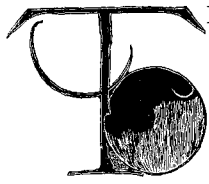


## THE LAST TRIP IN.

### PICTURES OF THE FAR WEST.—VIII.



HE teamster, as one of the types of the frontier, is seldom introduced in print without allusions to his ingenious and picturesque profanity; whereas it is his silence, rather than his utterances, that gives him among his brethren of the way almost the distinction of a species.

The sailor has his "chanty," the negro boatman his rude refrain; we read of the Cossack's wild marching chorus, of the "begging-song" of the Russian exiles on the great Siberian road, of the Persian minstrel in the midst of the caravan, reciting, in a high, singing voice, tales of battle and love and magic to beguile the way. For years the parlor vocalist has rung the changes upon barcarolles and Canadian boat-songs, but not the most fanciful of popular composers has ventured to dedicate a note to the dusty-throated voyageur of the overland trail.

He is not unpicturesque; he has every claim that hardship can give to popular sympathy; yet, even to the most inexperienced imagination, he pursues his way in silence along those fateful roads, the names of which will soon be legendary. As a type he was evolved by these roads to meet their exigencies. He was known on the great Santa Fe trail, on the old Oregon trail, on all the historic pathways that have carried westward the story of a restless and a determined people. The railroads have driven him from the main lines of travel; he is now merely the link between them and scattered settlements difficult of access. When the systems of "feeders" to the main track are completed, his work will be done. He will have left no record among songs of the people or lyrics of the way, and in fiction, oddly enough, this most enduring and silent of beings will survive—through the immortal rhetoric of his biographers—as one whose breath is heavy with curses.

The teamster is usually a man of varied experience, acquainted with life through its misfortunes. His philosophy easily condenses itself into the phrase, "It's dogged that does it." He is a fatalist, but he has not ceased to plan. In this, whatever his nationality, he is always American. It is a big country, and though he gets over it but slowly, he has all

the more time to collect his faculties, and his chance is as good as another's, should luck take a turn.

As he plods along he nurses a passive discontent. The future does not press him. It is the season of summer travel; the sun is hot upon the road; from two to three miles an hour is his average rate of progress. The monotonous shuffle of feet, the clanking of bits and chain-traces, the creak and roll of the heavy wagons as they trundle along, the wind that bellies the wagon-sheet and carries the dust before him, are opiates that might dull a livelier fancy than his. But the cadence in his brain does not make itself audible in musical phrases; his is the silence of solitude and latent resistance.

The teamster either has or affects a great contempt for his calling—unlike the stage-driver, who is always, figuratively speaking, on the box. He calls himself, and submits to be called, by derogatory epithets allusive to the animals he is driving. He will tell you that he is a "bull-puncher" or a "mule-skinner," but he says it with more of ostentation than humility. It is part of that ironical acceptance of fortune's latest freak so characteristic of the Western man, who never apologizes for his circumstances but by making sport of them.

The teamster is a man of simple habits. In a life of rough passages he has "lightened ship" by dispensing with all useless wants and conventions that tend to complicate existence. He has forgotten the use of a bed. When he arrives he sleeps in his blankets in the corral, which is his hotel. On the journey he spreads his bedding in the dust or the mud or the snow, at the hind wheels of his wagon. When he makes camp for the night he barely "hauls out" of the road, his inertia being equal to that of "Brer Tarrypin" when the man set the field on fire, and his philosophy much the same. The harness belonging to each mule of the string, 14, 16, or 20, as the case may be, is dropped in the animal's tracks on the spot where he came to a halt. When that proud society man and aristocrat of the road, the stage-driver, comes spanking along about nightfall, six-in-hand, and the pick of his passengers on the box beside him, he encounters the freighter's outfit distributed in heaps along the road. If he be a placable man he will



ENGRAVED BY J. H. E. WHITNEY.

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DRAWN BY MARY HALLOCK FOOTE.

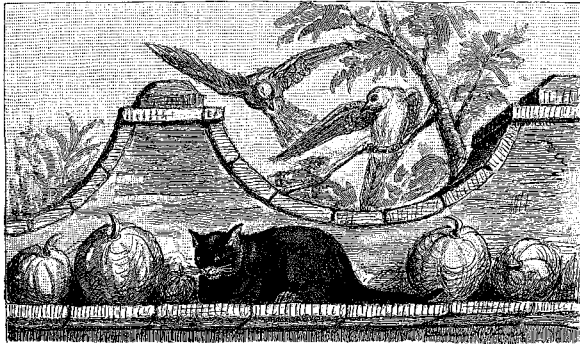


submit to swing his team out, contenting himself with cursing the slumbering teamster in his blankets; but should he have wrongs in the past to avenge, or happen to be in a grim, joking humor, he will, as likely as not, drive straight on, smashing hames and grinding collars into the dust. On his return trip next day he meets the freighter where he has crawled, scarcely a mile from his last camp, his crippled harness tied up with "balin' rope," and the two men will pass each other without a word; but a counter-grudge is saving up in the heart of the teamster, to be worked out by degrees on the road.

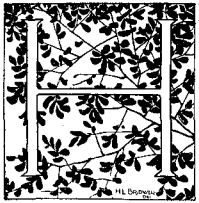
Relatively the teamster is but a small figure in that imposing procession of the forces of

civilization on its march westward. But upon his humble chances of one sort or another, his luck as regards the weather, his personal influence with his team,—perhaps upon some incantation of sounds with which he conjures those mysterious brute natures in their spellbound moments,—as well as upon his endurance and dogged resolution, the fate of many of the bravest experiments has rested. And as the season advances and the question presses, in some doubtful foothold of men in the wilderness, "Can we hold out till spring?" the arrival of the last freighter "in" is looked for as, on the verge of winter, on the Atlantic coast the colonists watched for the promised ship-load of supplies from the mother country.

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## SAN ANTONIO OF THE GARDENS.



Who goes westward from the City of Mexico goes out by the gate of the Tlaxpana, and so along the causeway to Tacuba, the very path over which the Spaniards passed, leaving many killed and of the

living nearly all being sore wounded, when they fled from the city that dismal night more than three hundred and fifty years ago.

But this now is a very pleasant path; for on the right and on the left of it are fertile fields and trimly kept gardens, and shading it are many great green trees. And only a little way out upon it is the village of San Antonio, built of gray-brown adobe on the level land beside the causeway, and peopled by certain ragged, uncared-for, easy-going descendants of the race that now serves where once it ruled.

The wayfaring stranger who loves a dish of friendly talk with chance acquaintances—and the wayfaring stranger not thus socially disposed will find all lands barren, and will come again to his own land not one whit the wiser of the world than when he left home

—will rest awhile in this village to chat with whomsoever it may please Heaven to send him to hold converse with. Nor need he fear that Heaven will not provide him with a talking-mate. Let him but seat himself beneath one of the great trees beside the roadway, and presently a stray old man will pause to pass a greeting with him; then a vendor of earthen pots, coming in from some outlying village to the city to sell his wares, will halt his donkey—on whose patient back the great red pots are high heaped up—and will ask in a gentle voice for a light for his corn-husk cigarito; an old woman will hobble up and say a friendly word or two; a young woman with a baby in her arms will edge out shyly from a near-by doorway, and so stand modestly aside, but ready to add her contribution to the conversation when it shall become a little more general and when amicable relations with the stranger shall become a little more assured; then another old man or two will join the group, accepting with a grave courtesy the offered cigarito; a lazy young fellow with baskets to sell, but with no apparent desire to sell them, will seat himself near; and outside of all will be a light fringe of pernicious ragged little