CHAPTER XI.

Campaigns in Texas.

Causes of Indian Depredations — Construction of the Trans-Continental Railways — Destruction of the Buffalo — Disaster to the Germaine Family — Attack on Adobe Walls — Organizing an Expeditionary Force Against the Hostiles — Unfortunate Condition of Western Kansas — Drouth — Locusts — March Under a Burning Sun Into the Country of the Hostiles — Description of the Country — Gypsum Belt — On the Indian Trail — The Indians at Bay — An Exciting Engagement — A Hot Pursuit — Apostrophe to the Red River — A Norther and a Deluge.

URING the progress of the events I have described, there was no long period during which the frontier settlements were entirely secure from the devastations of marauding bands of Indians. Yet, after a long season of mingled peace and war, the main camps had been gathered in and given reservations in the Indian and other Territories. These bodies of Indians numbered many thousands, and while they were apparently at peace they were constantly sending out bands, large and small, which were committing depredations upon the settlers of Texas, Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Nebraska, Montana, and Dakota. Among the causes of a want of security was the fact that these wild savages were placed in large numbers on reservations remote from civilization and under no control, restraint, or influence stronger than that exercised by a single agent, appointed usually on account of some political consideration. They saw only the worst features of civilization, being subjected in very slight degree, if at all, to the enlightening influences which exist among civilized people.

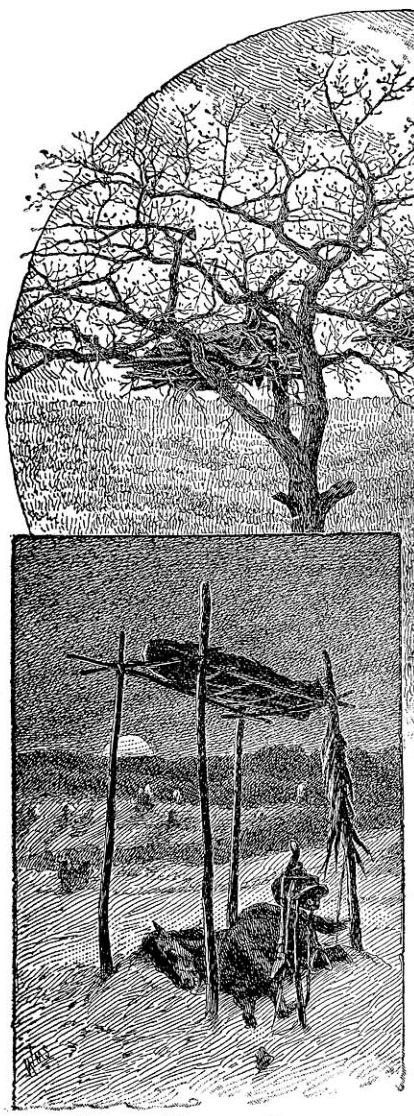
Accustomed as they were from childhood to the wild excitement of the chase, or of conflict with some other hostile tribe, taught that to kill was noble and to labor degrading, these Indians could not suddenly change their natures and become peaceable agriculturists. Without occupation, they led a listless, indolent life, the very foundation of vice and crime.

Through direct and indirect means they were permitted and encouraged to provide themselves with the most modern and improved weapons, and the use of these weapons inflamed their savage natures and gave them undue confidence in their own strength.

One of the strongest causes of unrest among them, and one that will have the same influence upon any people, was the fact that the promises made them to induce them to go on reservations were not always carried out by the government authorities. They had been removed from their natural source of supply, the direct range of the buffalo, but under distinct treaty stipulation that they were to be provided with shelter, clothing and sustenance sufficient in quantity and quality to satisfy their wants. Part of these treaty stipulations were not fulfilled. They were sometimes for weeks without their bread-rations. Their annual allowance of food was usually exhausted in six or seven months. Thus they were either overfed or half-starved; a condition which very naturally tended to create great dissatisfaction among them and arouse their turbulent spirits. They would usually remain peaceable during the winter, but an outbreak in the spring or summer was the usual result. Another cause for dissatisfaction was the rapid construction of railways west, or southwest through their territory, and the steady advance of the settlement toward the setting sun.

The construction of the railways, and the building of towns and villages along the valleys that they had occupied for generations, resulted in the destruction of their places of sepulture, or the receptacles their customs provided for the repose of their dead, which were regarded by them as most sacred. One instance of this kind occurred near Wallace, Kansas, where a wood-contractor had set a large body of men to work cutting wood in the beautiful grove among the branches of which the Indians had for many years been accustomed to deposit the remains of their dead. This they did by placing the corpse, attired in the richest garments they owned, bedecked with all the most beautiful ornaments and paraphernalia of which they were possessed, and wrapped in shrouds, blankets or robes, upon a platform built among the branches of the trees. This forest held the remains of hundreds of the departed, who according to the Indian belief had gone to the spirit land. Annually, or whenever the camp moved into that vicinity, the relatives of the departed were accustomed to come and, making offerings to their spirits, depositing some article valuable to them at the base of the tree or scaffold in token of remembrance and affection, to chant their requiems and make their accustomed demonstrations of mourning, frequently cutting their flesh as a mark of deep grief

and devotion for the loved ones who had passed beyond this life. When it was seen by the Indians that the woodmen were about to cut down the trees of this grove, they sent a deputation to the contractor to beg him to spare their cemetery, as it was to them a sacred spot. But their prayers were ruthlessly disregarded. So intensely did this outrage move the tribe, that they set out to obtain revenge by the murder of every white inhabitant they could find in that vicinity.



INDIAN MODE OF BURIAL.

Another cause of dissatisfaction, of which I have already spoken, was the destruction of the vast herds of buffaloes, their main dependence for subsistence in their wild state. The buffalo furnished them food, raiment and shelter. It gave them about all that they desired. But the enterprising frontiersman had found in the buffalo a source of revenue, and more than a thousand men were engaged in their destruction simply for the hides which were shipped in immense quantities to the East to be used in the manufacture of belting, harness-leather, and for other purposes. Colonel Richard Irving Dodge in his book on "The Plains of the West," published in 1877, has gone into this subject with great care, and his figures are undoubtedly entitled to the utmost credit. From him we learn that 754,329 hides, exclusive of robes, were shipped east in the year 1873 alone, over the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fé, the Kansas Pacific and the Union Pacific railways, and that during the three years 1872, 1873, and

1874, there were killed 4,373,730 buffaloes. But in this estimate, enormous as it is, no account was taken of the immense number of buffaloes killed by hunters who came into the range from the white frontier and took their hides out by wagons; of the immense numbers killed every year by the hunters from New Mexico, Colorado, Texas and Indian Territory; of the numbers killed by the Utes, Bannocks, and other mountain tribes who made every year their fall hunt on the plains. Nor did he include the numbers sent from the Indian country by other roads than those named to St. Louis, Memphis and elsewhere, or the immense numbers going as robes to California, Montana, Idaho, and the great West, nor of the still greater numbers taken each year from the Territory by the Hudson Bay Company. All these would, says Colonel Dodge, add another million to the already almost incredible list of slaughtered buffaloes.

WHAT BECAME OF THE BUFFALOES.

This wholesale destruction of their main dependence exasperated the Indians to an intense degree, and the tribes of the Kiowas, Comanches, Cheyennes, and Arapahoes held a great council at Medicine Lodge, Indian Territory, to take united and vigorous action in regard thereto. There their grievances and woes were proclaimed and possibly exaggerated, but the result was a general determination to make war upon the whites. This purpose they proceeded immediately to carry into execution. Most of the Cheyennes and Arapahoes left their reservations at once; the Comanches and Kiowas followed later. Moving from the central part of Indian Territory out westerly into the buffalo range, they sent out subsidiary expeditions to prey upon the white settlements in various directions, principally in western Kansas and New Mexico. One of the tragic incidents of these marauding expeditions was the catastrophe to the Germaine family. This family consisted of the parents, one son who was a grown man, and five daughters. Formerly they had lived in the State of Georgia, later in western Missouri, and were now moving thence to Colorado. They were

fairly well equipped with wagons, a few horses and some other stock. They had passed through as they hoped, the dangerous district and expected to arrive at a place of safety the next day, when suddenly a band of warriors appeared, killing the man and his wife, also the son who was a short distance away just returning from a hunt for game, and taking the girls captives. After traveling a short distance they decided for some reason not to keep the eldest daughter, a woman grown, and killed her in the presence of her four sisters. These were aged respectively fifteen, thirteen, nine, and seven. We shall have occasion later to refer to these unfortunate captives, as their history is interwoven with some of the stirring events of the campaign that followed.

One of the first attacks in force was upon those whom they hated most—the buffalo hunters. A large camp of these hunters located at what was known as Adobe Walls, a trading post on the Canadian River in the Pan Handle of Texas, and this the Indians attempted to capture by surprise. It was their intention to annihilate the whole band of hunters at the first dash. In the latter part of June, two hundred warriors made a descent upon the camp, but unfortunately for them the day happened to be Sunday, when the buffalo hunters were all gathered in for a day of rest and recreation and were therefore together in full strength. The Indians made the attack suddenly and in the most determined manner. The hunters being most expert in the use of the rifle and accustomed to accurate shooting, and, fighting from behind the thick protecting walls of the building, were cool and careful in their aim and played sad havoc with the charging Indians. Nearly thirty of these were killed outright and sixty or seventy others were wounded. It was a serious blow to the Indians. They had shown remarkable courage, frequently pushing right up to the stockade and fighting almost hand to hand trying to break down the doors. The fight was kept up for several hours, and then for three days they maintained a siege. It was an old-fashioned fight of frontiersmen against rude warriors, in which the latter were no match for the skilled riflemen.

The Indian's marksmanship is very accurate within the range to which he is accustomed in killing game—say within two hundred yards; but in the use of the long-range rifle, where he must take account of the elevated sights, the distance and the effect of the wind upon the flight of the bullet, he is inexperienced and in no way a match for his more intelligent enemy. Troops arrived there some days after the siege had been raised, and the scene which met their gaze told a story of the depravity of these men, physically brave and generous where Indians are not

INDIAN VILLAGE ROUTED.—SEE PAGE 170.

concerned, which needs no comment from me. After stating the number of the dead buried by the Indians, the account as transmitted to the eastern press, gravely adds, "Twelve more were left where they fell, and the heads of these twelve men were found adorning the gateposts of the hunters' corral."

At this time I was ordered to organize an expedition and move down from the north against these Indians. At the same time three other columns were ordered to move into the southwest from as many different directions. One under Colonel Davidson moved west from Fort Sill, Indian Territory; one under Colonel Mackenzie moved north from Fort Concho, Texas; and one under Major Price, with a battalion of the Eighth Cavalry, moved east from New Mexico. These columns were all moving toward the the same locality and for the same general purpose, but without any definite concert of action.

After the Siege.

My own command was to be organized at Fort Dodge, Kansas. Part of the forces which were to compose it were taken by me from Fort Leavenworth. On the way to Fort Dodge we passed through that State at a time when it was suffering from one of the most terrible disasters that had befallen it in all its history. Not only was its frontier infested with hostile Indians, but the season was also one of intense heat, the whole western portion being parched, blistered and burnt up in a universal drouth. Added to these visitations, the country had become the scene of such a scourge as has seldom been seen anywhere; such a one as I have never seen since and hope never to see again. The previous year the heavens had been darkened by a cloud of locusts coming from the mountain regions of the West. These pests had deposited their eggs in the plains of Kansas, and now

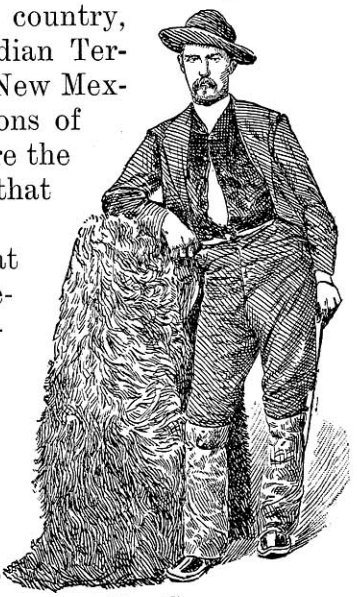
when these eggs were hatched the whole face of the country was covered with a mass of creeping young locusts that destroyed all the vegetation that had escaped the heat and the drouth. The green cornfields were stripped of every leaf, and the few stalks remaining were made to appear as if a fire had swept over them. The grass and leaves, the flowers and shrubs, were all consumed by these myriads of destroying insects. Not a vestige of vegetation was to be seen in the line of their pestiferous march.

My command when fully organized at Fort Dodge consisted of eight troops of cavalry in two battalions, under Majors C. E. Compton and James Biddle, four companies of infantry under Captain H. B. Bristol, a detachment of artillery under Lieutenant James W. Pope, and a body of trailers, guides and scouts under Lieutenant Frank D. Baldwin. This force was composed of friendly Delaware Indians and a body of twenty-five frontiersmen made up of expert riflemen, pioneers and plainsmen; men of known courage and intelligence, and possessing the best attainable knowledge of that remote and unsettled country.

Locust Scourge.

On the 14th of August my command moved south from the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fé Railroad at Fort Dodge in three columns, my object being to cover as wide an area of country as possible in order to force a concentration of the Indians on my front, and also to prevent if possible any of their number being left behind us. During the first five day's march, the heat, even for the month of August, being unusually intense, great suffering was experienced on the part of both the troops and the animals. So intense, indeed, was this heat that of the large number of favorite dogs that had accompanied the train when we moved from Fort Dodge, only two remained with the command when we reached Camp Supply, about a hundred miles south. At that point the command renewed its supplies and then commenced its movement to the South Canadian River and

into the country of the Indians, in the western portion of which they were as usual seeking refuge. The command in moving south from Camp Supply had one of the best plainsmen for a guide, Ben Clark, that I have ever known. His knowledge of the country was remarkable. Intelligent and reliable, his services were of great value. This country, comprised within the western portion of the Indian Territory, western Texas, and eastern and southern New Mexico, has features common to all the elevated regions of the interior, especially in respect to those that are the effect of climate, and these constitute nearly all that are of interest from a military point of view.



BEN CLARK.

Being subject to long periods of excessive heat and drouth, when its surface becomes impermeable to water, and then to sudden and most violent storms, every considerable declivity is seamed and gashed by the floods which the hardened soil cannot receive into itself, and which rush to the nearest outlet. That portion which has maintained one general level, or has but slight elevations, forms what is known as the Staked Plains, or "El Llano Estacado" of the Spaniards. East of this vast plain lies a belt of country, principally between 99° 30′ and 101°, which by its geological formation and surface, and the elevation of Mounts Rochester, Lyman, Lewis, the Antelope Hills, and many buttes and mounds farther south, shows the great washing away of the Staked Plains, which has evidently consumed ages of time. This region is broken into rolling prairie by a series of water-courses heading in the Staked Plains and taking an easterly direction, their breaks and ravines forming a rough and, in places, impassable surface. The Canadian River passes through the Llano Estacado, its almost innumerable tributaries affording most pleasant and well-sheltered valleys, with abundant timber, excellent water and grazing. The Red River, on the contrary, appears to have cut its course through the dead level plains, making deep and precipitous cañons, and it has only four tributaries of any importance. The soil of the high plains is in places rich and well covered with good grazing, while at others it is very light or sandy, and almost destitute of grass. Water is found only in lagunas or ponds, and then only at favorable seasons of the year. In the section of country to the east, timber, rich soil and abundant grass are

found along the water-courses, while on the high divides fair grazing is found, but no timber. The above section, so favorable for pasturage, is bounded and limited by a broad belt of gypsum country extending northeast and southwest and lying west of the Wichita mountains, and a deep stratum of the same mineral apparently underlies the eastern portion of the Staked Plains. Near this stratum vegetation is of very little or no value, and the water where it descends from the highlands, though excellent at its source, becomes so thoroughly impregnated with mineral substances as to make it in places utterly useless. At other places, although agreeable to the taste, it produces weakness and sickness in both men and animals.

The nomadic Indians, when not hostile and not disturbed, naturally occupied the country which lies west of the bitter waters of this gypsum region and east of the timberless, dry and unprotected plains, and watered by the tributaries of the Canadian and Red Rivers. These afforded them many advantages for their families and herds, and were their best hunting grounds. When pursued they placed almost insurmountable natural obstacles behind them in their retreat, passing over the rugged bluffs and through the deep and precipitous cañons by circuitous trails, impassable for wagons and difficult for a mounted force to follow, and sought refuge on the extensive plains, where an approaching force could be seen for a long distance.

In pushing south, the scouts under Lieutenant Baldwin, supported by a troop of cavalry, were thrown well to the west and moved toward Adobe Walls, where it arrived just in time to repel a second attack on that place by a considerable band of Indians. These Indians retreated south before him, burning what there was of the prairie grass behind them. A few days later, as Baldwin continued his march down the Canadian, he surprised a small party of Indians near the mouth of Chicken Creek and put them to rout. Soon thereafter he rejoined the main command on its march south from Camp Supply, *via* Wolf and Commission Creeks, at a point twelve miles west of Antelope Hills, the junction being effected August 24.

The chase now began in earnest, the trail of the Indians running southwest. Camp was broken daily at five o'clock in the morning, the command with its train marching about twenty-five miles each day, and experiencing hardships and privations which it is seldom the misfortune of man to be called upon to endure. In many places no water was to be discovered in the beds of the streams, and only at long intervals were there found

stagnant holes containing some, often impregnated with gypsum. Men rushed in frenzy and drank, only to find their thirst increased rather than slaked. Even coffee made with it was found so bitter that it could not be drank. The heat was almost unendurable, the thermometer ranging above 110 degrees in the shade, daily. We were marching through what was at that season a desert waste.

On the 27th the main Indian trail was struck at the Sweetwater, and was followed. On the 28th it became plain that the enemy were only a short distance ahead of us. Our main train was this day left behind in order to expedite the pursuit, and two companies of troops were left with it as a guard. Only five ammunition wagons and two ambulances were retained with the column. The trail grew fresher and fresher, and indicated the presence of large bodies of Indians. The troops were elated at the prospect of meeting the foe; new life was infused into their weary limbs; and during the ensuing two days they marched sixty-five miles, incredible as such an accomplishment may seem in such a country; infantry and cavalry marching together.

On the morning of the 30th the column was in motion at four o'clock, the scouts as usual about two miles in advance. At an early hour it emerged from the broken country and struck a level plain bordered on the south side by the steep bluffs which skirt the Staked Plains or "Llano Estacado." The trail led to an opening through the bluffs, and at eight o'clock Lieutenant Baldwin's detachment of scouts entered the hills, when almost instantly a band of about two hundred and fifty Indians charged upon them from the bluffs on both sides.

The fight opened at once. With that cool, deliberate judgment and courage which had distinguished him during the war, and which characterized him on all subsequent occasions of critical importance and danger, Baldwin handled his men with consummate skill, while the whole Indian force sprang from their places of concealment lining the bluffs. Baldwin's frontiersmen quickly took position, dropped on the ground, and used their effective rifles to the best advantage. His friendly Delawares went quickly into action and their veteran chief, old Fall Leaf, over whose head the storms of more than seventy winters had blown, his gray hair streaming in the wind, exposed himself conspicuously as he rode up and down his line encouraging and leading his men. The little force held its ground until reinforced by the rapid advance of the cavalry, which deployed at a gallop as they moved forward.

Compton's and Biddle's battalions were quickly thrown in line, the former on the right, the latter on the left, and it was a fine sight to witness the rapidity and enthusiasm with which officers and men flew to their designated places in the line. The Gatling guns under Lieutenant Pope were brought into action with the same speed and enthusiasm that characterized the other arms of the service, and an advance of the whole line was immediately ordered. Captain T. C. Tupper was as conspicuous as he always is when the fight is on, and Captain A. R. Chaffee made one of his bright, telling battlefield speeches; he gave the command to his men, "Forward!" and added, "If any man is killed I will make him a corporal." Major Compton rode in front of his command, waving his hat, and led the charge to the hills, and as the sudden onset from all parts of the line created dismay and panic in the lines of the Indians, they retreated precipitously, and were followed for twenty miles over the roughest ground that I had until that time ever seen men fight upon. Over the rugged hills and buttes, and the jagged ravines and covers, and across the dry bed of the Red River which was now covered with white, drifting sand where at times a great river flows, then up the right bank into the cañon of the Tulé, a branch of the Red River, through the burning camps full of abandoned utensils, went the flying Indians. The retreat and pursuit were kept up with the utmost energy, descending into deep cañons and scaling bluffs almost impassable, some portion of the Indians now and then attempting to stem the tide at some favorable point, upon which the troops would instantly charge and carry their stronghold, until at last the Indians were so closely pressed that they could not even make a show of re-forming, but sped away demoralized and in full flight.

The sharp engagement and the long and rapid pursuit during the intolerable heat of sun and earth, and the absence of water, caused intense suffering among men and beasts. In fact they were almost famished for want of water. On reaching the bed of the Red River, which at that point was nearly half a mile wide, there was only found a small pool of saturated gypsum and alkali, the stagnant water being rendered utterly unfit for use. During the chase the men tried every means of finding water, but without avail, and suffered so greatly that some of them resorted to the extreme of opening the veins of their arms and moistening their parched and swollen lips with their own blood. This expedient to relieve extreme suffering has occurred on two different occasions in my commands; at this time on the Red River of Texas, and again on the arid plains of Arizona.

A gallant young officer, who had been a colonel of volunteers during the great war, Adjutant-General of the expedition, G. W. Baird, Lieutenant of the Fifth Infantry, was moved by the sufferings of himself and comrades to wreak a fearful vengeance on the chief source of disappointment, by issuing a few days later the following apostrophic and paralyzing effusion, addressed to the Red River:

TO RED RIVER, TEXAS, CIR. 102° WEST, AUGUST 30, 1874.

I.

O! Name that art a lie,
Thou *tell'st* of purling springs,
  Where sun-browned farmers dip
The draught, or surface kiss
  With thirsting, thankful lip.

Thou *tell'st* of babbling brooks,
  Where artless children play,
Along whose verdant banks
  The happy lovers stray,
Of leafy-shaded pools
  Where, at the close of day,
The home-returning kine
  Their lazy footsteps stay.

Thou *tell'st* of rolling streams
  Upon whose bosoms wide
The wealth of cities floats
  And nations' navies ride,
Between whose ample shores
  Rolls in the moon-dawn tide—
And thou *art*—what?
A name that is a lie.

II.

Dust-stained, wearied and parched,
  Thirsting, ready to die,
We ask for one cooling drop,
  Which sullenly thou dost deny,
While, up from thy burning sands,
  As from venomed serpent's eye,
Come sparkles of parched brine
  Which hope of aid deny—
Art *sure* the good God made thee,
  Not they who his power defy?

III.

If in those Stygian realms—
Which good men shun and bad men fear—
Where grief fore'er o'erwhelms,
And mothers look on children's woes without a tear,
Where Dead-sea drops like thine alone are found,
Within Creation's bound—
If there one deeper, ghastlier pit there be
Where, fitting comrades, ceaseless writhe the vilest vile;
Those who have slain their babes unborn;
Whose flitting ghosts, in terror, other murderers shun—
Those who, in love's pure name, have wrought another's shame;
Crime more doubly damned than poisoning eucharistic wine—
Those who, for paltry gain, have doubly armed our cruel foe—
If Powers Infernal fitting prison find
For monsters such as these—
Thy name above its triply-barred door
Forever burns in baleful, sulphurous fire
O name that art a lie!

Written in the field, 1874. G. W. Baird.

The Indians being driven out upon the Llano Estacado it was impossible to follow further, as our trains were far in the rear of our command, and the trail leading up the precipitous cliffs told the fruitlessness of longer pursuit in the then condition of the troops. It was, therefore, deemed best to call a halt. After a night's rest the command, with infinite labor, followed the trail and climbed out of the valley of the Tulé and for miles out upon the Llano Estacado. It became evident, however, that no pursuit could be successful without supplies, and that before a train could be brought between the ravines and breaks of the valley to the table-land on the right bank of the Red River, the Indians could get beyond pursuit. Our trains being far in the rear, as stated, the command would have soon been out of supplies. Enough had been accomplished to demonstrate that we were strong enough to successfully encounter any body of Indians then in the field, but their subjugation, it was evident, would require time. While they undoubtedly rejoiced in their escape and were gratified at their ability to move with greater rapidity than the troops, at the same time they had received their first lesson in our tenacity of purpose and ability to remain with them in their most favored

haunts and secure retreats. It would be useless to return leaving the Indians the possessors of this remote country which would leave them, with their families and their herds, in a safe shelter from which they could send raiding parties in all directions. Therefore we determined to send our trains back for supplies, and to ourselves remain in the country an indefinite time, and until they were finally subjugated.

The period of heat and sunshine was finally followed by such an overshadowing of the heavens as created an impression of grandeur and awe. The threatening elements were not long in showing the force and fury of the storm that had been gathering. First there came a few scattering drops like shots as one approaches a battlefield, giving warning, and at the same time impressing one with their force. These were accompanied by the distant roll of thunder and occasional flashes of lightning, followed by a drenching flood of water, and then came the fierce onslaught of the terrible storm in all its wild and relentless fury. It was at first refreshing, but afterward pitiless in volume and extent and in its incessant raging. The tethered animals, unable to break away, turned their heads from the storm and huddled together as best they could to escape its fury. Fortunate indeed were those able to back up against some strong tent or covered wagon which would partly protect them from the beating hail and rain. It is remarkable how quickly changes occur in that country, from extreme heat to what is there called the "norther;" the cold harsh winds that are filled with particles of ice which neither man nor animal can face. These storms are undoubtedly the result of a cold current of the atmosphere coming in contact with a warmer one near the earth. To attempt to move under such circumstances would have been extremely injudicious, and all that could be done was to patiently wait until the storm should be over and the earth dry again. Fortunately, by carefully husbanding our supplies, we had enough to last us until the supply-train arrived.

The river spoken of as drifting white sand had now become a roaring torrent of water, rushing down through the arroyas and cañons, and filling the main streams until they overflowed their banks. The streams which ten or twelve days before were wide stretches of dry sand could not now be crossed without great difficulty and danger, the horses being compelled to swim. The dry, heated atmosphere had given place to one filled with water and charged with electricity.