

CHAPTER III.

About an hour and a half before daylight we were bowling along smoothly over the road, so smoothly that our cradle only rocked in a gentle, lulling way, that was gradually soothing us to sleep, and dulling our consciousness, when something gave away under us! The coach stopped. We heard the driver and conductor talking together outside, and rummaging for a lantern, and swearing because they could not find it. But presently, by the sounds, there seemed to be an examination going on, and then the driver's voice said:

Adormecer. LULL
Embotar. DULLING

"By George, the thoroughbrace is broke!"

Just then the conductor's face appeared at a lifted curtain, and his lantern glared in on us and our wall of mail matter. He said:

"Gents, you'll have to turn out a spell. Thoroughbrace is broke. "

Momento, corto plazo de tiempo. SPELL

We climbed out into a chill drizzle, and felt ever so homeless and dreary. When I found that the thing they called a "thoroughbrace" was the massive combination of belts and springs which the coach rocks itself in, I said to the driver:

Llovizna. DRIZZLE
Correa. BELT

¿How did it happen?"

"Why, it happened by trying to make one coach carry three days' mail, that's how it happened ", said he. "And right here is the very direction which is wrote on all the newspaper-bags which was to be put out for the Injuns for to keep 'em quiet."

Aquí mismo. RIGHT HERE

I knew that he was in labor with another of those winks of his, though I could not see his face, because he was bent down at work; and wishing him a safe delivery, I turned to and helped the rest get out the mail-sacks.

Guiños. WINKS
Deseando. WISHING

When they had mended the thoroughbrace we filled the two boots again, but put no mail on top, and only half as much inside as there was before. The conductor bent all the seat-backs down, and then filled the coach just half full of mail-bags from end to end. We objected loudly to this, for it left us no seats. But the conductor was wiser than we, and said

a bed was better than seats, and moreover, this plan would protect his thoroughbraces. We never wanted any seats after that. The lazy bed was infinitely preferable.

The conductor said he would send back a guard from the next station to take charge of the abandoned mail-bags, and we drove on.

It was now just dawn; and as we stretched our cramped legs full length on the mail sacks, and gazed out through the windows across the wide wastes of greensward clad in cool, powdery mist, to where there was an expectant look in the eastern horizon, our perfect enjoyment took the form of a tranquil and contented ecstasy.

Clavar la vista. GAZE
Revestido. CLAD
Polvoriento. POWDERY
Bruma. MIST

After breakfast, at some station whose name I have forgotten, we three climbed up on the seat behind the driver, and let the conductor have our bed for a nap. And by and by, when the sun made me drowsy, I lay down on my face on top of the coach, grasping the slender iron railing, and slept for an hour or more

Siesta. NAP

By and by we passed through Marysville, and over the Big Blue and Little Sandy; thence about a mile, and entered Nebraska. About a mile further on, we came to the Big Sandy--one hundred and eighty miles from St. Joseph.

As the sun was going down, we saw the first specimen of an animal known familiarly over two thousand miles of mountain and desert--from Kansas clear to the Pacific Ocean--as the "jackass rabbit." He is well named.

He is just like any other rabbit, except that he is from one third to twice as large, has longer legs in proportion to his size, and has the most preposterous ears that ever were mounted on any creature but a jackass.

I do not remember where we first came across "sage-brush". This is easily done, for if the reader can imagine a gnarled and venerable live oak-tree reduced to a little shrub two feet-high, with its rough bark, its foliage, its twisted boughs, all complete, he can picture the "sage-brush" exactly.

Rugoso. ROUGH
Torcido. TWISTED