

ACROSS THE PLAINS IN '61

By Lucy H. Fosdick

Although forty-three years have passed since I, as a little girl, crossed the plains of Colorado, with my father, mother, brothers, and sister, much that happened on the way is fresh in my mind; and thinking it may be interesting to the children of this generation, and perhaps to older persons as well, I have determined to write down what occurs to me, hoping to give others some idea of what a journey of that kind really was before the days of railroads and palace cars.

Our family first lived in the neighborhood of Boston. My father, who had been prosperous as a civil engineer, had a large part of his property destroyed by fire. Too proud to begin life again among his old friends, he turned his attention to the New West, where he might engage in farming and cattle-raising. He first bought land in Topeka, Kansas, and was preparing to send for his family when the fever and ague broke out there. It proved to be such a terrible disease that my father decided not to stay in that locality. He therefore pushed on farther west to the region of the Rocky Mountains, where, in Colorado, he found a most beautiful and healthful climate. He surveyed the site of, and laid out Denver, Colorado City, and several other towns. Then, having secured a house and farm in Colorado City, where it was hoped the Capitol would eventually be located, he sent for his family, and came east as far as St. Joseph, Missouri, to meet them.

It was now the spring of 1861, and the rumors of war were becoming ominous. My mother's friends thought it was a rather hazardous adventure for her to start on such a long journey with four little children, the eldest only twelve years old. However, duty called, and on Tuesday, the twenty-second of February 1861, we left Milton, Massachusetts, in sleighs for Boston, a beautiful snow falling as we drove merrily along. We went by train to Chicago, where we stayed over one night. Even now I enjoy remembering the lunch of chicken, bread and butter, and sponge-cake, that the landlady put up for us the next day, when we set out by train for St. Joseph. On Saturday the part of the train in which we were riding ran off the track; but as the engine and the baggage-car stayed on, the passengers were all made to get in among trunks and boxes of the baggage-car, which had a big red-hot stove in one end of it, and to finish their journey in this manner. Before reaching St. Joseph we had to cross the Mississippi on a ferry-boat, a feat at that time considered somewhat hazardous. We went from St. Joseph by train to Atchison, Kansas, and thence by stage to Lawrence.

At Lawrence we stayed until the tenth of April at a hotel, while our wagons, or "prairie schooners", as they were called, were being fitted out.

My father had four "prairie schooners" one of which carried, for the use of our family, what comforts it was possible to have. The top of the wagon had two coverings--one of canvas, and a second one of oil-cloth, put on to prevent the

rain from soaking through. Inside the wagon at each end, and filling up nearly the whole floor, was a low closet, or store-room, in which were kept dishes, some kinds of food and clothing.

There was a small space in the middle of the wagon, where one could stand up straight. In the daytime we sat on top of the closets, and at night we slept on them. The wagon, which was roomy, had a projecting shelf running the whole length of each side. On one of the shelves we had a small sheet-iron stove, in which we often had a fire when the weather was cold, and by means of which we were able to keep very comfortable. Attached to this wagon were two yokes of oxen, Tom and Jerry, and Buck and Berry. The other wagons were filled with furniture, kitchen utensils and provisions, grain and seeds of different kinds. They were not so comfortable as the family wagon, as they were occupied only by the men who drove. Two of them were drawn by oxen. In the fourth, which was drawn by a horse and a mule, rode a man and his wife who were going with us as servants. On the way out the woman did most of the cooking. While we were in Lawrence my father had bought two mules, "Fanny Daisy" and "Kitty Dear". "Kitty Dear" broke her halter one night, and being of a greedy disposition, ate besides her own allowance the grain given to "Fanny Daisy". Because of this foolish proceeding, she sickened and died. We had for other live stock, three cows, another horse, four little pigs, and a large rooster, who crowed every morning to wake us up. The pigs and the poultry were carried in a large two-storied box on the back of the wagon.

The pigs lived on the first floor, the hens and rooster on the second.

By the tenth of April everything was in readiness to start. Even now I can remember how strange, and the same time how delightful, it seemed when we started on the long and tiresome journey across those vast plains, not knowing what we might encounter, nor when we should reach our destination. We had heard much said about the Indians, and either for that reason or for purposes of cleanliness my mother took us children all to the barber's and had our hair cropped close to our heads. We did not understand then just what it meant when we heard our elders talk of the Indians scalping anybody, but we found out later. After we reached Colorado, as we did in time, we often saw scalps hanging from an Indian's belt.

For the first few days after the start everything was interesting to each and every one; but as day after day passed in the same manner, I imagine that the older members of the party grew rather tired of their occupation. I do not remember, however, that we children ever wearied of it in the least. We had cards and games to occupy our attention when we were moving, and whenever we stopped for dinner or for the night, there was always something of interest either to do or see. We all had to search for fire-wood, and for water, which sometimes was very scarce. In making a camp for the night it was always quite necessary for us to find a place where there was plenty of water for man and beast. Sometimes in the afternoon we would see in

the distance what appeared to be a large river, and great would be our delight; but as we approached the vision, it would gradually fade and disappear,--to our disgust, a mere mirage. As many times as we saw it, we could never be quite sure for some time whether it was a vision or not. It frequently happened that we had to dig for water in what was called a "Buffalo wallow",--a place where the buffalo had found water in a depression, had drunk all that there was on the surface, and had then passed on. By digging deep enough we could find water for the cattle. For ourselves we tried to have a keg-full of good drinking water.

The road was not always so smooth and level as the word "plains" would seem to indicate. I remember times when, on coming to a deep and rather narrow gorge, it would be necessary to lock the wheels together with a chain to keep the wagon from going too fast on the way down. There might be water at the bottom, and all the oxen would be hitched to one wagon in order to pull it through and up the bank on the other side. You can perhaps imagine what it must have been to sit in one of these wagons while this proceeding was going on. We became used to such things after a while, however, and were ready for anything that came along. A feature of the journey that I always enjoyed was Saturday night, not when I had tried all the week to be good, but when we found a camping-place where there was plenty of wood and water, and where, after placing the wagons in a hollow square, we prepared to rest until Monday

morning. For a little while all would be bustle and apparent confusion, as there was plenty for each one to do. Some went in search of wood, some brought water for cooking purposes, some made a fire, some unyoked the oxen, some did one thing, and some another until order appeared out of all the chaos and we were ready to have supper. Our food consisted principally of soda-biscuit, bacon or ham, and tea or coffee. Sweets were unknown, as were milk and vegetables. Coffee was usually sweetened with molasses. There was one thing, however, which we generally had for our Sunday breakfast, and which was always a treat--baked beans. They were prepared by the woman we had with us, in the following way:--they were first put into an iron baking-kettle, then the baking-kettle, which had a heavy iron cover, was placed on some nice live coals at the bottom of a hole dug in the ground. After other coals had been put on the cover, the whole thing was covered with dry grass and sods, and left until the next morning when it was taken out for breakfast, and was certainly a dish fit for the Gods. The men always ate their beans with a dressing of pepper and vinegar, a combination which I soon grew to like.

On Sunday, if there happened to be a stream of water nearby, every one had a bath. Clothes were washed, and hung on the bushes to dry, and a general air of cleanliness prevailed. I imagine that perhaps it would have been better for us all had Sunday come oftener. After we had been a few days on our journey, we began to meet Government mule-teams coming east from the various forts in Colorado: and as we were about the first emigrants

going west that spring, we created a good deal of interest. The drivers of the teams would tell us to look out for Indians at certain places, as they were travelling, and if we encountered them we might have trouble. The teamsters, to be sure, generally ended their advice by telling us that if we were well armed we should probably get through all right, but we naturally felt very uneasy, and from that time dated my fear and hatred of "Lo, the poor Indian".

One morning, soon after we had begun the day's journey, we came to a fire still smouldering. Plainly, Indians had encamped near us during the night, and had just had breakfast. Another time, I remember, I saw following us on the brow of a hill, at intervals for several days, an Indian dog--a sight which kept us in a continual state of excitement. On one occasion, when we had been travelling in the heat and dust, and the cattle were suffering for water, the road seemed to disappear entirely, leaving nothing but the bare plain, as if there had been no such thing as a road thought of. The teams were brought to a halt; then, after some discussion, my father had the saddle put on Kate, our little mare, and started forward to reconnoitre. I followed him for a short distance, when he discovered me and took me up behind him. After going about a mile or more, we came to a river, on the other side of which were high peaks of sand. From where we were it looked as if there were no passage through them. My father at once began a search for a ford. In so doing we discovered, lying near the river, a dead horse, which seemed

to have been left by the Indians only a few hours before. Who could tell that the Indians were not lurking on the other side of the river among those sand-hills? Surely not we; but we looked about for some time, until, finding a place where the road re-appeared, we headed the pony into the stream and crossed in safety to the other side. Then we rode back to the teams, and glad enough we all were to have found water in such abundance. Later, in crossing the river, the top of one of the wagons caught in an overhanging tree, and was badly damaged,--an incident which made it necessary for us to remain in that vicinity over night, much against our wishes. It was one of the most weird, solemn, quiet places which I ever had the misfortune to get into. As we all felt that we might see Indians at any time, a guard was kept all night; but the only excitement we had was the sight of the first buffalo which we had ever seen. One of the men wanted to shoot one, but it was not thought wise to fire a gun, for fear that the Indians might be near. Glad enough we were when the night was over and we could leave the desolate place. Thus we traveled day after day, with almost always something to keep us in a state of more or less excitement.

Another incident I always think of, both with amusement and with consternation at what might have happened, had the affair terminated differently. We had stopped for camp, and as the oxen were fagged, it was thought safe to let them graze a while before tying them to the wagon wheels for the night. Supper was just over, when one of the men who had gone to look for the

cattle, came running into camp to say that they had stampeded-- that is, had run off. Father at once gave orders for some of the men to go after them. Three jumped on their horses, and away they all went. Father then followed, leaving Mrs. Smith (our cook), my mother and us four little children alone in camp with darkness coming on. For a while we sat and talked, thinking every minute that the men would return; but hour after hour passed, with everything so quiet that not a sound could be heard. I think that I have never experienced such utter stillness as I did there, so many miles away from anybody or anywhere, alone on the prairie, with the knowledge that if the oxen were not found there was no way for us to get out of our embarrassing position. After a while my mother hung a lantern in one of the wagons to guide the men home.

While we were sitting there, listening to the stillness, we heard a slight noise underneath the wagon, in which we sat. Our first thought was, of course, Indians--or some wild animal. When we finally decided to look, we found that the four little pigs (who you remember lived on the lower floor of the box at the back of the wagon), had broken open the front door of their flat, had tumbled out and were running about the camp. The thing to do, of course, was to catch and put them back into their box; but as they had the obstinacy of their race, it was no easy matter to make them do what we wanted them to. So while the men were away chasing the cattle, we chased the pigs, and proved to them after a while that we were capable of doing what we had

undertaken. After catching them we soon had them where they belonged, and the door fastened so that they could not get out again.

We were glad of this little diversion to relieve the suspense of our situation; but after the pigs had been caught, we took our seats and resumed our watch, for not one of us had any inclination to go to bed until we had heard from the absent ones. At last, when the hour had come to be somewhere near eleven, until we could distinguish voices and knew that men were coming with the cattle. Before long they appeared with not a single ox missing. It seemed that the cattle, scenting green grass at a distance of several miles, had started for it and had reached it. When found, they were so wild with the taste that to make them leave their pasturage was almost impossible, and to get them all started for the wagons had taken much time. One would break loose and run break loose and run back, and then the whole process of rounding them up would begin again. They were very restless all night, and always after that they were well guarded when they were turned out to graze before being tied up after the day's journey.

When we had gone about half the distance towards our destination, we one day had a sight which comparatively few persons now living have witnessed. We had been travelling an hour or two since breaking camp in the morning, when, in coming over the brow of the hill, we came across a herd of buffalo, crossing the road at right angles, just in front of us. The

nearest ones were so close that we could see their eyes, and the farthest were like waves of the ocean, they were so many in number and so far away. It was a very exciting time for us all. The men immediately got out their guns and tried to shoot one, but as we had no experienced marksmen none of the shots took effect. The buffalo passed on and we were obliged to hide our disappointment at not getting any fresh meat while we took our pleasure in enjoying the unusual sight of so many great animals lumbering along out of our reach.

We had to stop the teams for fear we should be trampled to pieces. I had often seen tame buffalo in parks, but they have looked tame indeed when compared with the Monarch of the Plains on his own ground. We travelled all day with these buffalo in sight; yet we never seemed able to shoot one for fresh meat, but had to put up with the salt meat that we had brought with us. Another time we found some prairie hens near our camp, but when my father tried to kill one, the gun burst from too heavy a load, and just missed killing him.

It was when we were very near our journey's end, I think, that we met several teams travelling toward the east. As their occupants had fresh buffalo meat to sell, my father made some sort of trade whereby he came into possession of a few pounds. After it was cooked, however, we found it so tough that we were well satisfied at having no more on hand. Perhaps, however, the meat had come from a very old fellow, who had grown stringy from the exercise of galloping a few hundred miles.

Twenty miles a day was our ordinary rate over the dry and dusty roads, with seldom any rain to moisten the earth or fill up the streams; so that we often on pitching camp had no more water than what we carried in the keg. Sometimes the feet of the oxen would become so sore and cracked from the dryness of the atmosphere that the men would tie gunny bags around them to make it possible for them to travel.

Poor, patient beasts! It must have been a hard journey for them. With the double purpose of lightening their load and of gaining a little exercise, some of us would often walk ahead of the wagons; but we generally were very careful not to get so far away that we could not look back and see the teams. One morning my mother, who had started ahead alone, unconsciously walked farther than usual. All at once she saw in the road just before her a large gray wolf. As he was looking at her she stopped and looked at him, and then turned for a moment to see how far behind the wagons were. To her surprise and dismay they were not in sight. Although the wolf seemed about to attack her, she determined to try the power of her eye in subduing him. Much to her delight, after she had looked at him for a few minutes, he trotted off like the most quiet and gentle animal living. After that we were more careful than ever not to extend our walks very far ahead.

After travelling for nearly a month, we reached the first settlement of white people, a place called Fort Lyon. Just before arriving there we encountered our first Indians, who

came up to see our wagons, and who greeted us with the salutation of "How How". As my father did not feel sure of their friendliness, he made us children keep well inside the cover of the wagon. After a while they let us go on, and we found that we were very near the fort. Although these were really peaceful Indians, they were the ugliest creatures I had ever seen. I acknowledge without shame that I was afraid of them, and glad we were so near protection.

I had almost forgotten to mention an incident which promised to give us much pleasure, but which caused us sorrow instead.

One night a colt was born in camp. As we children had never before seen such a funny, long-legged little fellow, we found him a source of great interest. Every day for a week or more he was carried safely in one of the wagons until we camped, and then was allowed to stay with his mother until the next morning. When a little more than a week old he was allowed to run beside his mother during the most of the day. He was such an affectionate little thing that we grew fond of him. Then late one night, when we children had gone to bed, the men heard a noise out among the horses. On hurrying to the place, they found a wolf was attacking the colt and before they could drive him off, the colt was dead. We missed the little fellow in so many ways that we all felt very sad for long afterward. Then the mother of the colt and a mule disappeared shortly after we had reached our home in Colorado, we surmised that they had

started back to the place where we had left the colt, as they were tracked for several days in that direction, and we never saw them again.

After leaving Fort Lyon, we followed the course of the Arkansas River for some distance, and finally came to a ranch where were living a white family with children, a fact which naturally delighted us very much. We stayed over night with them, and for the first time in nearly a month sat down to a table with crockery dishes to eat from. From the ranch it was only about two days' journey to Colorado City, where our house was waiting for us. It had been built for a store, and was a long, plain, straight building, with a door and two windows in front, and with a door and one window at the back. It contained five rooms,--kitchen, sitting room, and three bedrooms. It had no bow windows, --or any other form of modern architecture. Here, on May 10th, 1861, we unloaded our goods, and set up our primitive housekeeping. The town consisted of one street, with a store and a few houses at the other end from where we lived. A desolate and forelorn place it must have appeared to my mother, coming from the luxuries of a New England life.

Soon beginning operations on his farm, my father first of all planted a garden in which we took an interest that was, I imagine, something unusual. Much of the time my father was away, often for several weeks at a stretch, engaged in surveying ranches then being occupied by the new settlers. For his work he was seldom paid in money, as that article was even scarcer

in those days than it is now. Sometimes he was paid in lumber, sometimes in groceries, and once he was paid in large willow baskets, made by a man for whom he had done the work. Soon after that episode he took a cow in payment, and then we had milk to drink with our corn-cakes and mush. To me milk has never had such a delicious flavor as had that first milk in Colorado. The three cows that we had started with from Lawrence had all come to untimely ends. The first one was left foot-sore at a ranch, where she died in a few days. The second one died soon afterward. The history of the third now follows:

Not long after our arrival in Colorado City, a party of Indians came to the house and asked to trade their horses for clothes. My father happened to have two or three swallow-tail coats, to which they took such a great fancy that they offered a horse for each coat, and agreed to come next day to make the exchange. That night, when the man went to drive home the cow, he found nothing but the hide and the horns; and as the Indians never came back for the coats, we felt pretty sure that some had killed the cow while others were occupying our attention in the house.

After a while we had vegetables from our garden, and it was the same with them as it had been with the milk. The flavor was a little better than the flavor of any vegetables before or since.

The children had very few companions for the two years

we lived in Colorado City, but we never tired of our pleasures or of our occupations, which I remember with amusement. We spent much of our time wandering through the now famous Garden of the Gods, and in climbing the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Often on Sunday we would drive up to Manitou, and with the aid of some kind of acid, which we mixed with the water from the Soda Springs, make a very refreshing drink. Nature in those days wore an aspect very different from its aspect in 1898, the Summer of the Spanish War, when again I visited the spot. While living in Colorado City we had many experiences with snakes and other wild creatures. As rattlesnakes were very plentiful, we children seldom went to walk without killing one. As soon as we heard a rattle, we would at once locate it, and then, with sticks and stones would proceed to kill the snake. We generally succeeded. Centipedes and tarantulas abounded, as well as grasshoppers and insects not seen in the East.

The Ute Indians gave us a surprise now and then. One day when my mother was alone, sitting in her doorway, some Indians rode up, dismounted, and entered, one may truly say, without ceremony; for since she had determined not to budge, they brushed by her chair with such violence as to upset her. One of them stood with his arm across the door, so that she could not get out, and one sat on his horse outside, so that nobody should surprise and catch them, while the others wandered all over the house, and did many things to frighten her. When after a while the Indian outside gave the alarm, the others rushed out, jumped

on their horses, and rode off. A man had seen their horses standing in front of the house so long that he came down to see what they were doing, and although they were friendly Indians, they did not wish to be caught.

Before we left Colorado City, the Plain Indians, called the Kiowas and Comanches went on the war-path against the Whites. We citizens of the state became very much incensed with the officials of Washington, because we ourselves were not allowed to make war upon the Indians without permission from the War Department, while the Indians could kill as many white people as they chose, and there was no redress. Finally the situation became so bad that our military governor, Chivington by name, much to the delight of the settlers, decided to take matters into his own hands. He ordered several companies of soldiers to march south and attack a camp of Indians about forty miles from where our family lived. The troops started from Denver, taking with them all private horses that they could lay their hands on. All teams were ordered to delay their travelling until the soldiers had passed by, so that there would be no danger of the Indians getting word of the expedition. I remember that my brother went out on the prairie, caught our two horses, and took them into an old vacant house while the soldiers passed by. If our horses had made the slightest noise, they would have been pressed into military service. We were about the only ones not to suffer in this respect. As for the troops, they reached the camp, surprised the Indians, and left but one or two of them to escape

and tell the tale. When the news reached Washington, Governor Chivington was cashiered and his office taken from him.

After living in Colorado City for nearly two years, my father bought a ranch down on the Arkansas River. Having surveyed and dug an irrigating ditch, he bought seeds and engaged a man to operate the place on shares. On visiting the place one day he discovered that the man had bought a ranch of his own, and taken father's seeds, and was preparing to plant them on his own land. As my father hardly liked this, he decided that it would be necessary for him to live on the ranch himself to look after things. Although he did not wish his family to leave their now comfortable home for the rude log huts of the ranch, yet, as mother insisted upon going, we packed up our goods and started. In those days the buildings on a ranch usually comprised two cabins with a covered way between. That was what we found at Booneville, the name of the post-office nearest to our new home. The place has been named after Colonel Albert Boone, a great-grandson of Daniel Boone. In one of the cabins we had boards laid on the ground for a floor. In the room were two beds, a dining table, a big fire-place, and a few chairs. A board enclosure was put up outside for our stove. Our cows were kept at night in a yard just behind the cabin, and often I have put my hand out between the logs to rub them.

Here we lived until my father could build a more comfortable home for us. When the new cabins were built they were placed in such a manner as to form a hollow square, as

that formation was considered the best mode of preparing for an attack from the Indians. We had seventeen different cabins, and had at one time a cat for each. One cabin formed the dining-room and kitchen; my sister and I occupied another; my brothers another; and the hired man slept in one or more. Several cabins were for housing the cows. A large one was for grain. Then besides there were the stable and the henhouse. People coming from the East were very much impressed with the size of our place. A man asked who lived across the street, as the driveway separated one set of cabins from another,--a fact which gave the impression of a small town with cabins on each side of the road. Later the log cabins were all torn down to be replaced with adobe houses, which were much warmer in winter and cooler in summer.

We had neighbors, though none were nearer than a mile and a half. We managed to meet often, however, and with spelling-school, dancing school, and other amusements, had a very good time. Soon after our arrival my father was appointed post-master of Booneville. The stage stopped there three times a week each way,--a fact which explains how we sometimes had visitors from the East.

The summer of 1864 was marked in the history of Colorado by being the time when the Government tried to teach the Indians how to carry on a farm. My father, who had charge of the whole experiment was away from home most of the summer. We would see him only once in two or three weeks. One day in

August a friend told mother that he did not think it was safe for her to remain on the ranch with only one hired man to protect us, as rumors were abroad that the Indians had gone on the war-path again. After waiting a day or two for my father's return, my mother decided to leave our home and go to stay with one of the neighbors. A trunk was accordingly packed with what few valuables we had, a wagon was loaded with our bedding, and one evening, just after supper, we started. Most of the family got into the wagon, while I rode a horse and drove the cows. When we reached the house of our first neighbor, they all ran out and went with us a mile and a half farther to a house where we all stayed for several days. While we were there my father returned, having stayed to see that the white families on the Government Ranch were conveyed to a place of safety. The Indians had come into the experiment station one day and had driven off nearly all the horses, thus showing very plainly that they did not care for farming. The attempt to teach them was never made again.

While we were living away from home one of my brothers was born. When he was a week old, our family were obliged to move into a soldier's camp, and live in a tent until November, before it was considered safe to go back to our own home. The Indians started for our settlement during this time, but meeting some teams on the way, took their revenge on those of this party. They drove off all the mules, killed the men, and hung a woman to a tree.

Snakes abounded on our ranch as well as in Colorado City. They were often found in our cabins. One afternoon, as I was lying on my bed, resting from the labors of the day, I felt a slight movement under my pillow; I turned and lifted it at one end, when, to my horror, I found a snake coiled there, thinking, no doubt, that it was a nice warm place. I snatched up the pillow and ran. The snake, quietly crawling up the side of the cabin, disappeared in the roof above, where I often imagined him as looking down upon me. Another time one of my brothers was out looking after the cattle when a rattlesnake gave his warning, and at once sprang at the horse, which he struck on a foreleg, just above the hoof. My brother drew his pistol, shot the snake, and cut off the rattles, which numbered eleven. As the horse began at once to limp, my brother led him home, where the men gave him a large dose of whiskey in the hope that it would overcome the effects of the poison; but it seemed to have little effect, for the swelling went up the leg till it reached the chest. For several days the horse ate nothing, and seemed so ill that my brother finally had him taken to the pasture, where he might lie down and die in peace. The next morning we all went out,--to find him walking about and eating grass. In a few days he was as well as ever. On another occasion my mother caught a small rattlesnake by putting a broom down on him about the middle of his length. Calling me to hold the broom, she went after a kettle of boiling water, and then, when the snake opened his mouth she killed him by pouring the hot water down

his throat.

As I look back upon the condition of things in Colorado, it seems to me that it was a country of extremes. Whenever it undertook to do anything, it acted in the most wholehearted way. If the wind blew, it blew for three days at a time, and people never went out of doors unless obliged to. The sand and stones would be whirled against the windows, while boards and other loose articles on the ground would be blown end over end and out of sight. Once the roof of an old cabin was lifted, carried right over our cattle yard and landed safely on the ground beyond. As on these occasions it was quieter in the cellar, my mother and I often went down there to sleep.

Again, if it hailed, the stones fell so large and in such quantities that everything in our garden was cut to pieces; grain was threshed to the ground, and very little was recovered from the slaughter. If grass-hoppers came, they appeared in swarms that filled the air as far as one could see. Every vestige of garden stuff that had survived the hail fell a prey to them. Hens grew fat on them. If the river overflowed its banks, it continued to rise until families were obliged to leave their homes. Many cattle would be drowned.

Such was Colorado then, and now in later years, it has upheld its reputation for extremes by being the first state in the Union to adopt woman suffrage. My mother, notwithstanding her New England birth and bias, has herself acted as an officer in the Primary caucuses.

This is the story of my trip across the plains; these events of my early life, in what was then the far, and almost unknown, West. There are, I think, a few Easterners living who have taken an ox-team trip of a month where now the Pullman makes the same journey in a few hours; and if my readers take half as much pleasure in reading as I have taken in the recalling, I am amply repaid.