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SUMMERING IN THE OZARK MOUNTAINS.

Winfield Courier, Thursday, July 2, 1885.

Mrs. Ed. P. Greer, who is spending a month at her father's (Mr. E. P. Kinne) ranch in the Ozark mountains in southern Missouri in a private letter gives the following description of the country. The many friends and acquaintances of Mr. Kinne in this city and county will probably be interested in thus hearing from him.

Letter from Mrs. Ed. P. Greer.

Today we rode with papa on his tour to Springdale Ranch. Each week he rides around the boundary line to pay off the men he has working for him in various parts. The ranch contains 9,000 acres of land, and the whole will soon be enclosed by fence: some rail and some barbed wire. We started at eight o'clock this morning and arrived home at half past five this evening. The first few miles lay through an uneven rocky valley, then a steep climb up the mountain side. The whole day has been lovely, cool and bright. All along the road the wild flowers were in bloom and the air was freighted with their fragrance. The wild roses grow in great profusion. They are low bushes with small roses, and "climby" ones with large fragrant blooms which range in color from a very delicate to a deep pink, with the most exquisite colors I ever beheld. Then the bright scarlet mountain pinks; the petunia and hollyhock; canary flower; purple and white larkspur; verbena from the palest pink to deep scarlet; and lilac, to deepest purple; one with a delicate, bell-shaped white blossom; a bright, salmon colored one, which blooms in large clumps. All are exceedingly beautiful. Indeed the mountains are one mass of brilliant and beautiful flowers, interspersed with lovely fern, wherever there is dampness enough for them. Where it is dryer grow what the natives call the mountain farren, more commonly known as "tracker," of which there are several varieties. Everywhere cool, bubbling springs are found. They usually issue from the shelving of rock projecting from the mountain side. They flow away in little rivulets over the white pebbles to find their way to the larger streams. Upon the ridge or summit of the mountain, it is usually quite level. The first we crossed gave us only a view of taller ones on each side, heavily wooded and strewn with flowers. Descending to the valleys we passed many farm houses. The people here have a mania for buildings; there will be from three to eight houses on a farm but not one will be decent. To use the popular phrase, "you can throw a cat through the cracks between the logs," even in dwellings, while many have no floors. The temples of learning are few and far between. In all our ride we only saw one. Papa is putting up one on the ranch and has hired a teacher to take the school for \$25 per month and take an order on the district when they do not have the money. This is considered good wages. Many of the people are so ignorant that they object to their children attending school. They give the same reason that Huckleberry Finn's "pap" did when he forbid him to go to school.

Indeed, me thinks that Mark Twain must have visited Missouri, or he never could have written anything which so accurately describes the people I find here.

The Ozark (weekly) News claims this to be the garden spot of the world. Nature has done much for this country. The land is fertile and very productive. The water cannot be surpassed and the scenery is lovely, but when we turn to the people one wonders how such incongruities can exist. Missouri surely rests under a curse. The people are demoralized and we sometimes would be led to think that they are very little above the brute in intelligence. Never did I feel so proud of our sunny Kansas. The moment I crossed the line, I was made aware of it by the drummers leaving the car and returning with their hands full of beer bottles and the expression of relief which they gave "to be out of a state where a fellow was obliged to be thirsty." Gradually, the farther in we got the deeper were the marks made by tobacco and whiskey. In every garden the tobacco and potatoes grow side by side. In almost every town; some, if not all, of the occupants were demoralized by drink. Often the mothers are too intoxicated to care for their little ones. Every hotel has its bar. You cannot turn without seeing a saloon sign, even if the town has but half a dozen houses. In conversation with an elderly gentleman of much intelligence, a native of Ohio, but a citizen of Missouri for more than forty years, he asked where my home might be. "I am from the banner city of the banner county of the banner State in the Union," I replied. He looked completely dazed, and managed to ask where so many banners might belong. He seemed impatient to know, but I waited a little, and then told him, "Winfield, Cowley County, Kansas." He looked disappointed--thought Missouri was as good, yes much better than Kansas. Prohibition did not help her any, etc. Well, perhaps it don't for him, but it does for me. I will take Kansas every time.

At noon we stopped in a narrow valley between two tall mountains, having ridden some ten miles. It was a lovely spot. Three springs came from the sides of the mountains, and, uniting their waters, flowed in a pool across the road. Immense trees afforded abundant shade. The air was laden with the perfume of numerous wild flowers, and from the raspberry vines, which grow wild also, we gathered enough to take with our lunch. Leaving here we climbed another mountain, a rough, steep place, requiring all of our stickative power to keep one going. Everywhere the long, graceful flora trailed over the rocks; the air was cool and pleasant. On again descending into the opposite valley, we spied an abundance of fine raspberries. With our dinner pail, tin cup, and hats, all picked berries and soon had one five quart tin pail full to carry home for supper. Then after riding up and down for several miles, we ascended one of the highest mountains. Along its summit for about a mile, or perhaps more, there was a natural macadamized road. The mountains are all densely wooded, and as we looked off this one, down into the valley below, then up the side of the next mountain, there were trees, trees, everywhere. Then as we again descended, we reached the pinery, where thousands of dollars worth of pine lumber have been cut. Most of the trees are small, being the new growth. The air was laden with the peculiar, and to me agreeable, odor of the pine. Farther on in the low valley we

crossed several babbling brooks and small farms. In two fields men were harvesting wheat. The great fields of golden grain formed a pleasing contrast to the green walls of trees which rise on the mountain behind them. One thing I noticed was the change in the temperature. When on the ridge of a mountain, we sometimes were obliged to use our wraps. On descending to the valleys, we were more than comfortable without them. After a two miles ride over the worst road I ever saw, we reached our own gate, having ridden about twenty miles. We had seen part of the east, south, and west lines, and had traveled almost all the time on the ranch. It was a long, rough ride, and what with jolting, clinging, and curtseying (to keep the overhanging branches from tearing our heads off), we were very tired. This morning as I finish this letter, after a restless sleep, during which I made the acquaintance of dozens of chiggers, I still think that the pleasure of my trip and the delicious berries we ate at tea are sufficient reward for all the little inconveniences I have had.