CHAPTER IV.

Our Acquired Territory.

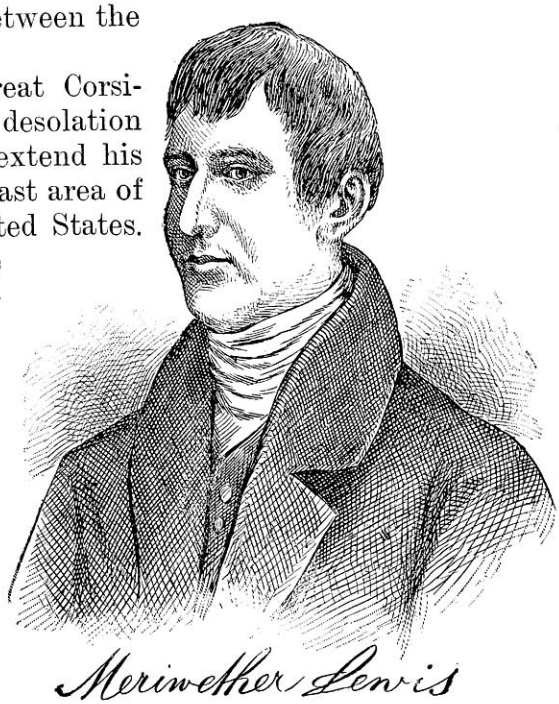
Colonization — Results of the French and Indian War — The Louisiana Purchase — Acquisition of Territory from Mexico — Explorations of Lewis and Clark — Fremont's Explorations — Surveys for Trans-continental Railways — Results of the War in its Effect on the Development of the West — Construction of Trans-continental Railway — Rapid Settlement of the West — Pittsburg — Chicago — St. Louis — Eads — Fort Leavenworth — Emigrant Trains — Hunting Expeditions — The Doniphan Expedition.

SOON after our forefathers had planted their little colonies along the Atlantic Coast, their children ascended the Hudson, the Mohawk, the Susquehanna, the Potomac, and other valleys, penetrated to the Ohio, and at length invaded "the dark and bloody ground" of Kentucky, and slowly moved westward along the region of the Great Lakes.

A little later they began to occupy the rich prairies of the Mississippi Valley, and to-day their remote descendants have transformed the treeless plains of the central West, and the mountain valleys and gold-fields of the Pacific slope and of the Rocky Mountains into busy and prosperous communities. Long before the day of the Anglo-Saxon occupation, adventurers of other races had passed lightly over much of what is now the United States. Yet only in a few isolated spots had they left any enduring trace. Pressing closely upon the footsteps of the hunters and trappers, the Daniel Boones of the frontier, the American has always founded homes, established schools, and organized permanent industries.

The favorable termination of the French and Indian wars, waged for more than two generations, gave the English colonists the great lake-region and northwestern territory west of the Alleghanies, and put an end forever to the Frenchman's dream of empire in this quarter. The Louisiana purchase gave us a vast area in the South and West, while the Texas revolution and the war with Mexico, gave us New Mexico, Arizona, and California.

What has long been called our great Western Empire may be roughly described as including the country lying from north to south between the Dominion of Canada and the Republic of Mexico; and from east to west (with boundaries less definitely fixed) between the Missouri River and the Pacific Ocean.



It is remarkable that when the great Corsican had exhausted his treasure in the desolation and destruction of homes in Europe to extend his empire, he was willing to dispose of his vast area of territory in North America to the United States. Seventy-five million francs at that time was a great boon to the French conqueror, and one million one hundred and seventy-two thousand square miles of the territory of North America was destined to be a still greater boon for the millions of free people who were to build prosperous homes in this then unexplored region.

The treasure exchanged for the land purchased the equipment and munitions of war that carried mourning and desolation to thousands of homes in Europe. The territory received in exchange for the treasure has produced untold millions of homes in our own country.

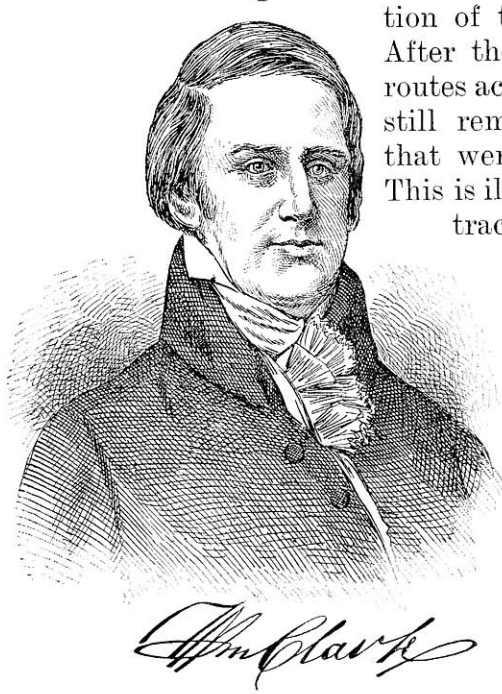
President Jefferson and the Congress desired a more perfect knowledge of this vast country acquired by what was known as the "Louisiana Purchase" from the French government, and it was under government direction that the expedition of Lewis and Clark was projected. In 1803, this expedition was organized at St. Louis to explore a route through the unknown wilderness to the Pacific Coast. The company was composed of nine young men from Kentucky, fourteen soldiers, two Canadian boatmen, an interpreter, a hunter, and a negro servant of Captain Clark's.

In the spring of 1804 the villagers of St. Louis assembled on the bank of the Mississippi River to bid adieu to the members of this first expedition. The history of that exploration is one of the most interesting ever written. Their first winter was spent with the Mandan Indians in what is now North Dakota. Towing their boats for two thousand miles up the Missouri River and leaving them in charge of a band of savages,

the Shoshone Indians, they obtained from them horses for crossing the mountains to the head waters of the great Columbia, and there built other boats and floated down the "Hudson of the West" to its junction with the Pacific at a point where now stands the town of Astoria, and here they spent their second winter. In the following spring they commenced their toilsome return journey to the upper Columbia, where they again found their horses, safely cared for in the interval by the friendly Nez Percés Indians. They continued their return journey over the mountains to the head waters of the Yellowstone, passed down the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers, and, after two years and four months absence, and after having been given up as lost, they were welcomed home again by the villagers of St. Louis.

In that perilous journey they had met no less than eighty-five tribes of Indians, who had never seen white men before, and passed through a vast country of surpassing interest and inexhaustible natural resources.

A few years later a party sent out by John Jacob Astor for the purpose of extending the fur trade also crossed the continent, passing over a portion of the route followed by Lewis and Clark. After the discovery of gold in California, immigrant routes across the continent were established, but there still remained vast regions between these routes that were almost unknown at a much later date. This is illustrated by the fact that the extraordinary tract of country now known as Yellowstone Park, so full of natural wonders, was practically unknown until several years after the great war. The same may be said, as far as the general public is concerned, of the Grand Cañon of the Colorado, although Lieutenant J. C. Ives, Corps of Topographical Engineers, made a most laborious exploration of the Colorado River in 1857–8 under the direction of the Office of Explorations and Surveys, Captain A. A. Humphreys in charge; and his reports and maps were of great interest and value.



While the Lewis and Clark expedition was on its return journey, a second important exploration was working its way to the westward. This was under the command of Zebulon M.

Pike, whose monument is the mountain which bears his name, looking out across the plains from the eastern edge of a world of mountains.

Lieutenant Pike was, as so many of those have been who led the way into our western empire, a soldier. He was born in the army, and while yet a boy, was an ensign in his father's regiment. And as a soldier he died. He was killed while leading his regiment, the Fifteenth Infantry, in the assault at York, Canada, April, 1813. After the stir he made in the old time when the ground his mountain stands upon was not ours but belonged to Spain; after all the charming narrations that have been evolved out of his adventures, we marvel that he died at thirty-four, the colonel of the regiment he led.

There were twenty-three men in this expedition, all told. They started from Bellefontaine, a location on the Missouri, fourteen miles north of the city of St. Louis—the same locality which had been the starting point of Lewis and Clark, and the first site of a military post west of the Mississippi—in July, 1806. There was then the beginning of a dispute about boundaries; the same that was ended by the treaty of Guadaloupe Hidalgo after the war with Mexico, while all the scars were healed by the Gadsden purchase a little later. Pike's errand was not entirely one of exploration, and without question it was desired to know also how strong Spain was along the boundary she claimed as her northern limit, and which we disputed.

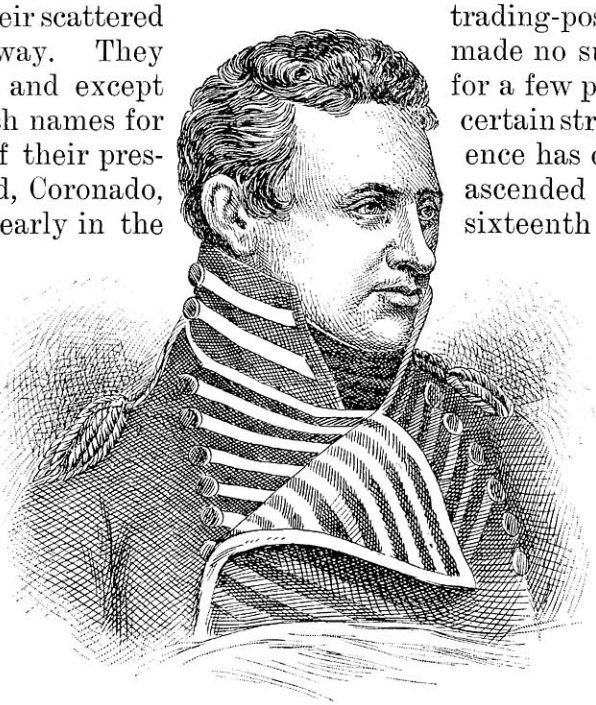
His journal reads now like a romance. It is of starved, frozen, ragged men wandering through a region that is the favorite and cosy tourist-ground of three generations later. His journey led him westward through what is now the State of Kansas, through millions of buffaloes, and into the foothills above what is now the city of Pueblo, Colorado. He first saw, far away, the mountain that bears his name, November 15, 1806, and it was in sight of his party through their wanderings for more than a month. He did not reach it, or name it himself, and was finally captured while in a stockade he had built on the Rio Grande, thinking it the Red River and that he was within our acknowledged territory.

This captivity took him a long journey into Mexico. It was filled with incidents that read strange now, and show how little the Spaniard has changed to the present date, and, equally, how much we have changed ourselves. Pike was released in July, 1807, and was thanked by the government for his services.

Long's expedition was also that of a soldier, and he, too, is commemorated by a lofty mountain which bears his name. His journey was made

in 1819–20, with valuable results, but without either the suffering or the romance which fell to the share of Pike. In a following chapter I shall dwell more particularly upon the beautiful region first examined by these men — Colorado.

Much of the region under consideration had been at a comparatively early date penetrated by a few men of the Latin races. French traders and missionaries in small parties had, from time to time, entered the present States of North and South Dakota, Montana and Idaho, before the tide of Anglo-Saxon immigration set in. They, however, made no systematic exploration. Their scattered trading-posts, built of logs, soon rotted away. They made no successful effort at colonization, and except for a few picturesque missions, and French names for certain streams and localities, all trace of their presence has disappeared.



General Pike.

The Spaniard, Coronado, ascended the Gila River from the south early in the sixteenth century, and other Spanish adventurers, fired alike by the zeal for religion and for gold, made desultory expeditions into the territory that is now Colorado and Utah. They erected here and there rude arrastras side by side with the cross, and to some extent colonized portions of what are now New Mexico and Arizona. But the civilization planted by them languished, and in some localities even entirely disappeared, either from inherent weakness or encroached upon by the fierce savages, who had become much more formidable by the acquisition of firearms and horses. Santa Fé, which was a Spanish colony fifty years before the landing at Jamestown or Plymouth Rock, remained a feeble village of adobe houses, until in recent years rebuilt by American energy and thrift.

The Anglo-Saxon is preëminently the colonizing race. From the first day of his landing on the eastern shores of the continent he has pressed eagerly and steadily forward, his eyes fixed upon the western horizon,

until his onward march has been, for the present at least, checked by the waves of the Pacific.

That eminent statesman, Senator Thomas H. Benton, of Missouri, for years had urged the construction of trans-continental railway lines which he believed were destined to become "the road to India." His ability and influence did much to attract attention to the importance of establishing at least one great avenue of commerce and communication between the East and the West, and it was chiefly through him that the expeditions of the "path-finder" Fremont, were authorized and equipped.

John Charles Fremont was a native of Savannah, Georgia. He was an accomplished officer and engineer, whose romantic wooing and winning of Jessie Benton, now his widow, may yet be remembered by those who were young at that time. Fremont's expeditions were organized with great care at the mouth of the Kansas, or Kaw River, at Bent's Fort on the Arkansas, and at various points west of St. Louis. He penetrated the central zone, passing over the Rocky, Sierra Nevada and Cascade Mountains, and along the entire Pacific Coast from the Columbia River to southern California. He had with him a corps of scientists, and his discoveries were valuable contributions to the knowledge of the times. His chief guide was the famous Kit Carson. He had several encounters with hostile Indians, and was fortunately in a position to establish our right of domain at a critical time on the Pacific Coast.

KIT CARSON.

In 1844 Congress authorized the first survey for a trans-continental railway, and an expedition was fitted out by Fremont at private expense for the purpose of making this preliminary survey. He wrote a history of his explorations which attracted great attention, not only in this country but also in Europe.

The close of the war gave a great impetus to the settlement and development of this region. The causes of this impetus have already been alluded to, and are not far to seek. The discharge from military service of such large bodies of men, mostly young, vigorous and intelligent, was a powerful stimulus to every kind of further achievement, both material and intellectual. The tremendous volume of energy and ability which had been engaged in mutual destruction, when suddenly released found its most natural and congenial field of expansion in the West, to which many

thousands of the young men from both armies soon found their way. Before the war, the border troubles in Kansas, and the prospect of similar trouble in other sections, while attracting perhaps a certain class, might well deter the peaceful farmer seeking a home for his family. That vexed question, the source of such bitter contention, as to whether free or slave labor should possess the virgin fields of the West was now settled for all time. The Homestead Law gave to each settler in fee-simple one hundred and sixty acres of land, which to the rack-rented toiler from beyond the sea must have seemed a princely estate.

And among the results of the war as connected with the West, was the acquisition of Alaska, that magnificent pendant to our territorial area. The undisguised sympathy shown to us in our struggle by Russia aggravated the strained relations already existing between that country and Great Britain, while drawing still more closely the bonds of friendship previously existing between her and the United States. Soon after the war, rather than endanger these friendly relations by the complications that seemed likely to arise from the presence in Alaskan waters of our whalers and fishermen, and perhaps willing also to perform an act showing her independence of Great Britain, Russia departed from her traditional policy and sold this territory to our government for $7,200,000. Within a few years after the purchase considerable American capital and several thousands of our citizens were engaged in the mines and fisheries of that region.

The actual construction of a trans-continental railway was inaugurated during the war for political reasons. At one time there was apprehension lest California and the Pacific Coast should secede from the Union. That State, particularly in the Southern portion, had been largely settled and dominated by men of Southern birth and sentiment, and in 1861 great sympathy was manifested there with the secession movement. California was, in fact, seriously in danger of being lost to the Union cause, and was saved largely by the efforts and eloquence of Senators Baker and MacDougal, the Rev. Starr King, Leland Stanford, and their compatriots, and by the timely action of the Government in sending General E. V. Sumner in 1861 to command the Union forces on the Pacific Coast. The danger that the communities of the Pacific slope, so far from the population of the East, and separated from it by a vast tract of wilderness, might become alienated from the Union, was plainly seen by the statesmen of that day, and the building of the first trans-continental line was hastened in order to establish a physical connection between the Pacific States and the Eastern portion of the republic.

Since the war many powerful States have sprung into existence, practically six lines of trans-continental railway have been built, linking with iron bands the Pacific States to their sisters of the East, resources that hitherto were undreamed of have been discovered, and a volume of development that is marvelous and bewildering to contemplate, has been crowded into a quarter of a century, making this the brightest period in our national history.

Returning again to my personal story, in the spring of 1869, having been assigned to the command of the Fifth United States Infantry, with headquarters at Fort Hays, Kansas, I bade adieu to the balmy atmosphere of the Carolinas where I had been on duty, and traversed by way of the then most convenient railway route the several intervening States, most of them being then seen by me for the first time. The battle-torn fields of Virginia and southern Pennsylvania were familiar enough, but beyond the picturesque Alleghanies the scenes were new to me, and presented ever-varying beauties of landscape. Crossing the Ohio at Pittsburg, a day's run through the populous and thriving States of Ohio and Indiana with their ever-present woodlands, extensive clearings, charming villages and busy manufacturing centers, brought me to the border of the great prairie region near that spot where the immortal voyageur, La Salle, first set foot upon the domain of the Illinois, almost two hundred years before. What a marvelous change! Not a vestige was now left of the powerful and warlike race he found there except their tribal name. Where they had roamed was now a mighty State, the undisputed home of the white man, and one of the great commonwealths of the richest and largest agricultural valley on the face of the globe. Where the smoke of their signal fires had curled toward the skies now stood "the school-house on the hill," and the church-spire pointing to heaven.

Following the pathway of the "Course of Empire" still westward another day took me beyond the Mississippi, across the State of Missouri and the great river which shares that name, and I found myself at length at my destination within the boundaries of the State of Kansas; "bleeding Kansas," as she was then still termed, but now long since arrived at her imperial rank among the sisterhood of agricultural States of the great Valley of the Mississippi.

At that time Missouri was a State of one million seven hundred thousand inhabitants in round numbers. She is possessed of boundless natural resources, and is especially rich in mineral and agricultural wealth. Her iron, coal, lead and zinc treasures are seemingly exhaustless. She is now

widely celebrated for her packing industries also, as well as for a wide range of manufacturing enterprises and industrial pursuits. Her commerce is very extensive, since a large portion of the produce of the northwest as well as of the supplies for that section is borne upon the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, and over the numerous railroads of the State.

The time of this first journey of mine across the central West was little more than twenty-five years ago at this writing. To illustrate the unprecedented growth to which I have alluded, I may call the attention of the reader to one or two instances out of a very large number.

The first city after crossing the Alleghanies was Pittsburg. The last previous census (1860) gave her a population of 49,217. The first following (1870) showed 86,076. She is now a city of nearly 300,000 inhabitants. A steamer starting from Pittsburg, 450 miles from New York, and 2,000 miles from the mouth of the Mississippi, may sail the entire distance going, and returning, every mile of it within the great Mississippi Valley, without once being stopped by a government official, or being taxed by any tariff.

Then came Chicago. Her then last census showed a population of 109,206; the next gave her 298,977. Two years later she was a heap of smouldering ruins from which she rose with astonishing rapidity, and now boasts a population of two millions in round numbers, a growth without parallel in the history of the world. A ship sailing from any part of the world may discharge its cargo at her wharves, a thousand miles inland. Her commercial success was already widely spread at the time of my first visit, and I regarded the city with much interest. The tragedy of the Fort Dearborn massacre was enacted on her present site, at as late a date as 1812.

Continuing westward I came to St. Louis, at that time a city of 350,000 inhabitants and the great rival of Chicago. This interesting city was originally settled by the French. The names of many of its oldest families are French, and the city still retains in its social character many of the attributes of that polished and pleasure-loving people. St. Louis was for a long period the chief seat of the French power in the Mississippi Valley, and also of their fur trade, to which it was admirably adapted by its situation at the mouth of the Missouri, the great western tributary of the Mississippi. This river was the natural thoroughfare of commerce from the Mississippi to the great fur-bearing regions of the northwest, being navigated by flat boats and other small craft, and, at a later date, by small stern-wheel steamers almost up to the base of the Rocky Mountains. At St. Louis the traders in

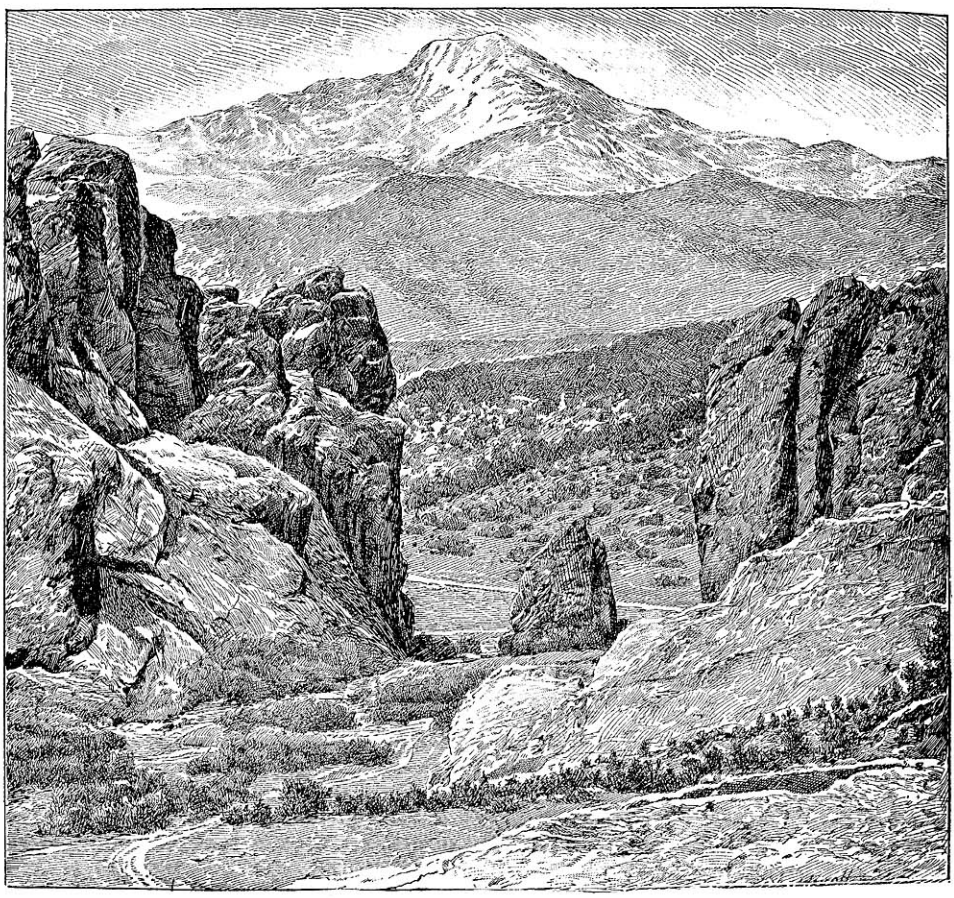
early times met the representatives of numerous Indian tribes from the plains and mountains, and at this point caravans of hardy pioneers were formed to push forward the ever advancing line of settlement still farther to the West.

When I passed through St. Louis in 1869 its great engineer, James B. Eads, had turned his attention from the construction of gun-boats and engines of war to the construction of the avenues of peace. Disregarding the adverse opinions of other eminent engineers he had defied the elements, and was sinking his iron shafts deep below the waters of the Mississippi and through the more difficult and treacherous stratum of quicksands beneath, to the solid foundation. His enterprise was afterward carried to a successful conclusion, and the great arch that now unites the banks of the Father of Waters was completed in the early seventies. His later work, at the mouth of the same river, will add to his high distinction as an engineer of broad and original conceptions, and as a far-seeing and public-spirited American.

I arrived at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, near the city of the same name, in April. This post was established in 1827 by the distinguished soldier of the War of 1812 whose name it perpetuates. It was for many years the principal base of military operations for the vast country between the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountain range. For many years it was the concentration point of a number of hostile tribes of Indians, and had its influence in restraining their warlike propensities, being at that time the extreme outpost on the western frontier. It is beautifully situated on the right bank of the Missouri, about six hundred miles above its mouth. Later it was from this point that the war material was shipped by wagon-trains westward across the plains to the distant military posts that were established from time to time for the protection of lines of communication and settlements. Here the escorts were made up to conduct the great transportation trains laden with supplies for the troops engaged in protecting the pony express and mail routes. Thence the exploring expeditions were sent out in the spring, and thither they returned in the autumn. Here came the young officers fresh from West Point, and other officers older in service, sometimes bringing their families to share with them the pleasures and lighten the burdens of their service on the distant frontier. While there was much of danger, privation and hardship incident to this remote frontier service, yet there was also much to attract and interest the ambitious and enterprising, and to furnish as well an occasional romantic episode of the service. When larger garrisons were gathered at Fort Leavenworth it afforded an

opportunity for social civilities and recreation, as well as the amusements incident to refined society. The officers were, as a rule, educated and intelligent gentlemen, while their wives and daughters were cultured and gentle, forming a society refined in tone, but free in great measure from the rigid conventionalities which govern restricted localities.

The great industrial interest at that time in Leavenworth, and also in



Pike's Peak as Pike Saw It.

other growing cities of that region, Kansas City, Omaha, and Council Bluffs, was the construction of the two trans-continental railway lines, the Union Pacific and what was then known as the Kansas Pacific, afterward a branch of the Union Pacific. Numerous wagon-trains of immigrants were also moving westward, the principal points of organization and departure being the towns above named. At these points Bishop

Berkeley might have seen the most fitting illustrations of his words, "Westward the course of empire takes its way."

Here were gathered each year thousands of newcomers, who with their children now swell the population of our far western States and Territories. Hunters and trappers, farmers, men from every walk in life, every handicraft, every learned profession, and of every business and trade; patriarchs with families and beardless youths, congregated in great camps and "outfitted" for the exciting and perilous plunge into the Western wilderness. Here were gathered together provisions, arms, animals for transportation and supplies of all sorts, and in these initial camps were organized trains or colonies in size and personnel to conform to the ideas of each individual and family. They selected their own chief, made their own rules and regulations for the government of the train or camp; crossed the Missouri and journeyed in every direction over the boundless plains and mountains of the West. They traveled by ox-teams, with mule and horse trains, in the saddle and on foot, with advance guards scouts, flankers and rear guards, establishing each night their outposts, pickets, main-guards, and train guards with almost military precision.

From these points many of the great hunting expeditions of a later day have started and passed to the plains and mountains beyond. Sir George Gore, Sir John Garland, Lord Adair, the Earl of Dunraven, the Grand Duke Alexis and many others, organized parties here for the exciting chase of the buffalo in what was then the great hunting-ground of the continent. It was from these points that the expedition of Captain William Marcy, Fifth U. S. Infantry, and George B. McClellan, had moved to the Rocky Mountains in 1853, and the expedition of Captain John Pope of the U. S. Engineers penetrated to the Llano Estacado in 1856. It was through Council Bluffs that the little band of Mormons, under Brigham Young, passed over the plains in 1847 destined in intention for the Sandwich Islands, but which located permanently in the valley of the Great Salt Lake in Utah; and it was from this point that the expedition organized in 1855 under command of General Albert Sidney Johnston and marched in 1856 against what was then considered a formidable insurrection of these same Mormons. Many of the important military expeditions were also organized against the plains Indians from what was for many years regarded as our Western boundary of civilization, the Missouri River. It was from a point on this border-land that the famous Doniphan expedition set out on its long and brilliantly successful march for the conquest of New Mexico and Chihuahua; said to be the longest, most successful and rapid march of foot-soldiers in military history.