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The walls of the canyons such as those of Pinto and Limpia rise hundreds of feet above the winding trails and are colored by the sun and storms of centuries until today they stand out as golden brown pipes of some ancient cathedral organ.

Here are wind swept plains carpeted with white primroses, Indian paint brush, daisies, wild verbena and many other kinds of flowers found only out here. The cacti (some 45 species), bearing white, yellow, violet and brilliant red flowers are to be found in large numbers down along the Rio Grande. Mesquite bushes, live oaks with mistletoe, wild locusts, salt cedars, cottonwoods and purple sage are common in this country.

It is a land of "magnificent distances," across which one can look for miles and gaze upon the distant mountains, so blue that they seem to be part of the bluer skies, "where the sun is a little brighter" than in any other part of God's great universe.

This country is strikingly like the Holy Land. The settlements of tiny, flat-roofed adobe Mexican shacks, which are a part of every town and so often called "Little Mexico," or Chihuahua, at once recall such villages as Bethlehem or Nazareth. The ever-present burro reminds you of that first Palm Sunday, when the burro was the beast chosen to convey the Master into the Holy City. The bare hills with their low growth of bushes and their protruding rocks and stony soil bring memories of the hills and the "Wilderness of Judea." The Mexican women with their mantillas and vividly colored dresses and shawls are not unlike those groups we find in the market places of Palestine today. Even the great Ranches consisting of hundreds of thousands of acres upon which graze thousands of cattle bring to our thought the days of ancient Israel, when a man's wealth was estimated by his "flocks and herds."

The very mountains lowering skyward and ever changing in color and grandeur, the vast plains, extending as far as the gaze of the eye can reach, the open life lived under the bright day's sun and the silvery starlight of night, the faces of men bronzed by the breezes and sunshine and marked by evidences of hard toil and untold hardships in the days when the challenge "to come and dare" was first heard in the land—all these forbid the trivialities of an over nice convention, the veneer of society, ideas of selfishness, narrow mindedness, petty likes

and dislikes, estimates of persons by the standards of pocketbook and family tree. Out here for a man to live it is necessary that he be real in every sense of that word and for the woman to endure it is imperative that she be true with all that implies. Character is the emphatic note.

Here is an ideal climate, cool, invigorating. There are only a few flurries of snow in winter and no hot days in summer. The sun shines every day of the year. The air is dry and clear so that mountains twenty miles away seem but three or four miles distant. But one disagreeable feature breaks in upon this order and that is the sand storm of March and April, when high and rushing winds tear up sand and sweep dust into every crevice and make clean housekeeping an impossibility for a brief season. Rain is very infrequent, coming mostly in the summer.

The moonlight nights in the "Big Bend" country, like the scenery, forbid all description. They are "white nights," when the stars seem so close that you feel like picking them out of the sky. The great moon floods the deep purple mountain peaks and creeps like the incoming of the tide into the dark canyons and lights them up with a ghostly hue. The cacti stand out like spooky beings from a land of enchantment and throw their crazy shadows over the roads. The white noses of the cattle lifted among the black bushes are apt to startle you as you drive or ride horseback over the trails by moonlight. In the arroyos you can verily hear the hush of the night. The coyote cries that strange, uncanny call that makes peculiar music for the midnight hour. From some distant ranch window a faint ray of light streams over the plains—it is the symbol of hospitality. "Come, stop over with us for the night. Here are warm hearted folk, a good bed and plenty to eat. On the morrow you can go your way." You feel God instinctively out here "among the big things." He is very near and you know it.

Note—In the next issue Mr. McClellan will describe the "RANCH LIFE" of the "Big Bend." Part of his Missionary work takes him miles back of the railroads and towns to the ranches. He has seen many "round ups," eaten from the "chuck wagon" and chummed with the cowboys and cattlemen. What he is to tell us will doubtless prove of interest especially to those of us who have never seen or visited a ranch in the Great West.

Note—The subtitles of these articles are taken from Arthur Chapman's well-known poem, "Out Where the West Begins"

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