

sopped in honey. After having spent some months in New Orleans, where everything of the known world was obtainable, it looked like rank starvation to me, but I was adaptive. The sea voyage had sharpened my appetite and I was possessed of a strong set of grinders, so I set to and made a meal, but I was not anxious to trespass on their hospitality, so next morning I set out on foot for Dewitt's colony, ten miles further up the Lavaca. Even at that early date there was a controversy between the government and colonists with regard to the meaning of the line of reserve, the government contending that it was ten leagues from the indentation of the gulf and bays and the colonists that it was ten leagues from the outer line of the chain of islands that extend around the coast, precisely the claim that England is now setting up in Alaska. The Texans made their claim stick; it remains to be seen how John Bull will come out. Fulcher accompanied me up to the station. The beautiful rose color that tinged my visions of Texas while viewing it through Robertson's long-distance lens paled with each succeeding step. There were herds of fine, fat deer, and antelope enough to set one wild who had never killed anything bigger than a raccoon, but, to my astonishment and disgust, I could not kill one, though I was accounted a crack marksman; but I found it was one thing to shoot at a mark, the exact distance of which I knew, and another to hit game at an uncertain distance.

The colonists, consisting of a dozen families, were living—if such existence could be called living—huddled together for security against the Karankawas, who, though not openly hostile, were not friendly. The rude log cabins, windowless and floorless, have been so often described as the abode of the pioneer as to require no repetition here; suffice it to say that save as a partial protection against rain and sun they were absolutely devoid of comfort. De-

witt had at first established his headquarters at Gonzales, and the colonists had located their land in that vicinity, but the Indians stole their horses and otherwise annoyed them so much, notwithstanding the soldiers, that they abandoned the colony and moved down on the Lavaca, where they were just simply staying. The station being in the limits of the reserve, they made no pretense of improving it, not even to the extent of planting corn, one of the first things usually attended to, for the Texan Indians, unlike their eastern brethren, scorned to till the soil, and the few Mexicans scattered through the country did so only to the extent of supplying their own wants; so when the colonists used up the breadstuff they brought with them they had to do without until they raised it. This, however, was no very difficult matter near the coast, where there were vast canebrakes all along the rivers. The soil was rich and loose from the successive crops of cane that had decayed on it. In the fall, when the cane died down, it was burned off clean. The ground was then ready for planting, which was done in a very primitive manner, a sharpened stick being all the implement necessary. With this they made holes in the moist loam and dropped in grains of corn. When the young cane began to grow they went over it with a stick, simply knocking it down; the crop was then laid by. Game was plenty the year round, so there was no need of starving. Men talked hopefully of the future; children reveled in the novelty of the present; but the women—ah, there was where the situation bore heaviest. As one old lady remarked. Texas was “a heaven for men and dogs, but a hell for women and oxen.” They—the women—talked sadly of the old homes and friends left behind, so very far behind it seemed then, of the hardships and bitter privations they were undergoing and the dangers that surrounded them. They had not even

the solace of constant employment. The spinning wheel and loom had been left behind. There was, as yet, no use for them—there was nothing to spin. There was no house to keep in order; the meager fare was so simple as to require little time for its preparation. There was no poultry, no dairy, no garden, no books, or papers as nowadays—and, if there had been, many of them could not read—no schools, no churches—nothing to break the dull monotony of their lives, save an occasional wrangle among the children and dogs. The men at least had the excitement of killing game and cutting bee trees. It was July, and the heat was intense. The only water obtainable was that of the sluggish river, which crept along between low banks thickly set with tall trees, from the branches of which depended long streamers of Spanish moss swarming with mosquitoes and pregnant of malaria. Alligators, gaunt and grim—certainly the most hideous creatures God ever made—lay in wait among the moss and drift for any unwary creature that might come down to drink. Dogs, of which every well regulated family had several, were their special weakness, and many a thirsty canine drank and never thirsted more. This was not perhaps from any partiality for dog meat; on the contrary, when the alligator went foraging under cover of night he evinced a decided preference for human flesh, particularly negroes, and many blood-curdling stories were told of alligators stealing into sleeping camps and seizing an inmate. One story, in particular, I remember as being told by an eye-witness. A company of emigrants were camped at the mouth of the Brazos waiting for teams to take them up to Austin's colony. One night they were aroused by piercing screams, and rushing to the place from whence they proceeded found a huge alligator making for the river, dragging a 14-year-old negro girl by the arm. He had crawled into a

tent, where a number of persons were sleeping, and, whether from accident or choice I cannot say, seized the darky and struck a bee-line for the river, which he would have reached on time with his prey but for his inveterate foes, the aforesaid dogs, who rushed upon him and, though finding no vulnerable point of attack, swarmed around, harassing and delaying his retreat till the men pulled themselves together and came to the rescue, when, seeing the odds decidedly against him, his alligatorship relinquished his prize and sought his own safety in the river. Their bellow was just such a hideous sound as might be expected to issue from the throat of such a hideous creature, and was of itself enough to chase away sleep, unassisted by the tuneful mosquito, whose song, like the opera singer's, has a business ring in it. I had heard the bellowing nightly while in New Orleans, but heard amid the noise and lights of the city there lurked in it no suspicion of the horror it could produce when heard amid the gloom and solitude of the wilderness. Wolves and owls added their voices to the dismal serenade. I had heard them all my life, but I had yet to learn the terrible significance that might attach to the familiar howl and hoot. The whippoorwill's silvery notes filled in the interludes, but they seemed strangely out of tune amid such surroundings.

Newcomers were warmly welcomed and entertained with all the hospitality at the command of the colonists. Sleeping accommodations were limited to mosquito bars, a provision not to be despised, since they were absolutely indispensable to sleep. The bill of fare, though far from epicurean, was an improvement on dried venison and honey, in that the venison was fresh and cooked, and Colonel Dewitt, my host, had bread, though some families were without. Flour was \$10 a barrel. Trading vessels came in sometimes, but few people had money to buy any-

thing more than coffee and tobacco, which were considered absolutely indispensable. Money was as scarce as bread. There was no controversy about "sound" money then. Pelts of any kind passed current and constituted the principal medium of exchange.

Children forgot, many of them had never known, what wheaten bread was like. Old Martin Varner used to tell a good story of his little son's first experience with a biscuit. The old man had managed to get together money or pelts enough to buy a barrel of flour. Mrs. Varner made a batch of biscuits, which, considering the resources of the country, were doubtless heavy as lead and hard as wood. When they were done Mrs. Varner set them on the table. The boy looked at them curiously, helped himself to one and made for the door with it. In a few minutes he came back for another. Doubting the child's ability to eat it so quickly, the old man followed him to see what disposition he made of the second. The ingenious youngster had conceived a novel and not altogether illogical idea of their utility. He had punched holes through the center, inserted an axle and triumphantly displayed a miniature Mexican cart. And I assure you, from my recollection of those pioneer biscuits, they were capable of sustaining a pretty heavy load; shouldn't wonder if that was the first inception of the paper car wheel. Game was the sole dependence of many families and I fixed up many an old gun that I wouldn't have picked up in the road, knowing that it was all that stood between a family and the gaunt wolf at the door, as well as the Indians. Domestic animals were so scarce that the possession of any considerable number gave notoriety and name to the possessor; thus there were "Cow" Cooper and "Hog" Mitchell. Failing to secure more choice game, there were always mustangs to fall back on. Over on the Brazos lived Jared E. Groce, a

planter from South Carolina, who had over 100 slaves, with which force he set to work clearing ground and planting cotton and corn. He hired two men to kill game to feed them on, and the mustangs being the largest and easiest to kill the negroes lived on horse meat till corn came in.

CHAPTER II.

The outlook was a gloomy one to me. Colonel Dewitt having a colony to settle, was as enthusiastic in praise of the country as the most energetic real estate dealer of boom towns nowadays, but land had no attractions for me, as I had a strong aversion to tearing up God's earth, to which fact I owe what little schooling I got. Disliking the restraint of school, I was given the alternative of going to school or working on the farm. That seeming to be the least of the two evils I chose the school, which I abandoned for the gun and blacksmith trades, becoming sufficiently skilled therein to do journey-work before I was eighteen. There were plenty of old guns to work on, but no tools, and no money to pay for work. By this time the last vestige of color had faded from my landscape, and if there had been an opportunity, I think I should have turned my back on it before it assumed a more than leaden hue. About that time Elhanan Gibbs came round from the salt works at the mouth of the Brazos, where Asa Mitchell, the first settler there, had opened a salt factory, bringing a load of salt. He wanted to take a trip inland and wanted a traveling companion. Glad to avail myself of any opportunity to get away from the stagnation of the station, I promptly offered my services. Gibbs was a hardy, muscular, man, and looking doubtfully at my boyish face, he said: "My son, I'm afraid your face is 'most too smooth to keep me company." My pride was up in arms at once; was I not almost twenty, and had I not stood up beside men in

shops day after day and done more work than any of them? I drew myself up to my fullest height and answered with dignity: "When I give out, Mr. Gibbs, you needn't wait for me. You can go ahead and leave me." With that understanding we started out. There were no horses to be had, but we were directed to a wealthy old Mexican ranchero over on the Guadalupe who had horses galore. We struck out on foot and reached Victoria, or De Leon's town, as it was then called, without accident or incident worthy of relation.

There was but one white man in the place and with him we stopped. After supper we heard a regular series of hand-claps going on which naturally reminded us of the "Juba" dance among the negroes. "Let's go round there and see those fellows pat Juba," said Gibbs. We approached a hut from which the sound seemed to emanate; but, instead of the merry dancers we expected to find, there was a woman down on her knees before a little bed of glowing coals on which lay a piece of sheet iron on which a couple of tortillas were baking, while by a series of pats she was preparing a third one for the griddle. There the patient creature knelt with her bowl of hulled corn beside her on one side and her metate on the other. The metate is simply two flat stones between which the softened corn is mashed into dough; after which it is rolled and patted and tossed in the oven, i. e., on the heated iron; the manipulator keeping up the milling and baking with the regularity of clock work, taking off one, turning another and putting on a third, then preparing another until there is enough for the family meal.

Martin De Leon had settled his grant with Mexicans, most of them being his peons and vaqueros. He had a large stock of both horses and cattle, and between the Comanches, who stole his horses, and the Cronks, as the

Karankawas were called, who killed his cattle, he had a troublous time of it. Becoming exasperated at the constant depredations of the Cronks, he determined to take matters into his own hands. He organized his retainers into an army, and mounting a four-pounder swivel gun on a jackass, set out to annihilate the tribe. He ran them to cover, brought his artillery to bear and touched it off, but he did not take the precaution to brace up the jackass, and the recoil turned him a flying somersault, landing him on top of the gun with his feet in the air, a position from which he was unable to extricate himself. The Mexicans got around him and tried to boost him, but the jackass had had enough of that kind of fun and philosophically declined to rise until released from his burden, so they had to dismount the jackass. By that time the Indians had disappeared and if any were killed they were taken off the field.

Captain Buckner, one of the first white men in the colonies, concocted a scheme to rid the country of both Karankawas and Tonkawas. Buckner kept a trading post down on Bay prairie. The two tribes of Indians were always bickering with each other and finally agreed to meet at a certain time and place and fight it out. The Karankawas came and reported the arrangement to Buckner and said if they only had arms and ammunition they would make short work of their foes. Buckner readily furnished the munitions of war, and directly the Tonks came with the same plea for assistance. The obliging Buckner also fitted them out, and when the time for the battle arrived, repaired to the designated field of conflict, field glass in hand, hoping to see both parties annihilated. The meeting place was a prairie half a mile across. The Cronks came yelling out of a belt of timber on one side, and the Tonks from a similar shelter on the other, and both opened fire

before they were within striking distance, shooting away all Buckner's ammunition without drawing a drop of blood; each party retiring in good order and claiming a glorious victory.

The Karankawas seem to have disappeared with the dominion of Mexico; just how I don't know; but there was a story to the effect that Captain Dimmit was incidentally the prime factor in the problem. Dimmit had a ranch near the mouth of Lavaca at a place called Dimmit's landing. Finding a pacific policy best in dealing with the Cronks, he was in the habit of giving them beef whenever they came around. During the Texas revolution Dimmit left to aid in the struggle. The Indians, knowing nothing of the nature of the trouble, went to Dimmit's ranch and finding it deserted went out and drove in the cattle and helped themselves to a beef. While thus engaged a party of Mexican soldiers came up and demanded to know what they were doing. "Oh," said the Indians, "it's all right; we are Captain Dimmit's friends." Upon hearing that, the Mexicans charged them, killing some and putting the rest to flight. The unlucky Cronks next met a party of Americans, and fearing another attack, shouted "Viva Mexico!" whereupon the Americans fell upon them and the remnant that escaped, either hid themselves in the canebrakes or took to their canoes and paddled out to sea. At any rate, I don't remember of ever hearing of them after the revolution.

Senor De Leon was the very essence of hospitality, as, indeed, I found the Mexicans everywhere to be. He had his caballada driven in for us to choose from. The vaqueros rode in among them, carajoing and swinging their lariats, the horses reared and snorted, and we concluded walking would be pleasant pastime compared to riding such steeds, so we

continued our journey on foot. The weather was so hot that we were obliged to lay up a good part of the day, and so were nine days going from Victoria to Gonzales, and it rained every day. The streams were all swollen, and as Gibbs could not swim, I had to raft him across when the water was too deep to wade. We trudged through black mud, wading and swimming streams, sleeping on wet grass, killing and broiling our meat, our only care being to keep our powder dry. Gonzales consisted of two block houses and the inhabitants of two men, John W. Smith and —— Porter, the families having all gone down to DeWitt's station. Finding nothing to tempt us to further explorations, and still unable to procure horses, we struck out for the Colorado. There were droves of handsome, sleek mustangs all around, and Gibbs concluded to catch one. It was said that a shot through a certain place in the top of the neck, called "creasing," would stun a horse and cause it to fall, when if one would be quick about it he could get a rope on it before it could recover. Gibbs killed a wild cow, braided a lariat of the hide and watched for a favorable opportunity to "crease" a mustang. By and by a drove came down to drink, and selecting a fine specimen, he fired. The horse fell and lay quivering. Gibbs dropped his gun, grabbed his lariat, ran up to the prostrate courser, slipped a noose over his head, and taking a turn around a tree, braced himself and waited for his prize to recover; but the horse never even kicked. He had broken its neck.

We reached the Colorado at Burnham's station, a few miles below where LaGrange now stands, then the highest settlement on the river. There Gibbs procured a horse and returned to the mouth of the Brazos, where he soon after died. Things looked more promising there than any place I had seen. The settlers were doing some

farming and all had milk cows, poultry, etc. Corn was in "roasting ear" and the people feasting. They boiled it and fried it and roasted it, either by standing the husked ears on end before the fire and turning them till browned all around or buried them husk and all in hot ashes, the sweetest way green corn was ever cooked. When the corn began to harden they made graters of old tinware, coffee pots being most in vogue. They were ripped open and spread flat on a board and punched full of ragged holes. They were then bent into an oval and the straight edges nailed to a board. The corn was of the large, soft, white Mexican variety and grated easily, and the bread was very rich and sweet, if a bit heavy. Next came the mortar and sweep. A good, sound tree was cut off some three or four feet above the ground, and the stump was hollowed out by alternate burning and scraping till it would hold sometimes a peck of shelled corn. Then a long pole, to the butt end of which a pestle was attached, was swung into the fork of an adjacent tree and the corn pounded into meal, which, often without sifting or salt, was mixed with water and baked, not a very tempting dish from an epicurean standpoint, but to people who had not tasted bread for months it was a delicious change. When cold weather came on there were huge kettles of "lye hominy." Captain Jesse Burnham had a nice family, one only of whom is at present living.* He was anxious to have a school and when he found that I had mastered the rudiments of the three "R's" he offered me a situation as teacher. But I had no predilection for pedagogy. Upon inquiry I learned that there was a shop down at Judge Cummin's station, some miles below on the Colorado, so I went down there. The judge had two daughters and there

*Robert. He died November 11, 1899, after the above was written.

were the two Miss Beasons, all nice, agreeable girls, and altogether it was not a bad place to stop, so I went to work. Here too I first met Captain Jim Ross and Colonel John H. Moore, who later married the Misses Cummins. But the unaccustomed exposure incidental to my jaunt brought on fever and I was bedridden for weeks. There was no doctor, but the judge was equal to the occasion. He nursed me as tenderly as if I had been his son. By the time I was able to get around my last cent was gone and I had even sold part of my clothes and I was the most homesick boy that ever left a comfortable home and loving, indulgent parents in search of adventure. In that condition Colonel Little, a man who had known my father in the old north state, found me. He had been over into Mexico for a drove of mules, which he was taking back. Shocked to find me so far from home amid such surroundings, he offered to take me home, an offer which I was all too glad to accept. I was very weak, but the thought of getting home buoyed me up to make the attempt. Colonel Little fitted me out with a nice easy-gaited horse and I started, but I had miscalculated my strength and by the time we reached San Felipe I was exhausted. Colonel Little, loth to leave me, waited for me to rest up and I made another start, but only got across the Brazos, where I was again prostrated and my friend was obliged to leave me. I found asylum in the family of Churchill Fulshear, who took me in and with the rude hospitality which ever characterizes frontier people, did all in their power to alleviate my suffering, but, living, as they did, without any of the conveniences even of those times, it was impossible to do more than supply actual necessities. As I lay there day after day, burning with fever, tormented with gnats and mosquitoes, and loathing the coarse and unpalatable food which was all those good Samaritans had to offer, I

would have given the whole territory of Texas had it been mine, to feel myself once more at home in a comfortable bed, with mother's loving face beside me. So thoroughly homesick was I that I was determined to resume my journey as soon as I got able, even if I had to walk. I thought if I could only get down to the mouth of the Brazos, where vessels came in, I could get back to New Orleans, where I had friends who would help me home. As soon as I felt able to undertake the jaunt I thanked my kind entertainers—I had nothing else to give—and started out to walk by easy stages. I skirted the river timber for several miles till I struck a trail leading through the bottom to Fort Bend (Richmond), where White & Knight had a trading post and ferry. My weakness prevented me from making good time and night overtook me while I was still some miles short of my destination. It was not an enviable situation. Weak, unarmed, not even a pocket knife—I had parted with everything except the clothes I had on—alone in a dense forest inhabited by Mexican lions, panthers, leopards and numerous smaller members of the feline race, all more or less inimical to man. There was no moon, and the tall timber made a darkness so intense that I had to feel rather than see my way along the narrow trail. I confess I felt rather uncomfortable, and every time a twig snapped I looked and listened for some nocturnal beast of prey. Now and then there was a rustle of leaves as some small animal scurried away in the darkness. With every sense alert and strained, I at length descried a moving object in the trail a short distance ahead of me. Concentrating all my powers of vision upon it, I made out that it was traveling leisurely in the same direction as myself, apparently unconscious of my presence. I walked on, unintentionally gaining on it, when, to my horror, it suddenly stopped and seemed to swell to double its

former size. I could see that it was mottled light and dark, and at once jumped to the conclusion that it was a leopard. Knowing that it was a characteristic of all the cat family to turn their hair the wrong way when displeased, I felt my hair raise, for I thought he was about to spring upon me. Presently he started on and, it being out of the question to turn back, and not caring to remain in the woods, I had no alternative but to follow. Not daring to lose sight of him, lest he lie in wait for me, I kept along at a respectful distance behind. His pace was exasperatingly slow, and again and again when I got a little too near to suit him he stopped, and every time he seemed to take on greater dimensions. This process of doubling had by this time brought him up to the size of an ordinary dog, and feeling that it would be extremely hazardous to permit any further increase in his proportions, I desperately resolved to bring matters to a crisis. I stooped, still keeping my eye on the enemy, and felt around for a good sized club. Trying it on the ground to test its soundness, I took it in my left hand and felt for another, resolved to make the best fight possible. Thus armed, I started on. Again the animal halted and I felt that the time for decisive action had arrived. I raised my chunk and with a strength born of desperation, hurled it at him and grabbed the missile from my left hand to be ready in case he should resent my familiarity. But there was no need. My shot struck him square and landed him some distance ahead, and then—well, then he didn't look any bigger than a polecat. With the release from excitement came the reaction; my overtaxed strength gave way and I wouldn't swear that I didn't cry. Anyway I had to sit down and rest before I could proceed. Waiting till the smoke—or rather scent—of battle cleared a little, I went on and soon saw the welcome gleam of light that betokened a human habitation,

and never was the sight more welcome. Hungry and worn out, I reached the cabin, where Captain White received me and ministered to my needs. In return I recounted my adventure, the denouement of which elicited roars of laughter, in which I could then afford to join. The next morning I crossed the river and went my way. Before I was out of the timber I met a panther face to face. We both stopped, one as much surprised as the other. I yelled at him, but he didn't budge. I suppose he wanted to see what manner of beast or bird I was, probably never having seen a white man before. He made no hostile demonstration, so I yelled again, when, apparently satisfied with his observations, he turned and went his way. He was a big fellow, but he didn't look half so formidable as the polecat. I have faced death many times since, when bullets and arrows flew thick around me, but I never afterwards felt the sickening horror that seized me every time that wretched little skunk stopped and threw up his brush.

The next settlement I struck was Josiah Bell's, where Columbia now stands. There I learned that Johnny McNeal, out on the gulf prairie, was in need of a blacksmith. There were quite a family of the McNeals. They had raised a crop of cotton and were building a gin. They had a shop and tools, and so I went out and in the intervals between relapses of the fever I made the gin irons. Iron was a scarce article, but we found an ample supply in the wreck of an old vessel that lay high and dry in a belt of timber at least five miles back from the gulf. The timbers were all rotted away; the knotted hearts of two pine trees that had once been the masts alone remaining. The irons though deeply encrusted with rust, were in a fair state of preservation. There was nothing to give a clue to its age or nationality. It had evidently been there


many a long year, probably driven ashore by a tidal wave, or one of those fierce tornadoes which sometimes drive the water far out over the prairie. It may have been one of La Salle's vessels. .

Sterling McNeal was something of a doctor and he treated me so successfully that I soon began to mend. The members of the family were the embodiment of kindness. By this time the weather was growing cool and I went bear hunting with the boys, and my homesickness melted away. I shot away many pounds of lead in vain attempts to kill a deer, but the balls invariably struck the ground many yards short of the intended victim. At last old Johnny McNeal told me not to fire till I could see the eyes. Acting on the suggestion, I went out one day alone and brought in a deer on my back, as proud and happy as a boy with his first pantaloons. The boys saw me coming and raised a shout: "Run here everybody; Smithwick's killed a deer." They lifted me and the deer on their shoulders and bore us in triumph to the house. After that it was no trouble for me to kill deer. The Mexican garrison at San Antonio was in need of an armorer and Stephen F. Austin procured me the appointment. I was quite elated with the prospect, but when I got to San Antonio I found everything so different to anything I had ever before encountered that I was thoroughly disgusted. There were but few Americans there, and but one American family. Captain Dimmit, with whom I stopped, had a Mexican wife and was, for all practical purposes, a Mexican. I had to do all business through an interpreter. The upper crust of society took no notice of me and the under crust was, to my mind, much lower than the negro slaves, and I couldn't think of coming down to their level. Old Gasper Flores was land commissioner and had almost unlimited power in the way of land grants. He offered

me any quantity of land, accompanied by the hand of his daughter, a little squatty girl, dark, almost, as an Indian. I was young then and disposed to be rather fastidious in such matters, and so declined the honor of the alliance, thus throwing away the chance of a lifetime.

The tools they offered me to work with were at least a century old in design. The anvil was simply a square block of iron; the bellows, two cylinders into which were fitted valvular pistons, worked by hand; the operator standing behind and working them alternately. And such hammers! They baffle description. The Comandante offered to send to New Orleans and get an outfit if I would make out a list, but I was not to be tempted by even such flattering deference to my judgment, so after a ten days' sojourn, I foolishly threw up my commission and, in company with —— Duncan and "Mustang" Brown, set out on my return to San Felipe. At the Salado we met a couple of men, with one of whom (Parker) I was slightly acquainted. Upon learning my destination he handed me \$6 in silver and an old brass pistol with the request that I deliver them to Cooper & Cheaves, who had a store in San Felipe. At Gonzales we stopped with Joe McCoy; Joe was a famous mustang catcher and had just made a catch. Among the lot was a nice looking black mare which proved to be perfectly gentle; she took my fancy and I traded my horse for her. Arriving at San Felipe I went straight to the store of Cooper & Cheaves to deliver the goods committed to my care by Parker. Cooper—commonly called "Sawmill Cooper," from having been engaged in the business of manufacturing lumber—was at once attracted by the mare. He walked around her, looked at the brand and asked me where I got her. I told him. "H'm," said he, "it's a little curious." "Why?" I asked, somewhat nettled by his air of incredulity. "Why, that's

the very mare we sold to Early, who left here about two weeks ago with Parker to go over to Mexico to buy mules." "I met Parker," I replied, "but the only man I saw with him was Tomlinson." Several persons had gathered around, and there appearing to be something peculiar about it, I called on my two traveling companions to verify my statement and relieve me from an awkward position. Early was a comparative stranger, having lately come in from Kentucky with quite a sum of money, which he proposed investing in Spanish mules, they being in demand for farming purposes in the cotton states. Being unacquainted with the country and language, he wanted some one to go with him, for which service Parker was engaged. Being flat broke, Parker borrowed from Cooper \$6 and a pistol, which some strange motive prompted him to return by me. There was certainly something suspicious about it, but San Antonio was 300 miles away and the only means of communication was by chance travelers, but as time passed on and Early did not return, Ned Cullen, an old acquaintance of his, became uneasy and began to make inquiries, which revealed the fact that Parker was in San Antonio spending money freely, but nothing had been seen of Early. At this juncture Parker, ignorant of the turn affairs had taken, returned to San Felipe. On being questioned he said that Early had gone on to Mexico, but upon being confronted with the facts in possession of Cullen and others, he betrayed such evident confusion that he was at once placed under arrest pending investigation. There was no jail, so I was called on to put him in irons, the first time I had ever performed such an office, but I put them on to stay until the affair was cleared up, for, as you may readily suppose, I felt resentful for the suspicion he had laid me under. A searching party was made up, and at Plum creek, where the mare



was found, they discovered the remains of Early, together with his saddle, bridle, blankets and saddlebags, all sunk in a hole in the creek. They had been deposited there when the creek was flush and were well hidden till the fall of the water exposed them. The mare had been turned loose with the mustangs, which an avenging Nemesis delivered into the hands of Joe McCoy.

Texas and Coahuila then constituted one state, with the seat of government at Saltillo, and in all Texas there was no tribunal for the trial of murder cases. The custom was to take down the evidence and send it to Saltillo. While this was being done it transpired that Parker was not his true name, which, for the sake of an honest family, I withhold. Under circumstances similar to the present he had murdered a man in his native state, of which his father was at the time governor. The evidence was so conclusive that all efforts to save him were futile, though the trial was obstructed in every way possible and his father well nigh impoverished himself trying to defeat the ends of justice. Parker lay in jail nearly two years and at length in a fit of despair attempted to cut his throat, but either his strength failed him or his courage, and he only succeeded in severing the windpipe, which would have answered every purpose but for the interposition of the physician, who inserted a silver tube to secure his breathing. Failing to secure his release, after exhausting every other means, the heart-broken father—a father still, even to the extent of sacrificing his honor—exercised his executive prerogative to save his guilty son from the gallows and immediately resigned his office. The murderer fled from the fury of an indignant populace and sought safety in that land of refuge—Texas—only to continue his career of crime. The facts in the Early murder case were taken before the alcalde and dispatched to Saltillo, but, before

there was any return made, Parker was taken sick; there was no physician near, and he was left to the care of old Jimmy Whiteside, who finally announced that he was dead, and, assisted by his negro man, forthwith proceeded to prepare the body for burial, accounting for the haste on the ground that, having died of fever and the weather being very warm, decomposition at once ensued. There was no coroner, and, when the few whom curiosity led thither arrived at Whiteside's cabin, the body was already nailed up in a rough box, from which a sickening odor emanated. Everybody was satisfied, and the incident was almost forgotten when a citizen of San Felipe, having business in Mobile, Ala., met and talked with Parker in the flesh. On returning to San Felipe he reported the meeting; the coffin was exhumed and found to contain only a cottonwood chunk, which, when green, was about the weight of a man. The artful scoundrel had worked on Whiteside's sympathies with a pitiful story of persecution, from which he was trying to escape to Mexico, of a quarrel with Early whom he was forced to kill in self defense, and thus prevailed on his kind-hearted jailor to assist him to escape. Well, he was gone and not at all likely to trouble that community again, so Uncle Jimmie Whiteside was not brought to time for his breach of the law.

An article published in the Louisville Courier Journal since the above was written, furnishes the clue to an interesting sequel thereto. The statement was to the effect that the late Minister Willis, who represented the United States in Hawaii during Cleveland's last administration, discovered in the person of a native Hawaiian missionary a son of the quondam Parker by a native woman; Parker having resumed his family name, which, being a peculiar one, led to his identification by Minister Willis, who, being a native of the same state with Parker, was familiar with all the circumstances of his first crime.

When and by what means the double-dyed murderer who had twice almost miraculously escaped the gallows effected his retreat to those then savage, far away islands, and how many more victims paved his way thereto, will never be known; but could the story be revealed it would doubtless make an interesting chapter.

CHAPTER III.

"Young man, you have thrown away an independent fortune," was Col. Austin's impatient comment when informed of my hasty rejection of the position tendered me by the government. And he was no doubt correct, but I still had a good trade to fall back on and this I forthwith prepared to do, purchasing the outfit of San Felipe's pioneer blacksmith, David Carpenter, and establishing myself in business at Bell's Landing where the proprietor of the premises, Col. Josiah Bell, was laboring to bring into being the town of Columbia.

A fine specimen of the old Kentucky gentleman was Col. Bell, who was among the first of Austin's colonists, both chronologically and socially. As a proof of the high esteem in which he held Col. Bell, Austin, when compelled to go on to Mexico in 1822, in order to get his father's grant confirmed, committed the affairs of the colony into the former's hands during his absence.

Of Col. Bell's children who were then quite small, I remember distinctly only James H., who later distinguished himself in the legal profession, attaining therein the honorable prefix by which he was long designated. It was not in that character, however, that Judge Bell first introduced himself to my special notice.

During a visit to the home of Col. Bell, my head cover-