

in the distance on our right; the Platte River is, in places, close on the same side, while between the river and the mountains lies a stretch of fourteen miles of as beautiful rolling prairie land as one could wish to see.

Four miles from Denver we pass the pioneer ranche of the country, on the right. The land which it embraces was taken up in the spring of 1859, by Mr. Rufus Clark, who is commonly called by all old settlers "Potato Clark," from the fact that Mr. Clark was the *first* person in the country to raise a crop of potatoes. Having sold most of the crop at prices ranging from 20 to 35 cents per pound, after having cut off and saved the seed end of each to plant the next season, he came to make the potato crop a *specialty*, to a great extent, and in the years from 1860 to 1865, often had 250 acres of potatoes, which yielded enormously.

Mr. Clark is a man who always buys for cash, and sells for the *best price* the market will afford, and although he has often been called *close* in exacting his due, no person ever questioned his *sterling integrity*.

It was along the river, just above, where gold was first discovered on the Platte in 1859, but the "diggings" were not profitable and were abandoned.

About one mile further, Bear Creek comes into the Platte, on the west side, its junction being marked by trees, houses and well-cultivated fields. Eight miles from Denver, we pass

PETERSBURG—an unimportant side-track, and two miles further come to

LITTLETON—This station is composed of a dozen or more buildings, surrounded by some fine farms and farm houses; most of the latter are painted white, and the flowers and shrubbery surrounding them look as though there was a woman in the family.

Passing on, the bluffs and ravines seem gradually to close in on our left, and we roll through numerous cuts, cross the canal that supplies Denver with water, pass

ACEQUA—a side-track, and then

PLUM—another station only in name, opposite Platte Canyon.

Our course is now to the southeast—up Plum Creek—which we shall follow for 25 miles. This is a rough and very little cultivated, ragged country, but well adapted to stock-raising, many vast herds of cattle appearing thereon.

A few miles further, we pass, on the right, the site of the old Fisher mill of

1860. Opposite this mill, comes down the old Plum Creek Divide wagon-road, which left the railroad six miles south of Denver on the Platte, turning up over the ridge, via the "Pretty Woman's Ranche," of 1860-3, situated at a spring on the southern slope of the Divide, five miles distant.

Continuing along, we pass, on the right, Fisher Ranche, and then come to

CASTLE ROCK STATION—32 8-10 miles from Denver, so named for a huge castellated rock that stands away up on the apex of a spur of the Divide, that here projects out into the valley, as though to bar our way.

At Castle Rock there is a settlement of about 50 people. Some of the bottom land along the creek is cultivated, and some to the eastward, up a little valley, but the greater portion depend upon stock raising. The road from this station turns to the south 2 6-10 miles to

DOUGLASS—a side-track, and a rugged country, with very little land fit for cultivating, then 3 2-10 miles to

GLADE—another side-track. It is 3 9-10 miles from here to

HUNTSVILLE—This station was named after Ex-Governor Hunt, of Colorado, one of the earliest promoters of the road.

In rolling along up the valley we have passed the "Old Mother Coberly Ranche," on the opposite side of the valley. A short distance further, the site of an old saw-mill appears, and a little further, near this station the old "Block House," built in June, 1874, for protection against the Indians. At that time about 560 people lived near by, engaged in lumbering and freighting.

Ivan Cracken, the first country residence of the writer, in 1860, is situated due east from this station, four miles distant, at the head of Cherry Creek Canyon. This domicile was constructed at the time "the rocks were rent," and it is thought there has been little change in the premises during the last 1800 years.

From our last station the country has been very bluff; on the left covered with some pine and scrub oak trees. Eight miles further brings us to

LARKSPUR—but we will not see the "lark" or the "spur," unless the latter is a "cowboy," and the "cattle on a thousand hills," are larks; but one thing is certain, when the cattle get on a *lark* it requires a great deal of spur to overtake them.

We are now opposite Irving Valley,