THE SANTA FÉ TRADE: ITS ROUTE AND CHARACTER.

BY J. EVARTS GREENE.

LESS than twenty years ago, a traffic, which had been carried on for half a century under conditions unique in North America, came to an end, or, to speak more strictly, though the traffic continued, its conditions, which had been mediæval, oriental and, for this century and continent, singular, became modern, American and commonplace.

The Santa Fé trade resembled that of the caravans of Africa and Western Asia in that it traversed a desert, or what was then so-called — the Great American Desert; it was also attended with dangers from the attacks of wild, marauding tribes. It differed from that, however, in the fact that there were no oases or inhabited stations on the long route, and in the contrast in the peoples and the conditions of life of the communities between which this traffic was conducted. At the eastern terminus was the rude, busy, enterprising, essentially modern and progressive life of our Western border, distinctively American, using that word, as we must so often, in default of an adjective denoting that which pertains to the United States. At the other end of the route, the social, industrial and political condition of the people was substantially unchanged since Spanish rule was established in Mexico by Cortes and his companions early in the sixteenth century, and with no prospect of a change for centuries to come. This remark applies, of course, to the conditions prevailing when the trade was begun and for many years afterward, but not so strictly to the last twenty-five years of its existence.

To one, familiar only with the life of the Eastern States, who thirty-five or forty years ago visited Kansas City,

which had then scarcely ceased to be known as Westport Landing, the sight of the huge wagons crowding the levee in early summer, with their drivers, short in stature, slouching in gait, dressed with a peculiar shabby finery and with swarthy, stolid, sinister faces, was extremely fascinating, and suggested thoughts of romantic and mysterious adventure. That sight has not been seen for nearly twenty years. The railroad, while vastly increasing the trade, has transformed it into a prosaic, ordinary traffic. The Great American Desert has vanished. The empty waste is sprinkled with cities, villages and farms. The buffalo is nearly extinct, the Indian is no longer nomadic or predatory, and Santa Fé is, from the business point of view, simply a station, more or less like other stations, on a branch of the great transcontinental railway.

The old Santa Fé trade has only an historical interest now, and in that sense it is, I trust, a proper subject for the attention of this Society.

The first Europeans to penetrate to the region traversed by the caravans of the Santa Fé trade were Cabeza de Vaca and his three companions, survivors of the company of Pamphilo Narvaez. After nine years of wandering from the shores of Florida, they arrived in 1536 at Culiacan, near the Pacific coast in Mexico. It does not appear that their devious route crossed the line of the Santa Fé trail. It was probably altogether south of the latter. But the story which they told of rich and populous cities in the region north of Mexico prompted the famous expedition of Coronado, who, setting out from Culiacan with a large force of Spaniards and Indians in 1540, wandered in New Mexico, wintered there, apparently not very far from Santa Fé, and in the spring set forth again towards the northeast in search of the city of Quivira, of whose greatness and riches he had heard surprising fictions.

I will not discuss the disputed questions concerning the identity of the places mentioned by Coronado in his narra-

tive of the earlier part of his journey. But I venture to offer a few suggestions in support of the opinion that its northeastern terminus was near that of what has been known in our time as the Santa Fé trail. Combining the account of Coronado in his third letter to the Emperor Charles V. with that of Captain Juan Jaramillo, one of his companions, whose itinerary is fairly definite, it appears that after travelling for many days across great plains, where they encountered marvellously vast herds of buffalo, and suffered much from thirst, they came, on the day of Saints Peter and Paul, to a river to which they gave the names of those Saints. Coronado briefly but graphically describes the prairie, which seems to have impressed him with awe and almost with dismay. "There is neither rock nor hill," he says, "nor tree nor shrub; nothing to arrest the eye, which seeks in vain for a limit to those endless plains as if gazing at the open sea."

They crossed the river, says Jaramillo, and advanced along its northern bank in a northeasterly direction for three days, when they came to an Indian village on a considerable affluent of this stream. The Indians resembled those they had before met on the plains, but were hostile to the latter. They ate buffalo's flesh raw, and their dwellings and clothing were made of buffalo skins, but they also cultivated maize. Travelling four or five days farther, they found successively, six or seven other Indian villages on other affluents of the river, and at last came to a village whose name, they were told, was Quivira. It was not a rich and populous city, but a miserable group of skin huts, like the others. Here Coronado remained twenty-five days, sending out parties which explored the neighboring country to some extent. He was told of other villages farther on, on the bank of a still larger river. He says the latitude of this place was forty degrees; that the country was well-watered by rivers, brooks and springs; that the soil was rich, deep and black; that the pasturage was

excellent; that the Indians cultivated maize; that there were plums in abundance like those of Spain, and excellent grapes. Jaramillo adds to these fruits, nuts and mulberries. Coronado pursued his quest no further, but returned, retracing for some distance the route by which he came, and arrived at Cicuye, whose site is supposed to have been some sixty or seventy miles to the eastward of Santa Fé, in forty days.

When I read the account of Coronado's expedition in the chapter on Early Explorations of New Mexico, contributed by our asssociate, Mr. Henry W. Haynes, to the "Narrative and Critical History of America," it seemed to me that there could be little doubt as to the northeastern limit of Coronado's explorations. Coronado's and Jaramillo's descriptions of the country traversed after they arrived at the river named by them for Saints Peter and Paul, precisely fit the valley of the Kansas or Kaw River, with which I was once very familiar, having made the land-office surveys of a part of it.

I infer that the Smoky Hill or main fork of the Kaw River was the river Saints Peter and Paul, because, besides other reasons, it is the only considerable stream flowing northeastward within reasonable distance of the place where Coronado, according to his previous and subsequent narrative, must have been. He came to the river, apparently, not far from the mouth of the Saline Fork, or Grand Saline, about sixty miles from the present site of Fort Riley. Following the course of the river on its north bank, he came, after three days or more, to an Indian village on a tributary of the river. Three days' journey over a level route would bring him to the confluence of the Republican Fork, where there would certainly be an Indian village, if anywhere. For there the bluff is high and steep on the north, sheltering the place below from the fierce and bitter winter winds. Wood is abundant; it is almost the first considerable growth of timber, except cottonwood and elm,

encountered by the traveller from the westward, and the bottom lands, broad and rich, required little labor to convert them into corn-fields. Continuing his journey for four or five days, he passed other villages in like situations, that is to say, on other branches of the river Saints Peter and Paul, and came at length to Quivira, not far, as I suppose, from the present site of Lawrence, and he was told of other villages beyond this on a larger river, which, if my theory is sound, must have been the Missouri.

The latitude of Lawrence is about thirty-nine and one-half degrees. Coronado says his limit was forty. Greater precision could scarcely have been expected. He says the country was well watered with rivers, brooks and springs. Anyone who had occasion to travel with wagons along the valley of the Kaw River before the era of bridges was painfully reminded of the fact that the streams are numerous, and, what is unusual in a region so level, springs are many and copious. I well remember two, which, if Coronado took the route which according to my interpretation of his narrative he says he did, he must have discovered and drunk from. One is a circular basin, ten feet or more in diameter and four or five deep, from which a stream, two or three feet wide, of clear, cold water flows to the river. Another, some twelve miles distant, we called the Seven Springs. For some distance along the foot of the bluff, streams of bright, cool water broke through the gravelly soil, and these uniting formed a delightful brook, which wandered through the wide bottom lands, a mile and a half, to the river, near where the town of Abilene now is. Both these springs are in the open prairie, unconcealed by tree or shrub, and no traveller through that valley could have missed them or resisted the temptation to drink of their waters; for the river is somewhat turbid, and its water, though wholesome enough, I believe, is not very palatable, having a slightly alkaline taste. The plums and grapes, mulberries and nuts are there. The quality of the plums varies much; those

from some trees are large, handsome and not ill-flavored. The grapes are abundant enough, but Coronado would not have written so confidently of their excellence if he had waited until they were ripe. The mulberries, ripening in June, were gone before his arrival, but Jaramillo probably recognized the trees. The nuts most abundant there are black-walnuts and pecans.

Coronado came to this river on the days of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, June 29th and 30th, according to the calendar of his Church. His journey of eight days or more down the river and his stay of twenty-five days at Quivira occupied him until the second day of August or later, so that Castañeda, who says that they arrived at Cicuye in August, after a return journey of forty days, must be in error, and Jaramillo, who fixes the time of their leaving Quivira at about the middle of August, is apparently correct.

The description of the province of Quivira fits the Kaw River country exactly. It will not fit any other nearly so well. Some portions of the Arkansas valley agree fairly well with the description, but the latitude is hopelessly wrong. The Platte River is more than a degree farther north; not so far that it need be ruled out on that score merely, but otherwise it is unlike Coronado's river of Saints Peter and Paul. It seems highly probable, therefore, that Coronado, though his route was not that of the Santa Fé trail centuries later, was the first white man who passed from one to the other of its terminal points.

From Francisco Vasquez de Coronado to Zebulon M. Pike is a long step, not only in time, almost three hundred years, but in the contrast between the sonority of the name of the Spanish knightly adventurer and the homely quaintness of that of the American soldier. But Lieutenant, afterward General, Pike was as adventurous, as intrepid, and as skilful a leader of men as the first explorer of New Mexico, and more honorable, just and humane. He was

the next person of whom we have certain knowledge, who passed from the Mississippi Valley across the desert plains to Santa Fé. A vague tradition asserts that, in the eighteenth century, trade was carried on to some extent between the French settlements on the Illinois River and New Mexico, and proof of it has been said to exist in the archives of the Spanish government of the province. It is said also, that in 1804 one Morrison of Kaskaskia sent a Frenchman named Lalande with goods for trade in Santa Fé, and that the faithless agent, having sold the goods profitably, neglected to account with his principal, lived prosperously in New Mexico and died there a rich man. These may be facts or fictions, but Zebulon Pike and his expedition pertain to the history of the Santa Fé trade, though he was a soldier and not a trader.

Having the year before conducted a successful expedition to explore the upper waters of the Mississippi, Lieutenant Pike was in 1806 directed by General Wilkinson to explore the country to the westward so far as the headwaters of the Arkansas and Red Rivers. Setting out from St. Louis, he went across the country to the Arkansas, and ascended that river to its headwaters, thence passed to the Rio Grande, some distance above Santa Fé. He built a small fort there, seeming to have believed that the stream was the Red River or one of its tributaries, and that he was within the territory of the United States. He was treacherously enticed from his little fortress by the Spaniards, made prisoner and sent back by way of Mexico to the United States. There was an appearance of mystery in some parts of his conduct on this expedition, and by some persons it was supposed to have a connection with the schemes of Aaron Burr, but Pike indignantly repelled this suspicion. He gave an interesting account of his expedition in his official report, in which, among other notable things, he writes of passing through vast herds of buffalo, elk and "cabri," and says he prevented the wanton

slaughter of these animals by his men, "not merely because of the scarcity of ammunition, but as I considered the law of humanity also forbade it." He would deserve to be honorably remembered for this, if for nothing else. Few of his fellow-countrymen in later years and in like circumstances have been so merciful. Zebulon Pike, then a brigadier-general, was killed in the battle near York, Upper Canada, April 25, 1813, just eighty years ago yesterday.

We come now to the actual beginning of the Santa Fé trade; but before treating of its history and its character let me give a brief description of its route. Its real eastern terminus was St. Louis, where the goods were purchased and the accounts adjusted. But the starting-point of the caravans was at first Franklin, a town about one hundred and fifty miles from St. Louis, on the Missouri River, afterward Independence, one hundred miles farther up the river, and finally Kansas City, known for some years as Westport Landing, Westport being a village five or six miles south of Kansas City on the State line, where for a time the forwarding-houses were established and the caravans made up for their journey of eight hundred miles. The route then was by steamboat from St. Louis to Kansas City, and by wagon from that place to Santa Fé. I may add that for a short time during the war of the rebellion, the starting-point of the caravans was changed to Leavenworth, Kansas.

Except for its lack of mountain and sea, a more beautiful and attractive landscape can scarcely be found anywhere, than that near the confluence of the Missouri and Kaw Rivers. In the late spring or early summer, it is especially charming, when the grass on the prairie is fresh and sprinkled profusely with flowers of many hues; when crab-apple thickets, many acres in extent, are covered with pink blossoms, surpassing in depth of color and delicacy of fragrance the bloom of our orchards; when the mignonette-like perfume of the wild grape and the subtile sweetness of the sensitive brier, a species of mimosa, with its flowers

like purple globes, sprinkled with gold-dust, entrance the senses like—

> Sabean odors from the spicy shore
> Of Araby the blest.

The oppressive monotony of the wide prairie is broken by gentle slopes and deep ravines, well wooded with groves of stately oaks and walnuts, which form promontories of woodland, jutting out into the open-prairie sea; and graceful elms, tall cottonwoods and stately sycamores adorn the margins of the streams. Pleasant brooks wander through the valleys, and plenteous springs entice the wayfarer by the sparkle and murmur of their cool, sweet waters. The Mormons, who occupied for a time about 1833, a district of like character in the adjacent counties of Missouri, styled it the Land of Promise—the Garden of the Lord—and well they might.

Not much of the route, however, was of this character. Leaving the Missouri at Kansas City, it followed in general the high prairie divide between the valleys of the Kaw and the Arkansas Rivers. If ease of travel were the only consideration, the summit of the dividing ridge or plateau would be the best route, affording a direct, almost level road, absolutely without obstructions, for more than a third of the whole distance. But in order to have daily supplies of water, it was necessary to follow along the southern slope of the divide, far enough below the summit line to intercept the tributaries of the Arkansas near their sources. These streams, the Marais-de-Cygnes, Neosho, Cottonwood and others, were encountered at suitable distances for camping-places, about twenty miles, more or less, being a day's journey.

Of the three requisites for a camp—water, grass and wood—the second was scarcely ever lacking, and the third was superfluous after entering the buffalo range, its place being taken by "buffalo-chips" or dried dung, which, readily gathered and making a clear, hot fire, met perfectly all the

requirements of a summer-camp fuel. The route presents no difficulties; the early traders had some trouble through losing their way, but after the trail had been established, it was, without the expenditure of any labor in grading or otherwise, a broad, well-worn highway, as distinct and unmistakable as any road in Massachusetts, stretching away for eight hundred miles without being crossed by any other, with no permanent habitation of man near it, and without a hill or ravine so steep or other obstacle so formidable as to make lightening of loads or doubling of teams necessary. Beyond Council Grove, one hundred and forty-five miles from Kansas City, no timber except an occasional cottonwood or elm was seen until within a short distance of Santa Fé. The rivers crossed were the Arkansas, Cimarron, Canadian and Pecos.

Mr. Gregg, whose book entitled "Commerce of the Prairies," is the best authority on the early Santa Fé trade, says that when he made his first journey in 1831, buffaloes were not encountered until he had gone some distance beyond Council Grove. He says, also, that he never saw buffaloes so abundant as some travellers have represented, but only scattered herds, a few scores, hundreds and sometimes thousands, and that ten years later they were "very sensibly and rapidly decreasing." Fifteen years later still, I found the eastern limit of the buffalo range as nearly as possible where Gregg placed it; but, instead of finding them less abundant than some travellers had represented, their numbers seemed so vast that exaggeration would be scarcely possible.

The caravans were sometimes attacked and more often threatened by marauding Indians, but the danger, except of a loss of mules or cattle by stampede, was not great. Gregg writes, about 1842: "In the course of twenty years since the commencement of this trade, I do not believe there has been a dozen deaths upon the Santa Fé

route, even including those who have been killed off by disease, as well as by the Indians."

The first actual trading expedition to Santa Fé from the United States appears to have been that undertaken by Knight, Beard, Chambers and others in 1812. They followed Pike's route up the Arkansas and, meeting with no remarkable adventure, arrived duly, expecting to find the republic proclaimed by Hidalgo in 1810 fully established there. But they found the Spanish royal authority still recognized, were suspected of connivance with the revolutionists and were held as prisoners for nine years, until Iturbide established the republic in 1821 and set them at liberty.

In that year, Bicknell and others left Franklin, Missouri, with a small stock of goods, intending to trade with the Comanche Indians on the upper Arkansas. Having heard of a better market at Santa Fé, they went there, and sold their merchandise at a surprising profit. Until this time, all goods consumed in New Mexico which could not be produced there had been brought from Vera Cruz by pack trains, and the costs and risks of transportation were so enormous that common cottons sold for three dollars a yard and other manufactured goods at correspondingly high prices. When the St. Louis merchants learned that a practicable route gave them access to a market where their only competitors must sell at such rates, they did not long neglect their opportunity.

Captain Bicknell started again the next year with a larger stock, which he sold to advantage, but nearly perished on the route, having lost his way between the Arkansas and Cimarron rivers. This part of the route was most dreaded by the early traders. The distance between the rivers, as the trail was finally established, was about sixty miles. It was the only part of the whole journey in which more than one day's march must be made without water. Mr. Gregg regards Bicknell's expedition as the beginning

of regular traffic on the Santa Fé trail. Two years later, in 1824, wagons were first used in this trade, the previous means of transport having been pack animals. It was found that the natural highway offered no serious difficulties to the wagons, and thereafter they were almost exclusively used. Twenty-five are said to have taken the trail that year, carrying merchandise valued at twenty-five or thirty thousand dollars. The early traders went in small parties, each having a few hundred dollars' worth of goods. The Indians at first were not hostile, and Mr. Gregg says: "It is to be feared that the traders were not always innocent of having instigated the savage hostilities that ensued in after years." Whether he means by this equivocal expression that traders prompted Indian attacks upon their rivals, or, that some of them provoked by their insolent cruelty indiscriminate attacks upon all traders, does not clearly appear. Whatever the cause in this case, the history of our relations with the Indians shows that misconduct on one side or the other, or perhaps on both, will in such circumstances infallibly supply provocation. For several years, the traders suffered considerable losses of merchandise and cattle by Indian attacks. They applied to the government for protection, and in 1829 and 1830 a military escort was furnished. After that year, the traders seem to have adopted the policy of protecting themselves by proceeding in large companies with some organization, which they could the more readily do as the amount of trade rapidly increased. Each company, having, perhaps, forty or fifty wagons and more than one hundred men, chose a captain, who determined the order of march, the times of starting and halting, the place of encampment, and appointed lieutenants and sergeants, who commanded the guards, on which every able-bodied man was assigned to his share of duty. The captain had, also, a somewhat vaguely defined general authority, for which he commanded respect if he was a natural leader of men, and suffered it to

fall into contempt if he had not the gift of inspiring fear and respect. Later, as the trade fell into the hands of men of larger capital, each of whom fitted out a train of thirty wagons or more, the owner or his agent took command, and better organization and sterner discipline were enforced.

The volume of this trade is said to have averaged one hundred thousand dollars annually for the first fifteen years. After that it increased rapidly. Statistics, kindly supplied by my friend Theodore S. Case, of Kansas City, give the information that the first cargo of goods for the Santa Fé trade was landed at Kansas City in 1845, by William Bent and Ceran St. Vrain. In 1850, six hundred wagon loads went from Kansas City. In 1855, the goods shipped were valued at five million dollars. In 1860, the weight of the goods shipped from the same point was 16,439,000 pounds, employing in their transportation 9084 men, 6147 mules, 27,920 oxen and 3033 wagons. The first wagons used were made in Pittsburg. Those used later were built by Murphy of St. Louis, and known as Murphy wagons. They were large and heavy, each carrying a load of six thousand or seven thousand pounds and drawn by six yoke of oxen or ten or twelve mules. The oxen were bred in Missouri, the mules in New Mexico. The drivers of the wagons owned by New Mexican traders were usually Mexican Indians, those of the Missouri traders, or of freighters, who supplied teams and drivers and transported merchandise at the rate of twelve or fifteen cents a pound, were usually "American" in the restricted sense in which that word was used on the frontier, or sometimes Shawnee or Delaware Indians. The most peculiar part of their equipment was the formidable whip, its stock a good-sized, tough ash or pecan sapling nearly ten feet long, with a lash somewhat shorter, but fully two inches in diameter, ending in a buckskin thong. To wield this tremendous implement required all the strength of a man's loins. The driver did not flog his beasts with it, but cracked it with a heavy

flourish and a smart jerk. You would hear a sound like a pistol shot, and see a little mist of hair and blood start where the cruel thong had cut like a bullet.

The usual day's drive was from fifteen to twenty miles. At the appointed stopping-place the wagons were driven up in such order as to form a square enclosed space or corral, an entrance to which could be closed by stretching chains across it. At halting, often early in the afternoon, the cattle were watered and turned out to graze under the charge of herders. At night they were driven into the corral and the entrance was closed. In the early morning for some hours before starting they were turned loose again to graze. The men camped for the night outside the corral, but retreated to it for defence in case of a formidable attack by Indians.

The goods for New Mexico were cotton cloths (bleached and brown), calicoes, rich and showy silk shawls and dress patterns, millinery, *bayeta* (a heavy scarlet woollen fabric used for petticoats by the New Mexican women), sugar, coffee, soap, hardware, and, during the later years of the traffic, bottled beer, canned goods, mining machinery, and innumerable other things. The return cargoes consisted of buffalo robes, beaver and other skins and furs (collected by trappers and Indian traders), wool, gold from the placer mines thirty or forty miles south of Santa Fé, and silver from the mines of Chihuahua and elsewhere. The silver dollars, which formed a part of many return loads, were put up in peculiar quaint packages. The manner of packing them is thus described in a letter from Mr. Elias Brevoort, of Santa Fé, who has kindly supplied me with much information of great use in the preparation of this paper: "Silver dollars were dumped in quantities of about five thousand into or upon a green or fresh beef-hide, and done up by having a rawhide rope interlaced around the edge of the hide and drawn up tightly. Then a fire was built near it so as to shrink the hide solidly to its contents

to prevent friction of the coin." These packages were as hard and their contents as immovable as if the metal had been melted and poured into a mould.

One feature of the traffic, which gave it a speculative character, and perhaps added to its fascination for some of the adventurous traders, was the uncertainty as to the amount of duties which would be exacted by the Mexican officers of customs. The rates fixed by law were well enough known, but the doubt was how much of a rebate the officials would allow, and how much they must be paid for it. A convenient and generally satisfactory arrangement, said to have prevailed for some time, was that the trader should have one-third of the duty, the official one-third, and the government the remainder. Governor Armijo, the last Mexican governor, at one time simplified the customs system by imposing by his own arbitrary authority a tax of five hundred dollars on each wagon-load of goods, in lieu of all other duties. The immediate effect was to make important changes in the character of the goods imported and in the methods of transportation. Instead of wagons carrying from one to two tons each, which had been in use up to that time, much larger wagons, carrying from three to three and a half tons, were used, and coarse and cheap goods were omitted from the loads. The perverse ingenuity of the "Gringos" thus frustrated the purposes of the governor, and he repealed his own tariff; which had been made without authority, and never had legal force. But Mexican officers generally had few scruples as regards usurping legislative authority, and Governor Armijo fewer than most; and the New Mexican public and others having dealings with its government had learned by experience to submit to the ruling powers without raising constitutional questions unless they were prepared for a pronunciamiento. Though Santa Fé was the chief market of this trade and the destination of most of the caravans, some traders took their goods direct to Taos,

Albuquerque, or other New Mexican towns, to Chihuahua, two hundred miles south, or even to Sonora, on the Pacific coast in Old Mexico, thus arriving at Coronado's starting-point.

The men engaged in this traffic were merchants of a peculiar stamp, not unlike the merchants and master-mariners of New England when discoveries were yet to be made by sea, and pirates, or other enemies not much better than pirates, were likely to be encountered. They were shrewd, prompt and daring, knowing their market well, but not averse from occasional rashly speculative ventures. Some of these, of whose mercantile achievements, as well as of their personal prowess and wild adventures, traditions still linger among the survivors of the time when the commerce of the prairie had a character of its own, were of French extraction, notably Felix X. Aubrey and Ceran St. Vrain. The former is remembered chiefly for his famous ride from Santa Fé to Independence, unequalled, I believe, in the annals of horsemanship. He had wagered that he would ride this distance, eight hundred and fifty miles, in six days, and actually performed the feat in five days and sixteen hours, riding his own horse one hundred and fifty miles and trusting to chance for relays for the rest of the journey. This achievement was commemorated by giving his name to a steamboat in the Missouri River trade, which I have often seen, proudly bearing at the head of its flagstaff the gilt figure of a horseman riding at full speed. Other famous rides were those of Mr. Elias Brevoort, an old Santa Fé trader, still living, whom I have before mentioned, who rode from Puerta de Luna to Santa Fé — one hundred and twenty miles — in sixteen hours, and from Doña Aña to Santa Fé — three hundred miles — in three days and three hours, the whole distance on one horse.

No one was better known on the plains from thirty to sixty years ago than Ceran St. Vrain. Traders, trappers, army officers, Indians, all either knew him personally or

by reputation. Shrewd, enterprising, impetuous, choleric and intrepid, he was courteous and charming in manners, and I have been told that in his house at Santa Fé all the conventional observances of polite society were carefully regarded, even to the point of appearing always at dinner in correct evening dress. His life was full of strange incidents and adventures, even beyond that of most prominent men of that region and time. He is said to have been born at Kaskaskia, or perhaps at Cape Girardeau, Missouri. In early life he entered the employment of the American Fur Company of St. Louis. With William Bent he established a trading-post in New Mexico, known as Bent's Fort, and another known as Fort St. Vrain. To these forts, trappers from all the labyrinth of mountains for hundreds of miles around resorted to dispose of their furs and renew their equipment. Kit Carson, James Bridger, Old Bill Williams, Vasquez and many others, the equals of these in their time, though their names are not remembered, were among those who made these forts their rendezvous. About 1845, Ceran St. Vrain removed to Santa Fé, and had great success as a trader.

He was one of those men about whose memory traditions gather, and innumerable anecdotes are told of him. Here is a specimen: As he was playing cards one day with a Spaniard, a dispute arose and the lie was given. They separated with the understanding that when they next met they would fight it out. The meeting took place in the street, which the general public quickly left clear to the combatants. Each drew his pistol, and at the first fire both fell. They lay in the street exchanging shots, each of which inflicted a wound, until their weapons were emptied, when they were helped to their feet, shook hands and were carried off to have their wounds dressed. Both recovered and were friends, bearing no malice. Two knights of Richard-of-the-Lion-Heart's train would have fought out their quarrel with other weapons, but in much the same spirit.

Jean Phillipe Chavez was another well-known trader of the same type, chiefly remembered, however, for his tragic fate while defending his train from the attack of a company of bandits from Missouri, who had organized the raid, knowing that he was bringing from Santa Fé a great quantity of silver. Chavez was killed, and the robbers are said to have carried away treasure to the value of two hundred thousand dollars.

This incident, too, has a mediæval flavor, though it occurred no longer ago than 1850, I believe. Several of the robbers are said to have been captured and hung. This was not the only instance of the kind; indeed, the attacks of robbers were among the recognized perils of the trade. The Jameses, Youngers and Fords, whom that part of Western Missouri has more lately produced, were the legitimate successors of the border banditti of the middle of this century.

It is almost as hard to fix with precision the end as the beginning of the Santa Fé trade in the form which I have tried to describe. The last train left Kansas City about 1866, and in successive years, the eastern starting-point of the caravans moved westward, following the progress of the railway. About fourteen years later, the locomotive thundered into Santa Fé and broke the spell which, for three centuries, had shut from the modern world, the city of the Holy Faith of Saint Francis.

In closing let me express my thanks for valuable aid in gathering materials for this paper, to my friends of many years, Major Hugh G. Brown, U. S. A., and Colonel Theodore S. Case, of Kansas City, both of whom with me saw something of this trade in 1857, and to Mr. Elias Brevoort, of Santa Fé, who, with great kindness, though a stranger, put at my disposal his intimate knowledge of my subject.