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DANIEL BOONE AND THE KENTUCKY CHARACTER IN 1855—A LETTER FROM AMERICA, BY LEO LESQUEREUX

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

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The following article is the sixteenth of a series of descriptions and comments by Leo Lesquereux on the American scene. It appeared in the February, 1855, issue of *Revue Suisse*, a monthly magazine published in Neuchatel, Switzerland.

In this translation no comment is offered. In a few instances an explanatory word or two has been inserted in brackets. The footnotes are by Lesquereux himself.

The Boone narrative is based upon the version given in John Filson's *Kentucke* (1784) or the French translation (1785) or possibly both editions. He may also have seen a few other early Boone biographies from which he gleaned some further anecdotes of Boone. As a contribution to the Boone saga no new facts are offered. Lesquereux's general presentation of Boone, however, makes his version a well told and decidedly interesting Boone Narrative.

A major interest in this letter—as in many of the narratives of travels by foreigners—lies not in the new “discoveries” about the country visited, but in the impressions given to foreign readers of such narratives, whether or not the statements made are in accordance with the facts. For example, although a Kentucky colonel may not be as hot-headed and ferocious as the incidents describe, the readers of *Revue Suisse* may have had no reason to believe there was any undue exaggeration. Of minor interest, but not unimportant even to Americans, are his shrewd and fair deductions of American character, and his scenic descriptions of contemporary Kentucky.

Lesquereux was born in Switzerland in 1806, came to America in 1848, and died in Columbus, Ohio, in 1889. Soon after his arrival in this country he became an outstanding authority on fossil plants and other matters relating to the geology of the entire Appalachian coal field. Among his scientific papers are two on the fossil flora of the Kentucky coal fields. They were published in the *Reports* of the Geological Survey of Kentucky: one in the 1857 and the other in the 1861 *Report*.

At some future date, the translator expects to present a study of the character of Lesquereux. For the present, reference should be made to the excellent summary of Lesquereux's life contained in the *Dictionary of American Biography*, Volume Eleven, published in 1933.

Columbus [Ohio], December 7, 1854

Nothing is so lovely as an American forest in autumn, because it is for this season that nature reserves the harmonious exhibition for her most brilliant colors. All shades of green and red are intermingled, blending or grouping themselves up to the summit of the tall trees, now passing from one to the other by imperceptible transitions; or, just now abruptly separating themselves, and appearing to the eye as sudden creations. A spot yonder, flashing in the sunlight, appears to burst out into a flaming fire. It is a group of red oaks, with leaves of brightest vermilion, framed in a belt of beech trees and maples whose foliage is just beginning to grow yellow. Over here are the rosy fruits of the sorb-apple [cormier] in full bloom, bearing down upon the delicate branches of the elegant arbutus [arbutus] which, upon viewing it, one would call an immense structure of most brilliant coral, freshly plucked from the ocean deep.

On the summit of the hills, the chestnuts, grouped in domes, appear really gilded by the rays of the rising sun. The illusion is complete; if we failed to reason, we would not doubt but that those ripening leaves were sending metallic reflections to our eyes. From hill to hill, the scene contracts or enlarges, sometimes confining the view to a wall of chalky rocks, partly veiled by trailing briars, tall dry grass and the late flowers—asters and goldenrods, hanging in garlands in the fissures. At other times, the view wanders into the distance over those vast forests, whose motley colors flow into the horizon.

Mounted as we are on the roof of a stage-coach, not one detail of this splendid panorama escapes us. The rising sun, whose

first unsteady rays reach through the forest trees; these colors so varied and soft that we can bathe our eyes voluptuously in their reflections; the immense flocks of wild pigeons which follow each other promptly, now passing over our heads in swift clouds, soon precipitating on some old tree, crowding it until it bends, or until the strongest branches are broken. And over all is this pure, clear atmosphere, so limpid and so blue that it appears to be a hitherto unknown element. Does not all that compensate for the few hours spent in our uncomfortable position, exposed to the frost of an October night?

But it is time to tell you where I am, and where you are going to be taken with me.

Last night I arrived in Louisville, which is on the Ohio shore, on the border of Kentucky, en route to Nashville, the capital of Tennessee. Ordinarily at this season, the Ohio is covered with boats, and but for the extraordinarily dry spell, I would have used a steamboat to reach my destination. But this year, as you know, the rivers have failed; as with other things, they have become bankrupt. The largest and proudest are no more than shameful gutters, dragging themselves in the mud or stagnating on the pebbles, green with algae. There is scarcely enough water for the fish. Likewise for the steamboats which at intervals are abandoned along the banks, forgotten in the mud, waiting in the burning sun for a cloud to bring them a shower of rain.

Since the boats could not go, I had to be sure of reserving a place for myself at the stage office, which you might poetically call the "bureau of diligences." But it was evening, and late. "All the seats inside are taken," said the clerk. "You will have to climb on the top." That is not the exact English expression; the sense is correctly "to take a seat and be carried on the outside." But now, to have you understand the advantages, and relish the comfort of my actual position, I must give you a description of the American stage-coach.

The exterior appears similar to one of the old traveling carriages we used to have in Europe, a half century ago. Or, if you prefer this better, it has nearly the form of a Lafitte or Caillard coach without the coupe or the rotunda.

The interior, perhaps slightly longer than that of French carriages, has nine seats; three in the rear, three in front, and three on an intermediate bench, just reaching from one door to the other. Passengers on the central bench have for their back sup-

port a large leather strap which is attached to both sides by hooks. Their backs face the rear bench, usually reserved for ladies, whose knees dig into their sides, and they face directly the front passengers, whose legs cross with their own, for better or for worse. Outside, attached near the top of the rocking frame, is the driver's seat, large enough to provide room for another passenger, and over the vehicle is the "cowl" or gallery of iron work a foot high, crammed with the trunks and bundles of the travelers, and the mail sacks, which are usually enormous. When the "cowl" is fully loaded, the baggage is covered with a large hide. So you can understand that the carriage is topped with a more or less pointed cone. And when the nine interior seats are taken, and the seat adjacent to the driver is occupied, if there remain any passengers for transportation, they are hoisted on top of this cone.

That day, there were twenty passengers registered, and I was, I think, the nineteenth. Then, if you can reason logically, you would deduce that I was not far from forming the culminating point of the pyramid.

A trip in these high regions is endurable if one can find a seat for himself, and can stretch out, for example, between two mail bags, with a carpet-bag for a pillow. But when all tenable positions are occupied, and you have to climb up high at two o'clock in the morning in one of those October frosts—so much the more piercing as they follow very warm days—the thing is no longer so pleasant. Add to this the necessity of keeping an extremely fatiguing balance. That is often a dangerous task on this new style roof, for the coach, drawn by four frisky and vigorous horses, rocks on long flexible straps and is thrown back from rut to rut on the road, like a shy mule trying to shake off a restraining rider.

To go from Ohio to Tennessee one must traverse the whole width of Kentucky. It is a charming trip to be undertaken, for the country is really magnificent. Unlike Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, it is not a land of endless plains and absolute uniformity where the view—satisfying as it may be at first—is soon tiresome with the same forms and the same irregularities. It is a country covered with chalky hills of varying height, among which meander numerous streams of clear water, and even some rather large rivers. The form of these hills is sometimes rounded, sometimes sharply cut by the flow of the torrents. Often they appear near each other in groups, or they may spread out like a miniature chain, and then they may diverge and become merged into the

horizon, as if to make room for charming and fertile valleys, covered with carefully cultivated plantations.

We do not encounter here, as in the north, those interminable cornfields, whose appearance, especially in autumn, is as melancholy and desolate as that of our vineyards stripped of their fruits. Rather, there is in the farms a constant variety, which can tell us where the labor is more skillful and better directed, or a less fertile soil on which the system of rotation of crops is necessarily applied for lack of fertilizer. Squares of corn alternate with plantations of tobacco, whose large tufts, ready for cutting, certainly present the prettiest verdure of the season; or with pastures, piled here and there with large haystacks awaiting the winter, and upon which graze magnificent cattle, American breeds crossed with the finest English stock, surpassing their Durhams and Berkshires in beauty and value, as even the English farmers themselves admit. The poorest areas—on the slopes of the hills—remain fallow, and are turned over to herds of sheep, which likewise include representatives of the better known breeds. And once in a while we encounter a few cotton fields of some extent, bearing at this season their ripe and open fruit. To a European, the show is really impressive. Viewed from the top of the coach, these bolls perfectly resemble eggs, or snow-balls, attached to the stems of potatoes.

Kentucky, we know, is a slave state. Joined to Ohio and Indiana for the whole extent of its northern boundary, if it could not take to industry with the enthusiasm of these free states, it has at least watched their development with a jealous eye, and lest it remain too far behind, has put to profit those elements of prosperity which it finds at hand. The river cities of the Ohio—Covington, opposite Cincinnati, Louisville especially, a jealous rival of the "Queen of the West"—are wealthy through commerce and manufacturing.

As one advances into the interior, trade and industry diminish. But landed proprietors, who have at their disposal slave labor for cultivating their lands, and who have besides easy and sure outlets for their products, pay particular attention to the agricultural industry and pursue with the aid of their Negroes lucrative experiments and operations for which their northern neighbors have neither the time nor the means of undertaking. Their position as a privileged class, and undoubtedly also their ancestry, give to these rich Kentucky landowners a character which is not a bad

resemblance to that of the country seigneurs of France, as they were described to us before the [French] Revolution. However, with a more pronounced tincture of barbarism. Kentucky has been chiefly colonized by North Carolina and Virginia, and therefore by the Norman race.

The first pioneer and the greatest hero of Kentucky was, however, an Englishman. This man is Daniel Boone, whose adventurous life has furnished the text for a great number of strange novels and tales. The story of this man, told with the simplest facts, presents a mass of deeds, incidents and exploits remarkable enough to test the credulity of the best authenticated ones. I should certainly like to write it down in detail, were it only to reproduce faithfully the type of trapper and American pioneer which one generally finds in the West, at the contact points of civilization with the Indian tribes. But it would take up a volume. We can only sketch a few of their features which are linked with the early history of Kentucky, and which we should know to justly appreciate the character of its present inhabitants.

From delicate childhood, Daniel Boone manifested an ardent taste for hunting. As soon as he could lift a gun, he spent his days in the forests, tracking squirrels and raccoons. Sometimes he remained away for entire weeks, living in the woods upon the products of his hunting, and returning to his father's home bearing with him the family's provisions, and the skins of animals which he killed or caught in his traps. The elder Boone, who had himself a vein of an adventurous spirit, suddenly determined to settle down with his family in some part of North Carolina. He had heard it described as a fertile land, especially being little inhabited and with abundant game. Such a journey, at that time, was certainly as difficult and more dangerous than a journey now to California across the Western deserts, and could be undertaken only by courageous and tried men, used to enduring the hardest privations.

The wonderful adventures of Boone begin with his marriage to a young daughter of a neighboring farmer, a "wood nymph" whom he had almost killed with a rifle-shot one night while hunting with a firebrand, mistaking her eyes for those of a deer or, more poetically, a gazelle.

No sooner was his cabin finished, a few acres cleared and a family started than a new adventure threw him into a path entirely different from the first. Perhaps the romance of his

honeymoon was exhausted. At any rate, here is what Boone tells us:

One day while strolling in the woods, he chanced to meet an old trader, returning from Kentucky with an enormous sack of furs. This man was John Finley, himself a hero with a string of marvelous adventures, who had been first to dare venture toward that unknown land of which terrible deeds were told. He had gone there at a thousand-fold risk of his life, to seek several Indian tribes with whom he traded powder and useless trinkets for the furs which he was carrying back. Finley must have had some highly interesting things to say, or an admirable talent for story telling, since, after having listened to him for several hours in his cabin, Boone made him remain for the whole winter, passing, as he says, not only his days but a portion of his evenings questioning him and hearing him tell his wonderful stories.

By spring, our two friends had made up their minds. They succeeded in getting four companions as associates, and prepared to inspect this land, which was then called the "dark and bloody ground." Finley and other travelers had heard about it in their talks with the Indians, or had explored some corners of the northern frontiers, descending the Ohio lower than had ever been done before. According to their reports, Kentucky was truly a paradise, covered with magnificent forests in which roved immense herds of deer and buffalo. But it was a forbidden paradise. As indeed, it was not the property of any particular Indian tribe, it was a sort of vast park, a neutral field reserved for the neighboring tribes who hunted there at certain seasons of the year, and invariably settled their quarrels there. These circumstances earned for it the terrible name which it had been given.

May 1, 1770,¹ our adventurers started on their way, under Finley's leadership. By day they proceeded cautiously, guns over their shoulders, stopping sometimes to hunt and renew their provisions. At night they camped in some sheltered corner, keeping watch in turns to guard themselves from an Indian attack. They crossed the Cumberland mountains, and June 7th arrived on the bank of the Red River, in a region known to their guide. There, full of enthusiasm at the sight of herds of buffalo and all species of game stocking the forests, they stopped, and built a cabin which was to serve as a center for their explorations.

¹ 1769 in Filson's Narrative.

The shores of Kentucky rivers were at that time covered with a species of rush of which the buffalo were very fond. There was besides, in the neighboring forest, an abundance of salt lands which all the ruminants enjoyed licking,¹ and where they joined each other in immense herds. From this discovery is explained the particular interest which attracted thence the pioneers from the South, all of whom were hunters. It also explains why, in spite of its present population and central position, Kentucky in our day still abounds with all sorts of game, and could thus support some of those professional trappers, whose breed has not yet been altogether exterminated.

From the moment of his arrival, the most extraordinary events crowded into Boone's life. Hardly settled on the bank of the Red River, he was captured, with a companion named [John] Steward, and taken away by the Indians. Seven days later, as they were about to be exposed to torture by fire, they succeeded in escaping and returned to their cabin, to find it plundered. Their companions had disappeared.

Later in the autumn, while running in the forest, Boone heard the crumpling of dry leaves, hid in a bush, and saw a white man approaching. Leaving his hiding place, Boone advanced to meet him and recognized his brother [Squire Boone], who had come to seek him and was wandering at random in the woods, not knowing where to find him. Somewhile later, while at the side of the Boones, Steward was killed by an arrow, and the two brothers remained alone, spending the winter in their cabin under constant exposure to attacks by the redskins. However, they did not experience a moment of fear nor of regret, nor weary of their isolation. "I do not believe," said Boone in his narrative, "there have ever been happier moments in my life. Often I said to my brother, older than I, 'You see how little a man needs to satisfy his wants. Do you not feel that happiness comes from within ourselves, and not from external matters? There is no need for a very deep philosophy to produce a happy man. He who places his trust entirely in Providence finds happiness in a path covered with briars and thorns.'"

The following spring, the stores being exhausted, Boone's brother returned to Carolina, and left him alone in that dangerous land. Thus our pioneer, constantly tracked by Indians who were watching him and knew his position perfectly, rarely slept in his

¹ Whence the name "licks," which is so frequently found in Kentucky nomenclature: Salt Lick, Licking Creek, Blue Licks, etc.

cabin, where he might have been surprised. He made a bed in the reeds or buried himself in the underbrush to spend the night there. As soon as his brother returned, at the end of July, both began a more extensive tour of exploration and pushed their reconnoitering up to the Cumberland, marking the courses of rivers which they came across, and naming them.

In 1773 Boone decided to settle down in Kentucky which, he often repeated, was a new paradise. He left to fetch his family, finding a feasible passage for vehicles through the Cumberland mountains, and returned on the road with five other families, escorted by a company of forty men. Attacked by Indians near the Cumberland mountains, one of Boone's sons was killed, with six of his companions. The disheartened band, notwithstanding its chief's entreaties, returned, to be nearer colonies of white men. Consequently, Boone endeavored to attract the attention of governments and of companies interested in the purchase of land in Kentucky. For that reason, he undertook the most perilous missions, sometimes leading surveyors from Virginia to some part of the new country; often requesting or holding meetings with various Indian tribes to arrange with them for the sale of their land; and frequently serving as a guide for military companies. On occasions, he took command of small detachments and often supervised the erection of small forts which interested parties were constructing to protect the first emigrants who, due to Boone's instigations, were now beginning to penetrate into Kentucky. He had, himself, laid out a road starting from North Carolina and crossing all of Kentucky. With the men whom he directed in its construction, he had built the first fort, Boonesborough, to keep in check the Indians, who never ceased to harass them. It was this place to which Boone brought his family. There also, until 1784, this hardy pioneer—who had now become not only a capable engineer, but as courageous a captain as any learned in the tactics of Indian warfare—resisted the continuous attacks of these savage tribes, who could not watch without fury and desire for vengeance, while the richest of their lands passed into the hands of the white men.

Thus Boone had become the spirit of colonization in Kentucky. He invited emigration from Virginia and Carolina, selected sites for the villages and for forts to be constructed. He watched over the Indians, who never allowed him a moment of truce, stirred up the courage of newcomers and urged them incessantly to resistance in that long war which could and should

end only with the ruin of one of the two races. Doubtless even without Boone's energy and aid, the struggle between the white and redskins would have ended to the advantage of the former, in Kentucky as everywhere else in America. But certainly without him the conquest would have been long retarded and much more dearly bought. A single incident will prove that:

In 1778 our hero was taken prisoner by the Shawnees, who knew him of old, and, appreciating his valor, had brought him to their camps near Chillicothe on the Ohio, and had him adopted by one of their chiefs. This chief watched over him, and was pledged to guard him with his life. During three months which he spent among these savage tribes, Boone had pretended to submit very willingly to their customs; he had learned their language and was apparently forgetting or despising the whites and their civilization.

One day he was surprised to see a muster of several hundreds of the most valiant warriors of the tribe, all well armed, and disfigured with the most horrible paints with which they covered their bodies before military expeditions. He found a way to get into the council hall of the warriors without being observed, and learned that the Indians were preparing to march against the fort at Boonesborough, in order to surprise and destroy it. This fort was the keystone of the white colonies, and once destroyed, all the other defensive works would indubitably fall into the Indians' hands. "Immediately," says Boone, in his unaffected style, "I felt that I had to escape or attempt the enterprise at all hazards, and the next day I took flight, before dawn. I reached Boonesborough after a trip of 160 miles through roads and a country which were unknown to me, and during the flight I had taken no nourishment, and had stopped only once." Back in his fortress, which he found in a poor condition for defense, he hastened and directed repairs, built new palisades, spread the alarm over the whole region, and procured munitions and all kinds of provisions. The Shawnees had been delayed and disheartened by Boone's flight, and when, August first, their strong army of 500 warriors, commanded by several French and English captains, appeared before the fortress, the little garrison, encouraged by its intrepid chief, was in condition to endure a siege of more than 15 days, and forced the enemy to retreat, after having killed and wounded a great number of them.

* "After a journey of 160 miles, during which I had but one meal."—Filson.

During that period in Kentucky (so justly named the "Bloody Ground") there remained not a single farmer who had not relinquished his plough for his rifle. Nor was there a single family which the Indians had not decimated with their tomahawks. Here we find some small children surprised and massacred at the edge of the forest; elsewhere it may be a father or some valiant hardy sons who had joined an expedition and had never returned. One day it is Boone's daughter with two of her friends, whom the Indians kidnaped at the very gates of Boonesborough fort; and some months later, the intrepid pioneer was drawn into an ambush and his brother killed at his side. Should we be surprised that, in the hearts of all these new colonists, there was no more than a single sentiment, an insatiable passion for vengeance?

However, the first aggressors were not the Indians, and certainly, to be fair, it is not to them that we should address accusations of cruelty and barbarism. Referring to the words of Boone, and also of all historians who investigated that period, it would appear that the white men fought to defend a country which belonged to them by virtue of other rights than those of force and invasion. "Their zeal to defend their land," said Boone (of his countrymen) "urged these heroes into battle, and inspired them with courage to attack superior forces without fear." This reflection was thrown off in passing, on the occasion of a battle when the whites, being the aggressors, fell into an ambush of the Indians, whom they were pursuing with too much eagerness and lack of precaution. Their defeat, which surely they had well merited, was envisioned by the colonists as a horrible ambush, and as one of those acts of infernal maliciousness which demanded the most atrocious vengeance.

And the vengeance of the white men was not accustomed to a long delay. A new and larger expedition was prepared. This time the troops advanced with caution against the Indians, who were defeated and pursued to the Ohio, where the Shawnees had their villages. These towns were reduced to ashes, the corn and fruit trees cut and burned; all prisoners, whatever their age or sex, were massacred. Could primitive savages have done worse than civilized savages?

But we are not going to take up again a useless discussion on the justice or injustice of a course which could be appealed only before the tribunal of God. We recall these bloody strifes only

to discover in them the source of some characteristics of the Kentuckians of our day.

During the period whose history we are outlining, the pioneer colonists were exposed to all kinds of privations, and endured them with unbelievable fortitude. They had scarcely any time to cultivate a few fields of corn, which, moreover, the Indians frequently destroyed, and they ordinarily had for their sole food deer and buffalo meat—even that lacking during the rigorous winters. Their cabins were poorly constructed and exposed to strong winds, and they had no other clothes than those made by themselves from animal hides, or some patch of rough cloth woven in their homes. Thus they were a race of men whom a more intellectual (rather than say more intelligent) civilization would call barbarians, because their animal instincts had been developed at the expense of their imaginative or other faculties ennobled by social conventions. But in the hands of Providence, these instincts were nothing less than powerful instruments which overturned obstacles and opened smooth roads to new generations. This is an observation to which Boone himself agrees, by way of consolation, as a philosophical conclusion to the story of his life. We will translate once again, this last paragraph because it depicts the pioneer American better than any possible description:

“In conclusion,” he says, “I was forced to confess that I saw in myself the confirmation of the prophecy of an old Indian who, in signing the deed of this territory to Colonel Henderson, took my hand and said to me: ‘We have given you a fine land there, but you will have some trouble settling it.’ My steps have often been marked in blood and thus, to myself, Kentucky has merited its name of Bloody Ground. I have lost by the hands of the Indians, two dear sons, a brother, forty horses and a good number of cattle.⁴ I have spent plenty of nights under the sky without shelter, and with the hooting of owls and the howling of wolves for companionship. Thus deprived of the society of my kind, often burned by the flaming sun in the summer, often frozen by the frosts of winter, what could I have been if not an instrument prepared by Providence to open a road for civilization in savage lands.”

If Kentucky had been populated in the same ratio as that of the northern states of America (of those known as the free states), the same varied and foreign elements would doubtless be found

⁴A declaration of sorrows of the Yankee of today would be just as pathetic as that of Boone. I believe that he would only change the order of the progression, and would begin with the horses and cattle.

mixed with its civilization, and there would be nothing with which to determine the character of its present inhabitants. At first emigration was extremely active, attracted by the miracles told of this new country, by half-fabulous stories which had been echoed to Europe. In 1790 Kentucky already counted 75,000 inhabitants; ten years later, 221,000; in 1810, 400,000; whereas for similar periods Ohio, with the same area, had only 5,000, 45,000, and 230,000 inhabitants. The slave population was also very numerous from the start, since, as we know, all the emigrants came from Virginia and Carolina, bringing their Negroes with them. Thus was established first and foremost this system of large cultivations or plantations which exist everywhere in the South, and that landed aristocracy which, in such a country where the necessities of life could be obtained so cheaply, was forced to perpetuate and strengthen itself from generation to generation, and thus become hereditary. Large properties, we know, are like large fish who swallow the small. This truth is even more evident in a country where the rich, all slave owners, secured labor for the very lowest wages, and where consequently the poor classes, forced to work themselves, found that the worth of their toil was only the minimum value represented by Negro labor. The result of this system—an effect which made itself felt more or less in all the slave states—was to be a constant restraint in the growth of population, by the forced removal of that class of emigrants whose sole fortune was in their hands, and who, with their industriousness and activity, had been the best agents for prosperity in the free states.⁶

If Tennessee appears to make a slight exception to this rule, that is because its central position is less favorable, the soil less fertile, and easy transportation is lacking, thus offering weak attractions to the emigration of rich proprietors, and offering less encouragement to the investment of capital for large cultivations. Also, from another point of view, the State's government, aware of these natural disadvantages, has sought to attract outsiders by all possible means. It has especially favored such enterprises or rather those less conscientious speculations which were based upon stately claims, and found its profits assured by the credulity of foreigners.

Population in	1790	1800	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850
Kentucky	75,077	220,955	406,511	564,317	687,917	779,828	993,344
Ohio	5,000	45,365	230,760	581,434	937,903	1,519,445	2,000,000

We have already noted in a preceding letter that the area of Kentucky is 40,500 square miles, that of Ohio, 39,964.

It is now easy for us to distinguish the two principal elements which have cooperated in civilizing Kentucky, and have made it what it is to-day. An element which we will call "pioneer"—an element which still holds a little of what is called the savage state and which is manifested by the exercise and development of physical faculties—force, dexterity, use of arms and artifice; by the love of absolute liberty, a liberty often as tyrannical as that of a tiger in the forest; by an implacable hatred for his enemy, a hatred which did not recoil even from homicide, and was transmitted in families from generation to generation. But there is also a patriarchal hospitality, the inviolability attached to a word of honor, and faith and devotion shown in every test of friendship.

An element which we may call "aristocratic" is shown by the subjection of a weaker race, by continuous efforts to acquire and enlarge possessions, by the tendency to guarantee the power of families by heredity and marriage.

These are sufficient indications for us to be acquainted with pure-blooded Kentuckian: A large, well-proportioned body, a spirited stride, proud and piercing eyes, powerless (in spite of his physical strength) to hold back his passion, and thus sometimes led on to murder when in anger. Besides, there is an abundance of kindness, benevolence, hospitality, good living, and joyous companionship, a love for external appearances, subscribing to the manners and elegance of a great lord. If we add that Kentucky has the most beautiful women, and the finest horses in America, I believe we shall have a sufficiently authentic picture of the country which we are now visiting.

We should not expect, however, to find this character clearly delineated along the river cities of the Ohio, which are for a great part populated with foreigners, especially French and Germans. Europeans, it is known, can get along much better with the natural chivalry and jolly companionship of the Southerner than with the frigidity and gruff individualism of the Yankee. Nevertheless, the large proprietors do have winter homes in Louisville. They like to live there to display their pomp, show their magnificent horses, and to promenade the streets with their ladies, loaded with silks and laces.

We may meet them at the dining tables of the large hotels, where they are pompously quaffing champagne. It is on occasions like these that, rendered ungovernable, even by their best friends, they are looking for a quarrel and reply to the first provo-

cation with a pistol shot. Besides, there is no need for inebriation to lead them on to murder. Who has not heard here of the horrible assassination [November 2, 1853] of a poor Louisville schoolmaster [William H. G. Butler] whose only wrong was to have inflicted a slight correction on one of his students [William Ward] belonging to one of the first families of the state. His brother [Matt F. Ward] sought out the master in the midst of his class, and after a few words were exchanged, drew a pistol from his pocket and killed him. This deed occurred scarcely a few months ago. In any other American state, at least on this side of the Mississippi, the murderer would have been hanged, I suppose. Here he was acquitted [April 27, 1854] by the jury and tranquilly enjoys his riches, while the widow and child of poor Butler live in poverty, forgotten in some corner.

To be sure, the indignation of Louisville's citizens proved that the case was an anomaly in their conduct of life, but the citizens of Louisville were mostly foreigners. And furthermore, what is an anomaly if not the application of a case pushed to extremes, the extreme limit of a false principle? The law punishes these kinds of applications of a theory, but does not rectify them, does not destroy the principles. And in my opinion, the Kentuckian (with whose past we are familiar, and from which he emerged with difficulty) is worthy of comparison with the noble of our past European civilization—a knight with honor outraged, national, personal or other honor. And these partisans and promotors of duels between man and man, or between peoples and peoples, should also, by logical reasoning, be absolved of any similar crimes.

Now that the sun has risen, we are getting warmer. We have looked over the region, and, with the departure of some travelers, we have made our acrobatic seats a less uncomfortable place. We are renewing our social manners and becoming acquainted with our companions. That is easy. We have talked so long of the elements because we find them everywhere, and furthermore it is a very convenient term to characterize a multitude of things which cannot be defined. Here we have a fellowship or social element which, since our departure from Louisville, circulated the carriage in the form of a bottle of whiskey or corn brandy. Without wounding my conscience the least bit in the world, it would be easy for me to advertise my character as a temperate man, and to assert in passing that, placed in the center of the circle, as one

can see, in spite of the cold and mist of the morning, I had escaped the electrical influence of the destructive fluid. The phrase perhaps can be prettily turned, but not strictly.

The hospitality of the Southerner shows itself in their homes, and, in certain cases, it is as urgent as that of one of our dear natives of the Jura who, once decided to fill someone up, does not let anything stop him, we know, until the patient is half-choked under the weight of his overloaded stomach.

On the railroads of the Northern states of America we often see some traveler looking around furtively, taking some indistinct object out of his pocket, bringing it to his lips while bending down, as though seeking something under a bench. It is an electrical element which here is absorbed by a non-conducting body, or if one prefers to say, the Yankee drinks a draught secretly. The indistinct object is returned to his pocket and our individual is none the more amiable for that. He even knows how to manage, without any expense of politeness or excuses, to turn aside the indiscretion of a neighbor who is never timid. We have heard it already often: "Eh, say there, friend, that's a little beer you are drinking there." "Undoubtedly." "Can't we try some, to warm us up a bit?" "Oh, no! There is too little for two." Forced to accept this game of words in good spirit, the neighbor grimaced and returned to his impassiveness.

The real Kentuckian, who has not yet been enslaved by temperance societies, and who is not ashamed to drink what he pleases (when he has paid for it with his own money), takes out his bottle from some corner of the vehicle, opens it; regards it complacently, then swallows a long draught. Afterwards, he offers it to the ladies if there are any, and then the bottle makes a tour of the circle. If some veteran of absolute temperance finds himself in the company, in order to escape repeated solicitations, he is forced to lift the bottle to his mouth just for appearances, as I did myself when the morning having come, I was urged to take part in the unpleasant breakfast.

The bottle belonged to two young men from Louisville. One of them was fourteen years old, a cadet or student of one of the numerous military academies of Kentucky. The other, his brother, twenty years old, had (he told us) already tried a half-dozen different occupations, and was finding it more convenient to defer any final choice for a few years, living on the paternal fortune in the meantime.

The younger one, a true blackguard in appearance, had three pistols in his pockets and a sporting rifle at his side. The elder had merely a pistol and a rifle, and otherwise appeared to have a more pacific disposition. Both of them constantly handled their arms, treating them with minimum precautions, loading and unloading them in the coach, sometimes firing a pistol at some partridges, other time hurling the shot of their guns into flocks of pigeons. The vicinity of these two harebrains was little reassuring. The younger one drank incessantly from his bottle of brandy and swallowed the whiskey with the coolness of an old trooper, without its taking any more effect on him than pure water. Nobody, not even the driver, was the least bit preoccupied with that turbulence, which at one time or another, however, frightened the horses. A word on this subject would undoubtedly be taken as an insult, or proof of cowardice. I would not even stop to mention a fact of such common occurrence if it did not serve as an introduction to one of those scenes of murderous fury which display the savage side of the Kentuckian character:

All the seats on top were very uncomfortable, but at times they were more or less satisfactory. At one of the relays, the older of these young men having for a moment left his place beside the coachman, his young brother unceremoniously took possession of it and refused to return it to the legitimate proprietor. Anger, resistance and then assault. The elder, intending to throw his brother off the carriage, seized him by the throat, but the latter held himself with both hands to the long hair of his adversary, and with his teeth took hold of two of his fingers, chewing them with all his might. Feigning a shameful capitulation, the elder brought his already half-overthrown antagonist back to the seat, but as soon as he felt his hair set free, and saw his bloody fingers extricated, he gave him a vigorous punch in the face, and then threw him head first on the road.

Indeed, I believed he was killed. But he was not dead, not even stunned. He recovered immediately, seized his pistol and was ready to fire. The shot was coming, when that big fellow, his brother, threw himself with a cry behind the coach, during which some travelers interposed, disarmed the young cadet, and brought about a decisive peace. After some long parleys, the war terminated to the advantage of the younger one, who proudly occupied the usurped seat. Soon the affair was forgotten and

their good humor returned to our two Kentuckian fellows, who five minutes later appeared to be the best friends in the world.

From relay to relay the coach rolled along an excellent road, and our companions heightened their conversation with ditties and curious anecdotes. The sun had risen, its heat had been excessive; now it was descending behind the forests in the horizon, and its oblique rays, cool and colored, were gliding over the leaves with all the tints of a prism. The gray squirrels were playing along the moss-covered tree-trunks, stretching on the earth, or leaping from branch to branch. They seemed to be following us, to cheer us with their gambols. A blue jay shook its azure plumes and sent forth its mocking cry across the thickets. Some families of woodpeckers were jogging their big red heads against the stripped trunks of some large dead trees, working incessantly, as though they must profit by the last glimmers of the day to accomplish their task. The limpid stream which ran alongside the road was now hiding under the clusters of autumn sun-flowers, which appeared like small trees in those large bushes; and then the stream was coming clear, and sliding like a silver ribbon over the naked pastures. Some yellow leaves were falling, whirling along the road. And way above, toward the sky, a bald-headed vulture was following in immense spirals, as though to throw a final look upon these splendors before returning home for the night.

What sublime language, that evening prayer of nature! Only an instant of emotion caused by the contemplation of these wonders, when they pass slowly before your eyes, without a single detail escaping; when all these forms, modified in a thousand ways, sliding in, going out, springing up again, now illuminated by a colored ray, now designed vaguely under the darkened arch of the woods—is it not better than the deafening distractions of a trip by train?

At midnight, the coach arrived for supper at Bell's Tavern. It is half-way on the road from Louisville to Nashville, and here stop numerous travelers who are going to visit Mammoth Cave, that celebrated grotto to which we also, in passing, are going to pay our tribute of admiration.