

train enters the ravine, where the bluffs assume more formidable features; in fact, the ravine becomes a gorge, the rugged spurs shooting out as though they would reach the opposite wall, and bar out farther progress. The first one of these spurs does indeed bar our way, or did until a tunnel was completed. Before this tunnel was finished, the company laid the road around the point of the spur on a temporary track. Emerging from the tunnel, the train rushes down the gorge, the wall now rising close, abrupt and high, on either hand, and 17 8-10 miles from St. Mary's we arrive at and pass

Wolcot's—an unimportant station. Down, down we go—the rough spurs point out from either wall of the canyon, an indenture in one bank marking a projection on the other. While looking on this scene, one cannot help fancying that one time this chasm was not; that some fearful convulsion of nature rent the mighty rocks in twain, leaving these ragged walls and fetid pools to attest the fact. Suddenly we whirl out of the mouth of this chasm—out on the level lands of the North Platte River—cross a substantial wooden bridge, and stop at

Fort Fred. Steele—5 8-10 miles west of Wolcot's; elevation, 6,840 feet.

This fort was established June 30th, 1868, by four companies of the 30th Infantry, under command of Brevet Col. R. I. Dodge, Major 30th Infantry. When the posts in the Powder River country were abandoned, the great bulk of the military stores were hauled to this place and stored for future use.

About two miles west of Fort Steele formerly stood

BENTON CITY—now entirely abandoned. The road was completed to this point the last of July, 1868. At that time a large amount of freight for Montana, Idaho, Utah, and the western country was re-shipped in wagons at this point, and during August and September the place presented a lively aspect, which continued until the road was finished to Bryan, the first of October. Benton at that time was composed of canvas tents; about 3,000 people of all kinds made the population; a harder set it would be impossible to find—roughs, thieves, petty gamblers (the same thing), fast women, and the usual accompaniments of the railroad towns, flourished here in profusion. There were high old times in Benton then, but as the road

stretched away to the westward, the people "packed up their tents and stole noiselessly away," leaving only a few old chimneys and post-holes to mark the spot of the once flourishing town. Whiskey was the principal drink of the citizens, it being the most convenient, as all the water used had to be hauled from the Platte River, two miles distant, at an expense of one dollar per barrel, or ten cents per bucket-full.

At Benton, the bluffs which mark the entrance to the canyon of the Platte near Fort Steele, are plainly visible and will continue in sight until we near Rawlins. They are of gray sandstone, worn, marked by the waters or by the elements, far up their perpendicular sides. They are on the opposite side of the river, the banks on the west side being comparatively low.

At this point the river makes a bend, and for several miles we seem to be running down the river, parallel with it, though really drawing away from the stream.

To the south is a long, high ridge of grey granite, called the "Hog Back." It is about four miles away from the road, and runs parallel with it for about 15 miles, terminating in the highlands of Rawlins Springs. It is very narrow at the base, not exceeding half-a-mile in width, yet it rises from 1,000 to 3,000 feet high. The ridge is so sharp that cattle cannot be driven across it, and in many places it is all but impracticable for a man to attempt to walk along its summit. Where this ridge reaches the river bank, about two and a half miles above the bridge, the walls are perpendicular and very high, from 1,000 to 1,500 feet. A corresponding bluff on the opposite side shows that the river has cut a channel through this ridge, which at one time barred the progress of the waters.

On the south side of the ridge is a very pretty little valley, through which flows a small creek into the Platte. It furnishes fine grazing, and is in marked contrast to the surrounding country.

Many years ago this green and peaceful looking vale was the scene of a fearful battle between the Sioux and their inveterate enemies, the Utes. The Sioux were encamped in the valley, and were surprised by the Utes, who stole on them in the grey light of the morning, and attacked them furiously. Though taken by surprise, the Sioux fought bravely, but were surrounded and overpowered. When trying to escape, they essayed to cross the "Hog Back," but every one who raised his head above