

tion. Many of its banks and financial institutions failed, together with many business houses.

It is now, only fifteen years since the "boom scourge" came, that the capital of southwestern Kansas—Wichita—is recovering. It is a notable fact that during six months in the latter part of 1886 and the early part of 1887 the real estate transfers at Wichita involved a sum larger than those represented by real estate transfers, elsewhere in America, save in two places, New York City and Kansas City, Missouri. The Missouri town was also going through a delirium. In the point of value of real estate transfers, Chicago had to take fourth place to Wichita's third. Citizens of Wichita donated nearly a million dollars as bonus money to secure the location of packing houses, a car factory and other commercial institutions, few of which proved of permanent value to the place. It may be mentioned, parenthetically, that the car works, constructed with a portion of the bonus money subscribed, was in operation but for a few weeks. After making this demonstration of good faith, the easterners, who promoted the affair, pocketed the subscription money, remaining, above the cost of construction and the price of a banquet given on the opening day, and returned to the east, from which, according to biblical traditions, the wise men are said to have come. The buildings have not since been used, except during a few months when a traveling circus hibernated in them.

The University "Craze."

The university craze was one of the ridiculous features of the Wichita boom, but I hardly believe the townspeople realized how funny it was until the ebb-tide had left them bankrupt and restored them to their normal sense of humor. One real estate genius at that time platted an addition hopelessly far from the outlying residence portion, and sought to save himself by having a university located in the center of his territory. The promoter donated the land, and a church organization secured money enough to put in a foundation for one building. The foundation still stands, and it is still unburdened by superstructure, one of many monuments to the folly of the "boom scourge." During all these vicissitudes there is a class of hardy pioneers who have remained faithful to their great love of the southwest. They have withstood the shock of the "boom" days, the hot winds, and other disasters. They have lost their paper fortunes and become reconciled to give up the millionaire illusions. Then when all seemed settled, Kansas was again subjected to a calamitous disturbance—the alliance-populist wave that swept over the state. Fortunately Kansas has now given up this attempt at self-destruction. Peace and plenty seem

at last to have come to this commonwealth. There is no need to rehearse the folly which is yet painfully fresh in the minds of all Kansans. The state has passed through a fiery ordeal, almost from her territorial days to the close of the old century. But Kansas is a great state. It is now coming into its own—into the prosperity vouchsafed for it by its generous soil, its balmy climate, the breadth of its domain—and above all, by the honest, resolute character of its people—a class once too visionary, and possibly too enthusiastic yet, but in my humble opinion, the most aggressive, intelligent people who do honor to American citizenship.

The Loyalty of Kansans.

It is impossible in one short article to even faintly cover one's recollections of the great southwest, especially if one has lived with, and become a part of that people. What I have jotted down in this article are mere fragments of the "warp and woof" of a mighty panoramic story that might be told of that locality and its inhabitants. I know in my own personal experience the grain bags of promise were torn open and found to be filled with the tare seeds of disappointment which were blown carelessly about by the wind puffs of adversity.

It is now eleven years since I bade the people of southwestern Kansas an affectionate farewell, and drifted before the force of circumstances into other localities, but my recollections, yea more, my love for the great cattle range and its people has caused me to devote many hours to the writing of an historical story of the "southwest" and its provincialisms, which will probably be given to the world sometime during the present year.

That which I would emphasize in these "recollections" is the unswerving loyalty of the average Kansan to his native or adopted state. A prairie fire or a hot wind may sweep over the "southwest," devastating and completely withering up all vegetation. Then, perhaps, the next day a misty rain will begin falling. A prayer of thanksgiving is at once in the hearts of the people. After a steady down-pour of three or four days, the sun will come out, wreathed in smiling gladness. The scorched and browned landscape takes on a new life. The buffalo-grass within a few days is a carpet of living green. The cacti will put forth new shoots and spines, their buds open into beautiful flowers as fragrant as the cape jasmines, while the sunflowers will lift their drooping leaves, and bulbs of promise will swell in triumph under the caressing rays of the wooing sun. Then it is that hope springs up anew in the hearts of these Spartans of the great "southwest." The country may have been "burned up," but when nature smiles with a new promise, they regard it as a good omen—a rainbow of hope—and at once begin making ready for another seed time.

OLD FORT KEARNEY AGAIN.

THE CONSERVATIVE has received the following remarkable communication from one of the members of the garrison of Old Fort Kearney. The remarkable thing about it is that such a letter as this—which we are able to print without the alteration of a word or a letter—should be forthcoming after the lapse of fifty-four years.

GALLATIN, MO., May 20, 1901.

DEAR SIR:—In response to your letter of recent date, I shall now undertake to tell you my recollections of "Old Fort Kearney." The plat enclosed will help you to understand my story.

It was in the latter part of June, 1847, that I joined the "Oregon Battalion," as it was called, at Fort Leavenworth. The "Oregon Battalion" was composed of five companies of Missouri mounted troops, as follows: Capt. Sublette's from St. Louis, Capt. McCoslin's [D. McCausland] from St. Charles, Capt. James Craig's from Holt, Capt. Wm. H. Rogers from Savannah, and Capt. Rob't. Stewart's from St. Joseph, Mo. I was a private in Capt. Wm. H. Rogers' company.

The "Oregon Battalion," 500 strong, under command of Col. Powell, with Captain Van Vliet, an old regular officer, as Quartermaster, and Captain Todd as Adjutant, reached Fort Kearney, [Nebraska City,] the latter part of August, 1847, and we remained there till in May, 1848.

The old Block House was standing empty when we reached there, having been built prior to that time, but just how long, I do not know. I do not know whether it had been occupied before our advent. It was about twenty-four (24) feet square, built of hewn logs.

This Block House was built two stories high, the first story being built square with the world, and the second story being built across the angles of the first story, so that the loop holes in the second story commanded the angles of the first story, and opportunity was thus afforded the garrison to shoot in every possible direction.

There was no other house or cabin standing anywhere in that vicinity at the time we reached the fort.

We immediately constructed quarters (each mess of twelve built a cabin of cottonwood logs, hauled off of the island north of the fort; each had a fireplace built of sticks and dirt, and the roofs were made of dirt). These cabins were joined in a row south-west of the Block House, and at an angle with this row, as shown in the plat, each room being 20x20 feet in size. Similar cabins were constructed for the captains and other officers: Some, perhaps all, of the officers' rooms had windows in them, which was not true of all the privates' mess-rooms—though each had