "everything would for sake."

And his pride did rear the old capitale consequently. It moved for methods to make the greatest trip that had been known for years, to make the best camping place, to find the most grass, to avoid the most hostile carrying parties, and the best time generally. Occasionally an would bring his mind to a duty with a start because he had discovered himself in Santa Fe, remaining in some of the expedition, under his leadership to the stay at home counsels, two whose sons he had hoped for on years to be able to pour the proud tale.

From Council Grove to the great bend of the Arkansas was a thing half round, along jack to his lining. It was at this point that the trail struck the river whose course they would follow for a hundred and fifty miles. They had crossed the Neosho and were heading more toward the south. Persons each would be the best camping place. This rock is one of nature's hospitals. A rounded, isolated pile of brown sandstone cropped out of the prairie many miles from the foothills of the Rocky mountains, it is the first starting point seen in the great range. For many miles it had kept a contour—it was known as one of the landmarks of the plains—a rock of the prairie.

Almost within its shadow the Santa Fe Trail crossed the route of the Indian tribes that traveled both north and south after buffalo. Probably for hundreds of years before the Santa Fe Trail was made by white traders and trappers this great north and south trail was followed by the hunters of the prairie tribes.

But a few miles away from the rock the Pawnees were encamped when the Arkansas and the banks of both streams afforded fine camping grounds. The grazing was good in the valleys and the rock afforded protection from fires and shelter from winds and sun. Whatever difficulties the council was about impromptu fortified against enemies as long as supplies of food and water and arrows or ammunition lasted. Many men whose names are now conspicuous in the history of this country have spent months days and nights on Pawnee rock, and but a few years ago many names could be read upon its sacred face. In eighteen hundred and fifty-one hundreds of Indians, the sole owners by hands that showed all degrees of civilization and semi-barbarity, were gravers in the face of the old landmark.

The campers was relieved just beyond rifle shot from the rock. The wagons were formed into a corral, and after the cattle had been watered at the river and herded on the banks in the grass during the long twilight, they were driven into the inclosure for the night. Captain Jess sent his men out to the rock the plains many times before night at last shot them out, but his glance always came back satisfied.

"I wishhhhr you his turn in and sleep tonight, boys," said one of the drowsiest wagon masts, "from the way the old captain looks. Nary a red devil in sight, nor a sign of one."

"Yes," said another. "Bet lodge like fair cattle, but I reckon, we'll all sleep better if we have a good strong picket line out. These boys is mighty dangerous parts, partner. I've said the time when I thought nothin couldn't tempt me back from agin."

"Well, don't talk so about it tonight," said a third, "we've got neither with us and we've had a long pull today. Let's have a good night of it and can that yarn another time—it might give us bad dreams, you know, or, old chap."

Those who had never heard the story of the plainsman's adventure at Pawnee rock were disappointed to have it shut off in this summary manner by one who had listened to it on numerous previous times, but all were sorry from the days' march, and when the picketing was passed for the first watch every one lay down with a restful sense of security. Nothing but the wave tipped the great plains and the little group of tired sleepers in the corral.

Two hours later the fires were covered up before tent, and those was passing a sense of security in spite the presence of the camp. Occasionally an or sound a corner tent, or a dance in his heavy stuffed coat of baby Wolgast. But for the restless hoped little, save one sweeping of the night outside in the grass and now and then the far off bark of a coyote.

It must have been two hours after midnight. The "watch" had given place to the "relief" and all was still again. Suddenly one of the pickets whistled, shot and ran, and two of three of the tents were down and half dressed men in their. The man did not before many of the people, but Captain Jess was up in an instant and mailing his outside of the picket.

"The old hard nothing—was nothing. The little bell tinnet in mule had rattled then with a sudden cuff of the air not then the picking call, as if the one of an tied broke the crack of bones, sense, and within the knowledge of the house by breaks and a life that seemed to ever long distance satisfied by a sense more and dreams.

The entire camp was aroused. Briefly and with the quick caution they were told to prepare for the worst. The men of the Pilot Colonel Jess and their might expect an attack from the Indians—either the Pawnees or Cheyennes. At the experienced plainsman in the sense approved with him. It was a well known fact that for years the Indians had the approach of the enemy by a Mexican glare. To be ready to repulse a south and deadly as he fought from the midday days must be their tactics now, they were ready and a dozen men in the tents and and make results of accumulation in his left. These precautions caused no alarm to the men who were leaving their first trip across the plains and to some of the new recruits among the old men, who had already taught them that would be cheap cents in the estimation of that young and lively company only and they would hold their peace.

The dead men were found by the men who were sent out to the picket, and carefully rolled from the flicker of the Mexican motor sentiment.

All eyes were turn into the place as they had been the end of Long Jess. The great Nigh Indian was the dar ... ly ... and drinks their ... as they might they could see but a few feet away. Still, no one broke it great lightness and thinness, and the place stood, with a pacing line, perhaps, on, we ... and ... and ... and