TRAVEL INTO MISSOURI IN OCTOBER, 1838.

BY EDUARD ZIMMERMANN.

From among a number of old letters and diaries of some of the German settlers in Missouri the following account of a foot-tour extending about eighty miles into the state is described. The writer was a German, Eduard Zimmermann, who had recently come from Europe. The angle at which he views American conditions is not wholly without interest. This being the time when the great influx of Germans began in Missouri, this man's account doubtless was read with the keenest interest by his friends at home. The translation reads as follows:

"On the twelfth of October, I left my stopping place, which is a few miles east of the Mississippi river in the state of Illinois, in order to go to St. Louis. In company with a friend who had but recently come from Germany, I intend to spend a few weeks in wandering through at least a part of the new promised. land of the state of Missouri. We reached the Father of Waters at sunset, just in time to take a steamboat to the Missouri side. From sunrise to sunset the ferry boats do not run because of various dangers.

Previously I had seen St. Louis only during the hottest time of the year. How striking then was the difference between that season and this! Now activity and joyousness was seen on every hand. During my other visit all the shops were closed and empty, the streets forsaken and the places of amusement dead. Cholera and bilious fever raged as for a wager, and the hearse alone was constantly on the go. Sickness, death, burial, these were the themes of all conversation. Precautions and medical directions the sole objects of reflection and thought. How entirely different it was now. The streets were lively, the coffee houses and other places of entertainment were filled with people, the most care-free enjoyment of life had taken the place of deathly anxiety and precaution.

St. Louis is after all a second New Orleans, in spite of Duden's statement to the contrary. This is the place where the inestimable quantities of produce from the entire Missouri Valley and of the upper Mississippi Valley accumulate in order to find a good and speedy market on the Gulf of Mexico. Here is also the gathering place of men and merchandise coming from the Ohio River and the eastern states. The extra distance from the mouth of the Ohio is wholly disregarded because here the shippers and the travelers are certain of finding opportunities of rapid transportation to the mouth of the Mississippi, regardless of the stand of the water. Trade and commerce flourish more and more and will be brought to a still higher degree of efficiency when the proposed waterways through the state of Illinois are completed. Settlers from all the states of North America come here, and the still greater mass of European immigrants arrive here from New Orleans, from the seaports of the Atlantic, from New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore, to pour themselves into the fertile plains of Illinois, into the much-praised Missouri, into the recently opened state of Arkansas, even into southern Texas, where not only the beauties of nature but the exceptionally alluring material inducements attract the agriculturists.

St. Louis numbers at present scarcely more than ten thousand inhabitants, and yet it surpasses in the varied mixture of its population, in the great number of strangers within its midst and in its geographic significance and interest every city of its size in the old and the new world. Beside the many descendants of genuine Indian blood, a large part of the population consists of Frenchmen, Germans and Spaniards. The descendants of the Britons, of course, constitute the majority. Several thousand negro slaves and free colored people live here, and if on Sunday the devout are at their churches, and the care-free inhabitants have been lured to the country, then one might easily imagine himself to be walking on the streets of some city in San Domingo. Only black faces are then seen on the streets, only gaudily dressed groups of colored children play before the houses. In the

larger hotels and the 'entertainments' the haggard American gentlemen sit around the hearth in a semicircle, showing an almost Indian-like apathy, their legs crossed, rocking themselves and chewing tobacco, (a custom which in the interior of America is by no means regarded as improper). The Frenchman with lighted cigar hops around the billiard table in the coffee-house and wastes more breath in a minute than an American does in an entire day. The easy-going German, too, finds his place of entertainment, where the beverages are tolerable and the stay homelike and pleasant, and there amid the smoke of the pipes and the clinking of glasses a German song and the sound of musical instruments are heard.

Since the distribution of Duden's book St. Louis has become the main goal and gathering place, especially of the German immigrants. Those who live here or in the neighborhood are well informed regarding the affairs in Germany, and often times know more than their friends at home, because the newspapers are not subjected to censorship.

St. Louis has grown rapidly during recent years. This growth is hastened by the discovery of near-by lead mines, by the rapidly growing population in the interior of Missouri, and especially by the rapidly increasing Illinois town on the opposite bank of the river.

One of the main branches of trade in the city is the fur trade which is carried on by a company of specially privileged private citizens who have one of their main depots here. These special privileges consist, as far as I have been able to ascertain, in this, that other private individuals are not permitted to trade with the Indians for certain definite articles, especially firearms and tomahawks. These articles may be sold only by the company. The sale of intoxicating liquors is forbidden by the United States even to the fur companies, in order to prevent certain avaricious white persons from deriving exorbitant profits from this sort of trade. The enormous basin of the Missouri river which is visited annually by hired hunters who work for the fur companies (among whom there are many Germans but still more French adventurers,) furnishes thousands of buffalo hides and also quan-

tities of the still more valuable beaver pelts. Nothing is more fascinating than the stories of such hunters. The hunting expeditions usually depart from here in April or May. The usual time of service is eighteen months, of which more than half is required for the journey to and from the Rocky Mountains. Eighteen dollars and provisions, which in the far west consists almost solely of buffalo meat, constitutes their monthly wages. But then the hunters must agree to perform all sorts of service. Usually the hunters go by steam-boat as far as Liberty in Clay County, the most western town in Missouri. From there they go either on horseback or in small boats which usually have to be pulled by the men themselves, further into the interior. Council Bluffs, the outmost fortification of the United States, is about five hundred miles above St. Louis. This is said to be the farthest point to which settlements and civilization have thus far penetrated. The so-called forts further up the river on the important tributaries, the LaPlatte and the Yellowstone, have been established by the fur companies themselves, but they are in reality only pallisades not real forts, and must be regarded as simply the offices of the company. Several hundred miles west of the state of Missouri the large herds of buffalo begin. From there on these animals appear in such large herds that their actual number can no longer be accurately determined, but the space of ground which they occupy is taken as the measure of their number. At first I did not believe the stories of the hunters, but books of travel by trustworthy men assure me that the buffalo in those regions are actually counted by the mile. 'I saw five, ten, or fifteen miles of buffalo,' that is the current expression in regard to their number. The buffalo is shot with a rifle. The Indians who have a cunning way of enticing the animals into an enclosed place kill them with the bow and arrow. The buffalo is by no means dangerous and always seeks safety in flight. The beaver is caught with traps in his holes. The manner of trapping them has been learned from the Indians. Concerning the Indians I have heard various contradictory reports. Some depict them as peaceable and even honest,

while others cannot tell enough of their wicked intentions and their cunning. The various tribes differ in this regard. The relations of the Indians to the fur-trading companies must necessarily often times be strained because of the passion and the lack of self control on the part of these children of nature on the one hand and the avarice and selfishness of the whites on the other. All accounts agree that the Indians live in constant bloody feuds with one another. The Sioux, the Osages, the Delawares, the Mandans and the Blackfeet are the tribes with which the hunters have most to do on this side of the Rocky Mountains. The Blackfeet are said to be the most hostile and dangerous. In dress and manner of living the western tribes differ vastly from those which are still found in the states of the Union, though there appears to be no essential difference in their customs and their character.

We should have left St. Louis on the day following our arrival there, if we had not found many highly educated and most agreeable German immigrants who had just arrived and in whose company we felt comfortable and at home. Besides this, another cause for my stay was the horseraces which were scheduled to take place at this time, the like of which I had not seen either here or in Europe. The races took place about three miles from the city at the so-called Prairie House, a favorite place of amusement of the St. Louisans. The races were attended by large crowds. I believe indeed that these Americans are happy at such occasions, but we foreigners were not able to detect many evidences of it, for their joy and delight manifests itself in ways so much different from ours. External pomp and finery which make such a pleasing effect at our public gatherings are entirely wanting here. Varying costumes, music, songs and dancing, all that makes an European public gathering so cheerful and lively, one looks for in vain in America. The eye of the foreigner, at least, is able to distinguish only one class of people here. From the Governor to the jockey they all belong to the large class of gentlemen; at least, I was not able to discern any difference between them. But this sort

of monotony does not entertain. In this regard it is different among us. At home it is seen what each one is or what he professes to be. Every characteristic is sharply defined. There is the student, the soldier, the clergyman from the country, the merchant, the baron—crowded in a little space one believes to see the whole world before him. Of course we owe this entertaining mixture chiefly to our differences in rank and station, to our prejudices and to our arrangement of state. But who thinks of all this in the moments of joyful intoxication, who concerns himself with sad reflections during these fleeting moments of joy! It is enough that one is entertained and charmed; the question as to what produces this delight does not concern us in the moments of bliss. One thing that gives an amusing touch to the gatherings of the Americans, whether these gatherings be secular or religious in character, is the fact that everybody arrives on horseback. Women and children everybody is on horseback. In the country frequently two, sometimes even three persons, are seen riding one horse. Such a gathering has much in common with a camp of Cossacks, and the lover of horses certainly finds plenty material for entertainment. The Americans, like the English, are much given to betting, and at the horse races hardly anybody is a mere spectator. In the state of Missouri there are apparently no strict laws against gambling, especially against games of hazard, as in most of the other states, or these laws are waived on special occasions, for one roulette wheel stood beside another at these races. The number of persons who took part in the gambling is incomprehensible. Without dismounting from their horses many made a wager with the nearest by-stander and without apparently enjoying the exhilaration of the suspense rode on again when the result was made known.

On the morning of the fifteenth of October we started on our excursion into the valley of the Missouri. We took a westerly direction, slightly toward the north. We had made up our minds to follow the highway toward Jefferson City, the seat of government of the state of Missouri, and to deflect from this road only for the purpose of seeking out the settle-

ments of the educated Germans. Close to St. Louis the country is not especially attractive, but further on it becomes more so. Two German writers, one of whom is Friedrich Schmidt, have written contradictory reports as to the region immediately around St. Louis. The one asserts that it is prairie land while the other claims that it is woodland. Both are right. It is manifest that once everything was prairie. Everybody in the west knows how quickly a prairie is transformed into forest land if it is no longer set on fire in the autumns. Illinois, which is chiefly a prairie state, is constantly in the process of changing into the most attractive forest land. If Mr. Schmidt was here twenty-five years ago, he doubtless saw but little forest land. Even now there are still miles of prairie. The weather was delightful for our journey. The sky and the air reminded us of spring. The prairies are said to be enchantingly beautiful in spring. Even now they are still marvelous. Here and there the young hickory trees glowed in the most livid gold, numerous varieties of sumach glowed in fiery red and caused the wide prairie to appear like a huge carpet wrought in purple. Countless clusters of flowers of bright colors modified by the thousandfold autumnal shading of their leaves adorned the plains. After a few hours of rest with a cultured German family which lives about ten miles from St. Louis, we went about an equal distance further and spent the night with an American, who a few years ago immigrated from Virginia. Inns are found only in the cities and towns, or possibly along the mail-routes. The traveler is therefore obliged to make use of the hospitality of the settlers. This sort of hospitality is perhaps nowhere developed to a higher degree than in this new country where it would indeed be unnatural and inhuman if a stranger were not hospitably and cordially received. For our purpose of becoming acquainted with the land and its people we had chosen the right mode of traveling, for it compelled us to stop several times each day in the huts of the inhabitants. Necessarily we had to enter into conversation, and no theme was nearer at hand for discussion than the nature of the

country, the advantages and disadvantages of the settlement, the kind of produce raised, and the means of disposing of it.

By constantly losing our road we went much farther than we ought to have gone, but occasionally we struck upon a shorter way without knowing it. Below the river Au Vasse, which we had to cross in a canoe, the country is for the most part prairie land, except that part which is nearest the river. The cold became painful, and the icy wind which blew across this vast plain, where no elevation offered it resistance, seemed to us to come from the Rocky Mountains, many thousand miles to the northwest. We found no German settlements in this region, but were told that shortly before this time a deputy had bought land for some Germans in Bran (?) County, [perhaps Boone County], above Jefferson City. Before we reached the little town of Pinkney our way led us through Louther Island in Montgomery County. This island has been formed by a creek, which, having divided into two parts, flows in two channels into the Missouri. The island is exceptionally fertile. There are large and beautifully equipped settlements here which have much in common with the plantations of the southern states. Many of the houses of the homesteads are used exclusively as the dwellings of the black slaves. Here the farmers raise tobacco and cotton. Tobacco is said to do exceptionally well in Missouri and to be preferred to all other tobaccos on the market in New Orleans. The practice of cultivating this crop, however, might easily bring the condition of the slaves near to that condition which their unfortunate fellows suffer in the southern states. Up to this time the treatment of the slaves, who are in the country districts, is very good. Their material condition is very endurable. As a rule they live in families, have their own dwelling houses, their own live stock and till a certain amount of land for themselves, in which way they have their own earnings. This tolerable condition of the Missouri slaves by no means excuses the shameful practice of slavery, however, and against this sin committed against humanity one must strive with all energy. The Germans who live in Missouri have no slaves as yet, and are still op-

posed to the institution of slavery. However, it is possible that in time this feeling may become dulled, and their posterity may grow up with the idea that it is a necessary institution. No German ought to live in a slave state. Illinois, a free state, has a great advantage over its neighboring states. The breech between the free states and the slave states is inevitable, and who should then like to be found on the wrong side? Near Louther Island we met with a slight adventure. In the darkness of the night we had lost our way, and finally came to a broad creek. The icy coldness of the water rather than its depth repelled us from wading it. Finally our calling and shooting was answered by the barking of dogs in the distance. We went in the direction from which the barking came and were so fortunate as to find a sort of a bridge which had been made of felled logs, which brought us to a very new little settlement. The cold became more intense day by day, so that our hands became very cold on the rifle barrels. With every degree that the mercury fell our faith in Duden's pleasant winters in these western states vanished more and more. [A footnote states that the winters of the previous years were very severe.] To be sure there are many days which make us feel that we are ten and more degrees further south than we were in our old home, but there is no such thing in Missouri as a winter which approaches the rainy season of the tropics. There will be no change in the climate of the state until clearings and tilling of the soil have done their work.

Pinkney, a little town of a few houses, is prettily located. Here many Germans have settled and some of them have chosen very romantic locations. The Americans reproach the Germans for selecting the very poorest land at times, and this is on the whole true. The Germans prefer high lying regions because they are more healthful, open and attractive. This the Americans do not comprehend. They call only that land pretty which is rich in fertility. They never become attached to a given region. If they can sell their property to any sort of advantage, they are certain to do so, regardless of the fact that it may be the scene of their happy childhood

with its dearest memories. This characteristic of the Americans is not beautiful, but for the rapid settling of a new state it is very advantageous. It is also beneficial to the political condition of the Republic that the American is less susceptible to moral and ethical impressions. The more self-satisfied a people is the more easily it is governed, provided the right cords are touched. The so-called man of feeling is the toy of every ambitious person.

Ten miles below Pinkney is the new town of Marthasville in the newly created County of Warren which was formerly a part of Montgomery County. Here the German settlements are numerous. The settlers seem to think that their fortune is made if they are close to Duden's old home. All the Germans whom we met in Missouri belong to the educated classes, and in spite of the short time they have lived here many of them are already handsomely arranged in their homes. Most of them have forgotten the disappointment which at first gave them so many sad hours, and they fare better here than they did in their oppressed home country. Duden's place itself is not as poorly situated as some people say. But the wanderer seeks in vain for something that might with due apology be called a dwelling house. Neither are there any arbors and beautiful vistas to be observed. However, it must be remembered that the settlement has been lying idle for several years and on this account it makes an unattractive and unpleasant impression.

A beautiful road led us from Lake Creek to Missouritown, a very small, dead village, which, however, boasts of a very beautiful situation on the river. There are many German settlements along Lake Creek.—Limestone constitutes the greater part of all bluffs along the Missouri. Sandstone occurs more rarely. Granite is not found at all between the Alleghany and the Rocky Mountains. Our plan to return by way of St. Charles was frustrated when we again lost our road. It would have taken us too long to have found the right road again, so we returned to the right side of the Missouri at Lewis' Ferry. For a while we followed the river valley, crossing Bon Homme creek and Creve Cœur creek and on

the twenty-second of November we again reached St. Louis, our starting place, after three weeks of wandering."

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