

WESTWARD HO!

Go by Rail Over the Santa Fe Trail.

MILDRED MILLER.

It is often remarked that everybody is traveled nowadays, that everybody has gone from the "turbulent waters of the Atlantic to the shores of the placid Pacific, and from the banks of the icy lakes to the tropical lands around the Gulf," and that many have crossed the pond and journeyed even through the Orient. Notwithstanding these facts the Defender has many readers who for divers reasons do not get very far from the comforts of their own firesides (ahem, radiators), and these dear home friends are ones who are cordially invited to enjoy this little Western tour with us. Leaving Chicago over the Santa Fe for the far West there is nothing especially interesting to note. Kansas City is the first large city. Its importance as a manufacturing, railway and live stock center is too well known to occupy our time here. The famous Santa Fe trail began at what is now Kansas City, followed the Kaw River to Lawrence, then over the mountains through Raton Pass. The Indians made a military escort essential for travelers and wagon trains that went to the Southwest about thirty years ago.

The alfalfa fields are especially attractive to one going through Kansas for the first time, but the Eastern traveler is anxious to reach the junction of the great plains and the foothills of the Rockies. The atmospheric conditions being favorable Pike's Peak was seen clearly with the naked eye, although a hundred miles distant.

Gradually we approached the first important range—the Raton Mountains—at whose base is situated the city of Trinidad. Here a delightful meal was taken in the Hotel Cardenas, a new structure built of brick and stone in the old mission style. The Cardenas was named for a Spanish captain who traveled through the Southwest with Coronado in 1540.

Leaving Trinidad with two powerful mountain engines we start up Raton Pass, a remarkably steep grade. Trinidad can be readily called to mind because it is there you see first the adobe houses and Mexican settlements. We stood on the rear and gazed with delight upon the series of mountain views as the road wound its way up the mountain in sharp curves. In some places the mountains were covered with pines or shaded with aspen; others were covered with stones and then there were huge bare cliffs. The trail through the Raton Pass is especially interesting at this point, for before the time of railroads every caravan, overland stage, emigrant, soldier cavalcade bound to the Southwest passed what is now a dilapidated old house, once a toll house, near the summit of this pass. After a last view of the beautiful Spanish Peaks we pass a post with Colorado on one side and New Mexico on the other, and then plunge into a tunnel of dense darkness that is almost 8,000 feet above the level of the sea.

(To be continued.)