

A JOURNEY TO THE DEVIL'S TOWER IN WYOMING.

(ARTISTS' ADVENTURES.)

WITH PICTURES BY THE AUTHOR.

WE were on our way to the Yellowstone and the Tetons, by way of Gillette and the Big Horn Mountains, intending to enter the park by the East Fork of the Yellowstone. Our party consisted of Jackson, the photographer, of Denver; young Millet, his assistant; and myself. We were to meet our outfit at Sheridan. Our plan also included a trip to the Devil's Tower on the Belle Fourche River. Moorcroft was the nearest point to the tower on the railroad; but as no outfit for the trip was to be had there, we were compelled to go to Gillette, twenty-eight miles farther, a declining town of the character usually found at the end of a railroad section during construction. The night before our departure we engaged a light wagon and team, and were assured that we could make the journey in a day, spend one day at the tower, and return the next. We were told that we should find ranches along the way, where we could either stop at night or get what was needful. We carried nothing but Jackson's photographic apparatus, my sketching-outfit, and our blankets. Our inquiries as to the distance of the tower were variously answered by estimates of sixty, sixty-five, and seventy-five miles.

After twenty miles of travel we noticed that our team seemed to have a tired air and a startling indifference to the whip, and that our plans had been too hastily made. However, we were too far on the road to turn back; even had we done so, there was no other team to be had in Gillette, so we pushed on. A map is a sorry guide to follow in a country devoted to cattle-raising, where roads branch out everywhere and seem to end nowhere. Our way, however, was supposed to be clear to Ranch 101, said to be twenty-eight miles distant from Gillette, and there we would refresh ourselves and feed the horses. All Gillette had said we could not miss our way.

About noon "101," as we supposed, came in sight; but we forded the Belle Fourche only to find what we supposed to be "101" deserted. This rather dampened our ardor: no deserted place had been spoken of by our Gillette guides. At some distance off we saw a herder lying in the shade of a tree, and we asked him about "101." He said it was a little farther on over the hill. The hill proved to be really

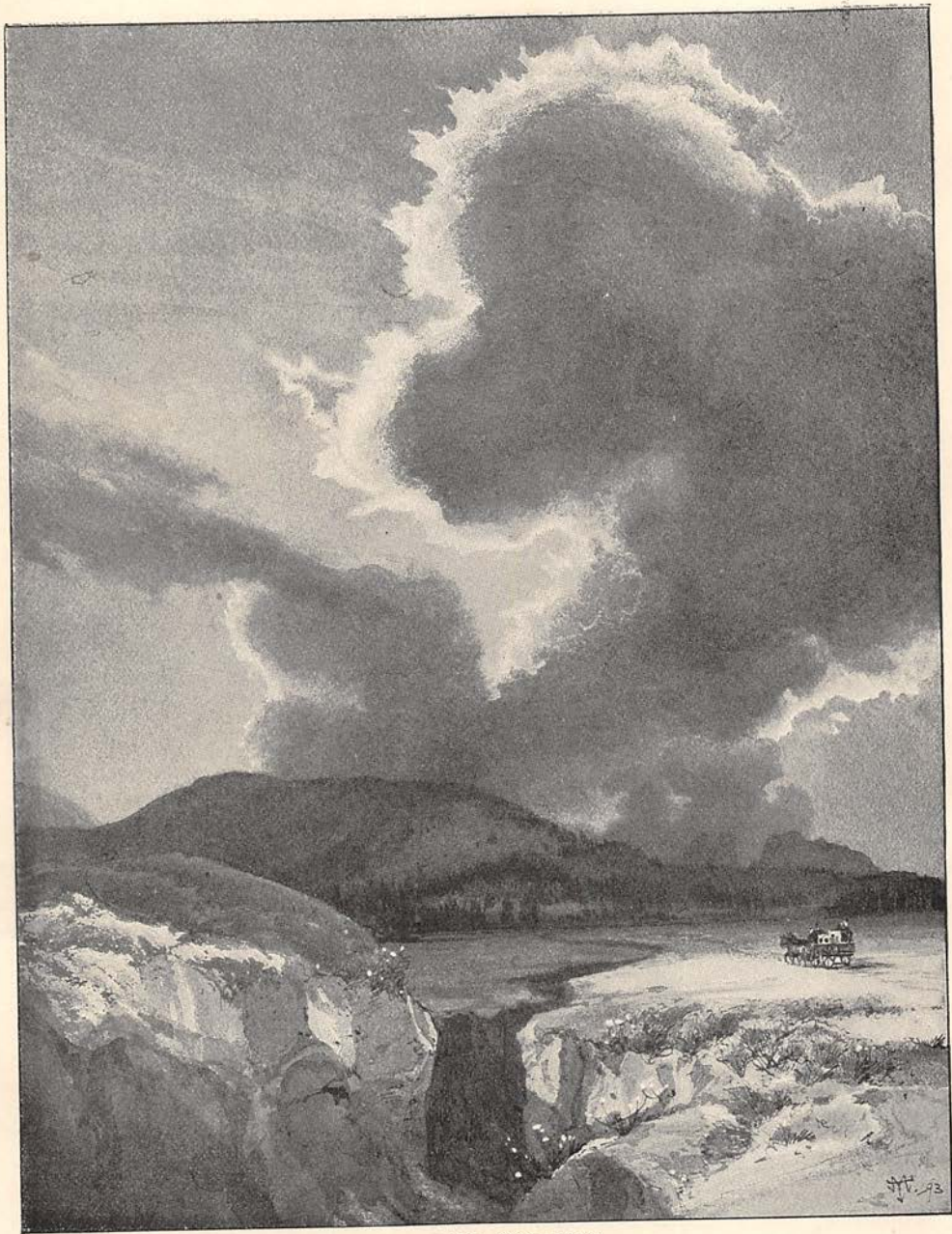
about 1000 feet up. We mounted it with joy, only to find another equally high beyond it, and another and two others beyond these. It was hot, and we had had nothing to eat since five in the morning, and were feeling in need of a little rest.

From the top of our last hill we could see the Belle Fourche winding away for miles in its fringe of cottonwoods before it entered its cañon, cut in a sandstone ridge heavily timbered. Far beyond rose the Black Hills of Dakota; and away to the southeast lay the great "Inyan Kara" (mountain within a mountain). It was a magnificent panorama. Beneath us lay Ranch 101, about a mile away, embowered in a lovely grove of cottonwood trees, with an air of comfort about it that reminded me of a well-kept and prosperous farmers' house in the East.

It was now two o'clock in the afternoon, and instead of twenty-eight miles to "101," we had come about thirty-five. However, we had made about half our journey, and if we pushed on hard we could reach some ranch on the Belle Fourche near the tower before night came on. Going down to "101," we found a neatly painted frame dwelling-house surrounded by log houses for the various needs of the ranch. All ranches in this region are known by their cattle-brand—as the Currycomb, the Crown, the Anchor, etc.; and "101" was the brand of this one. It was a corporation ranch with a superintendent.

Finding the superintendent in, we inquired if we could get something for ourselves and horses. We stated that we were strangers to the country, on our way to the tower, and that we needed some directions. His reply was rather chilling. He said that he did not keep a road-house, and he had no horse-feed; but he kindly informed us that there was plenty of grass outside. He did not offer to give us any directions. As we left the house, we were followed out by one of the young men, who seemed to feel that our reception had been uncivil. He asked us where we were going, and although unable to direct us himself, he said we could get directions from the man at the next ranch across the Belle Fourche, at the same time pointing out about where it lay.

After crossing the stream, we had no difficulty in finding the log house, where we were



THE GATHERING STORM-CLOUD.

greeted by a young woman. The front room was very poorly furnished even for that part of the country; and on our requesting information as to our route, she said she did not know, but would ask the man of the house. He did not come out of the back room, but we could hear them talking there. When she returned she said we were to follow the wire fence through the swamp until we came to the road about a mile away, and keep right on past the old der-

rick until we reached the second creek, where we would see the road that led down to the Belle Fourche; she could not say how far it was to the tower.

When we reached the road we found it excellent, passing over gently sloping hills, with occasional *arroyos*. Descending into a broad valley, we passed the derrick, which was situated on the edge of a small stream, and we also passed many ranch houses, all of logs, but



THE HAIL-STORM.

in every instance deserted. These were the ranches where we had calculated to refresh ourselves and our horses! They were plentiful enough to have given the name of Cabin Creek (the creek we were to follow down to the Belle Fourche) to the stream that in the wet season flowed through the valley.

The woman had said nothing of diverging roads, and we now became uncertain which we ought to take of the many that branched off from the one on which we were traveling. She had said we were to cross the divide and go down to Cabin Creek, where the road would be clear down the creek to the Belle Fourche. We saw a divide some miles away, at the head of the valley; but the other roads that led from ours also crossed divides. We concluded to take the one at the head of the valley, because that seemed most traveled and trended in the direction of the tower. When we reached the top, we could look far down into the valley below us to a fringe of cottonwoods that indicated the windings of a running stream. This must be Cabin Creek. We started down the slope with rising spirits, believing that there must be a ranch there; and we tried to put some of our own buoyancy into the tired animals, but in vain. When about half-way down we caught a glimpse of the tower through a rift in the mountains about twenty-five miles away, rising pale and immense against a clear sky. Presently we noticed a dark mass of cumulus clouds rising in the west, which increased so rapidly in size and blackness that the sun was soon obscured. When the sun had disappeared behind the great cloud, its edges were fringed with a sharply defined band of light, of a most extraordinary and dazzling brightness that I can compare only to a fringe of stationary lightning. Higher and higher it rose and spread until it covered the sky. Ominous shafts of lightning began to shoot from it, and the distant mutterings of thunder indicated that a storm was at hand. We were about to stop

and arrange our affairs with that in view, when the cattle that had been grazing on the hill-sides came tearing into the valley in a perfect stampede, making for the shelter of the pine-groves on the other side of a deep *arroyo* that separated us from the woods.

The wind had now risen to a gale, when we noticed a few small white objects driven along toward us, and bounding as they came. A ghostly grayness began to obscure the previously dark-plum-purple-colored hills to the west. The sun must have gone below the horizon, for a sudden darkness came on. Our horses refused to move a step. We were entirely unprepared for the suddenness and severity with which there broke upon us a storm of hail. The hills disappeared entirely, and we could see only a few feet from us. Everything that might have served as a protection for us had been securely packed and strapped before starting; and with this fierce storm raging it was impossible to do anything for our defense. Light summer clothing and thin felt hats were our only protection against this awful fusillade of ice-balls that struck us with a force as if coming from a sling.

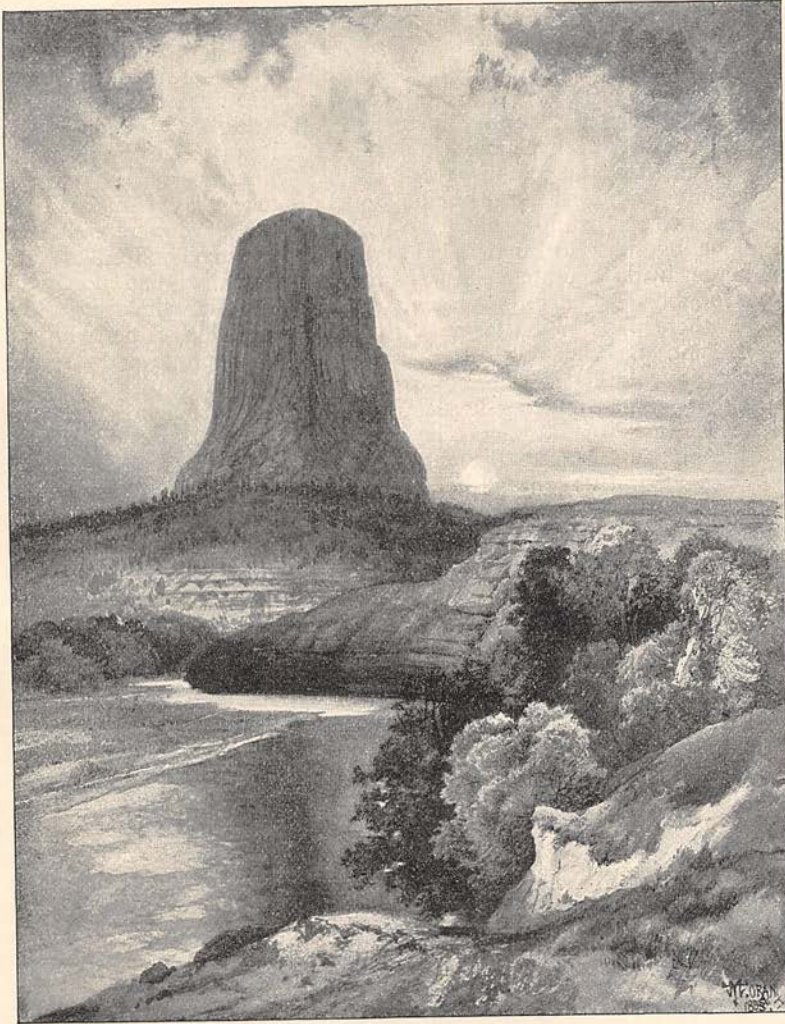
The horses, smarting under the blows, suddenly made an attempt to turn about so as not to face the storm, and in doing so they nearly overturned the outfit. We feared they might stampede; but, fortunately for us, they were too used up to do so, and simply winced under the blows, as we did ourselves. How long would it last? How long could we stand it? Our hands were beginning to show purple lumps where they had been struck, and our heads were aching, and sore, and lumpy, from the pelting ice-balls. Night was coming on. Our wagon was loaded with ice-balls, which were rather flat in form and from two to three inches in diameter, and the landscape was covered with them to the depth of four inches.

Soon after the hail began to fall, the wind became a cold, chilling blast that greatly in-

creased our discomfort. We shivered and shook as though seized with an ague. Now rain intermingled with the hail, and soon it was a drenching downpour of water; but it was comforting to know that the storm of ice was over. Then the hills began to reappear, and the glow through the rain indicated that the storm had about spent its force, and that clear skies lay beyond.

weather had been fine and dry for weeks, and gumbo roads are good when dry. It is of such fine texture that it will receive an impression as clean as wax. During this short storm the gumbo had softened to the depth of an inch or two, and our trials with it were about to begin.

The sky was perfectly clear again. The sun had been down about half an hour, and the



THE DEVIL'S TOWER ON THE BELLE FOURCHE IN NORTHERN WYOMING.

Do you know what gumbo is? Well, it is the clay of northern Wyoming. When wet it is the blackest, stickiest, most India-rubber-like mud that exists on earth. Like the gathering snowball, it accumulates on whatever comes in contact with it, and is so adhesive that it never falls away of its own weight, as any well-regulated mud will do, but must be laboriously removed when you or your wagon-wheels become clogged with it. Up to the breaking of the storm, gumbo had not troubled us, for the

darkness of night was beginning to settle about us in the valley, while the twilight glow still illuminated the higher mountain-tops, as we made a start to reach the creek. The horses really seemed to have had some new life infused into them by the storm, for they started off cheerfully; but the terrible gumbo soon began to discourage them. We tried walking to relieve them of our weight, but soon found that the friendly gumbo had us in its embrace, making our feet like lead. After repeated stoppages to clear the

wheels, we at last reached the creek. Searching for the road was out of the question. It was dark now, with several inches of hail covering the ground, and completely hiding all traces of a road, if there were any. We could not make camp where we were, in water and soft gumbo.

About two miles farther, across the creek, was a great clump of pines on the top of a gently sloping hill; and it seemed that if we could reach that we would be all right for the night, as it would be drier, and we could have a fire, if our matches had not been spoiled by the rain. But to cross the creek was a serious matter. The bank upon which we were was about fifteen feet high; the road made a very precipitous descent to the water, but was easy on the other side. The gumbo had been softened to the depth of about an inch on the slope, but was hard underneath. A dangerous matter by daylight, to make such a descent was doubly so under the present conditions. Yet there was nothing for it but to make the attempt. Jackson took the reins, while we remained on the bank. The horses shied at first, the darkness making it seem deeper and steeper than it really was. They finally made the plunge, but instantly found they had no foothold, and wagon and horses simply slid down into the creek — without accident. We followed them, and, getting into the wagon, reached the other bank without further trouble.

Slowly, wearily, we made our way to the pine clump on the hillside, but it took us two hours to cover those two miles. It was ten o'clock when we reached the pines, wet, hungry, and worn out. We found it had been the camping-place of herders, whose pine-bough beds were there, dry underneath, and ready to be used for lighting our fire. The used-up horses were turned loose to find food for themselves, as we knew they were too tired to wander far away, and grass was plentiful. Our matches proved to be in good condition, and we soon had a fire fit to roast an ox. Our wet blankets were brought out and dried, and we turned our steaming selves before the fire until we were dry enough to take to our blankets. Our pine-bough beds were as welcome as the softest down.

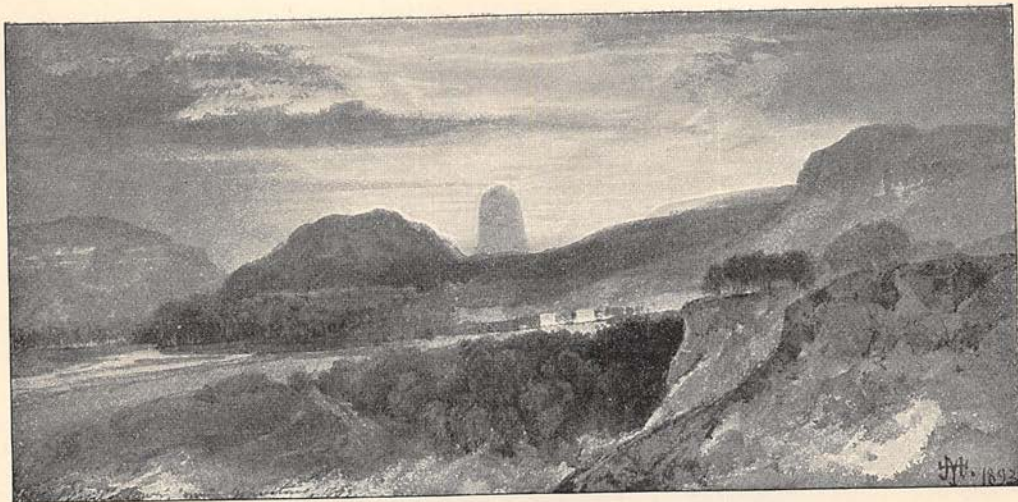
Early next morning we retraced our way to the creek to find the road that was to lead us down to the Belle Fourche. Arriving at the gumbo slide of the previous night, we emptied the wagon of everything to make it as light as possible. Jackson undertook to get it up the slide, and was successful. The great camera, the boxes of plates, and the bedding we managed to get over on a bridge made of the legs of the camera. Having safely reached the other side, we wandered in all directions

to find the road, but no trace of a road leading down the creek could be found. After an hour's fruitless search we gave it up. Were we on Cabin Creek, or had we passed it at the derrick? We concluded to retrace our way to the derrick, and to follow the road down to the cañon. This meant twenty or twenty-five miles to reach the river; but we knew there were ranches and farms on the Belle Fourche, and that we could reach the tower by that way.

We reached the cañon early in the afternoon, but did not know which side of the river to take, as there was a road on both sides. We chose the side we were on, but soon found that it led away from the river and up a side ravine. There we saw smoke rising in the air some distance ahead of us, and soon reached a house, where we were well received. We were very grateful indeed to get something to eat, as we had had no food for thirty-eight hours. The ranchman told us we were on the wrong side of the river, but by going over the hill opposite and descending to the river, we could cross it just above where we descended. And such a descent as we made! A narrow trail over a series of sandstone terraces so steep and rocky that I never expected to see our wagon whole at the bottom! But by great care and good luck we managed to get to the river all right. Knowing that we were at last on the right road for the Devil's Tower, and within reach of habitations, we almost forgot the sufferings of the previous day.

The scenery along the river to the tower was fine: a very wide cañon in sandstone worn into castellated forms, inclosing a fertile valley studded with the houses and fields of prosperous farmers and ranchers. It was evident that we could not reach the tower that day; and when we inquired in regard to accommodation for the night, everybody told us to go to Johnson's. We concluded that Johnson's was a place of entertainment for travelers. When we arrived there, early in the evening, we found that it was the home of an English gentleman who was given to horse-raising. He and his wife welcomed us heartily, and did everything to make our sojourn pleasant. His house was a neatly built frame, and luxuriously furnished, even to a grand piano. From there the great tower loomed up grandly some twelve miles away. In the morning our host had the herder bring in about a hundred of his horses to show us, after which we regretfully left his hospitable home and made our way on to the tower, which we reached about noon.

This wonderful mass of columnar basalt rises about 2000 feet above the Belle Fourche. It is somewhat of a geological puzzle, standing alone as it does, and rising directly out of a country entirely made up of sedimentary rock.



THE DEVIL'S TOWER, FROM JOHNSON'S.

One theory is that it is the core of a great volcano, crystallized into its present form, and that the mountain of which it was the core has been carried off by erosion. Be that as it may, it is a grand and imposing sight, and one of the remarkable physical features of this country. We sketched and photographed it during the remainder of the day. In the evening we were hospitably received at the ranch of Burke and

Mackenzie, two Englishmen also engaged in horse-raising; and the next morning, under their direction, we started on our return to Gillette by way of Cabin Creek. On the way we passed over the old camping-ground and the scene of the hail-storm, to find that we had been on the right road after all, and that our camp that night had been only twenty miles from the Devil's Tower!

Thomas Moran.



IMOGEN.

LEONATUS POSTHUMUS *speaks* :

SORROW, make a verse for me
 That shall breathe all human grieving;
 Let it be love's exequy,
 And the knell of all believing!
 Let it such sweet pathos have
 As a violet on a grave,
 Or a dove's moan when his mate
 Leaves the new nest desolate.
 Sorrow, Sorrow, by this token,
 Braid a wreath for Beauty's head;
 Valley-lilies, one or two,
 Should be woven with the rue.
 Sorrow, Sorrow, all is spoken—
 She is dead!

Thomas Bailey Aldrich.