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Arizona Trails

Until six months ago the word Arizona stirred in me only a few unrelated impressions - vivid - exciting - enduring - to be sure, but not upsetting. There was the Grand Canyon from rim to river - a glimpse of the Painted Desert - the Apache Trail - the town of Bisbee clambering up the walls of the Canyon, first seen after the lights of night were on. All unforgettable but still not over-whelming. Then came a look at a phenomenon - I can call it nothing else - that did upset me - something so outside of my notions of the physical world that it left me both scared and fascinated.

It was a Sahuaro Forest!

The Sahuaro I had seen many times in crossing the desert by train or huddled in a cacti garden or a strong and curious note in a photograph or painting, ^{2 knew} recalled it as a huge solitary fluted column, or more often a mammoth, fantastic candelabrum, thirty, forty, even fifty feet high and in season wearing a glorious capital of white flowers.

But it was not this solitary giant cactus, this "Sage of the Desert", as its Arizona lovers call it, that so agitated me. It was the creatures - for the Sahuaro seemed ⁵ now more than a plant to me - it was the creatures when I first saw them stretching over thousands upon thousands of acres along the foothills of the mountains that

enclose the plain of Tucson, running for miles upon miles to the westward and southward over the still untouched desert or most impressive of all climbed from the roadside up to the very tops of the buttes in the gloomy Sabina Canyon.

There/^{they} stood rank upon rank too thick for a human to pass through safely and yet never touching one another, quite unlike the neighboring trees of the forests I know, trees which continually nod to one another, carress, interlock. No, each Sahuaro is an individual - an individual protected from the touch of its own kind as from the touch of all that moves by an armor of strong slender daggers of its own making - sharp as stilettos - and as dangerous.

All around and between these millions of strange and solitary creatures grow numberless fantastic relatives, cacti like the Sahuaro, armed as he is. They bear beautiful names:- ocotillo, cholla, prickly pear, yucca, night-blooming cereus. Exciting as each is in itself they are but a body guard to this ^{ev} great leader. He is the dominating figure in these forests which the longer I looked at them took on more and more of the character of vast armies, forever standing silent and watchful guarding the land from the invader, man.

But I soon found that man around Tucson at least shared little of my strong feeling about the Sahuaro. As a matter of fact they are so used to them that they scarcely notice them. Not that they have domesticated them but they have learned to thumb their noses at them and do.

The rich come out of the East and middle West and buy

enormous tracts of the forest - run long driveways through them - build attractive and interesting homes with every possible comfort; their big windows looking out upon acre upon acre of the formidable and forbidding creatures standing in array up to their very door steps..

Long and daring women go into the desert, the foothills, the Canyons, taking up a hundred and sixty, six hundred and forty acres, and actually make themselves homes - very lovely homes, too, sometimes in these sinister surroundings. They landscape with a keen eye to the future commercial value of the Sahuaro patriachs on their acreage. no two of which as near as I could make out ^{are} ~~were~~ ever alike. Here these dauntless ladies settle regardless of what for me would be a deterrent as powerful as an active volcano for a neighbor. The rattlesnake is the alley of the Sahuaro and it may be found day or night lying across one's threshold or outside mesmerizing one's cat!

It was the women of Arizona who broke the spell the Sahuaro was rapidly laying on me, first - the women of the State Legislature. The tenth session of that body - Arizona has been a state but twenty years - was held last spring when I was in the South west and I immediately realized that women were cutting a figure in it. As a matter of fact I never had had quite so strong an impression of women cutting a figure in a Legislative body, certainly not in the Congress of the United States, as I got from following what went on in the Legislature of Arizona last winter in the daily reports of the body that came from the hand of one of the best political reporters that I have come across for many a day - J. Falbet Smith of the Arizona star.

Mr. Smith relished his legislature. He liked the members - men and women - their seriousness and their antics - their loyalties and their foolishness - their frankness and their evasion and he spread it all before his readers with humor, kindness and a keen sense of political and personal biases.

It was Mr. Smith who introduced me to the bloc of seven women in the lower house - a respectable proportion of the sixty-three members which ^{form} that body - seven women, who apparently for the sake of the looks of things, sat together in the chamber, though as far as I could make out that was the only form of co-operation practiced by them. Each of them seemed to go on her own looking after the district she represented, quite regardless of feminist dogma which is the way it must be if women are ever to be of use as legislators..

These women were decidedly of use. Take the Dean of them - the lady from Yuma. I was interested in her first of all because she came from Yuma.

Now I have never set foot, only crossed it by train, ^{in that county - one of the 12 into which} ^{the} ⁹⁵⁶ ^{13,000} ^{square miles} ^{make up} ^{Yuma is divide of} but the name has always had a place in my cupboard of names kept for themselves alone, that is because I like the sound of them - love to tell them as a good religieuse does her beads. Then geographically Yuma is something to be reckoned with if you are considering Arizona's future for she occupies the Southwest corner of the state, only the Colorado River between her and some two hundred and fifty miles of the California border. Thus she may be said to be an outpost guarding

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Colorado River

She hoped to develop the sites along the river within the state, ~~from the top down through~~ a series of dams as the Salt River has been developed. The famous Roosevelt Dam, one of the two greatest in the country first impounds the waters of the Salt River. Below it are three more dams using the same water for power and this water when it finally runs out is used to irrigate the Great Valley in which the city of Phoenix stands. "That is the way we must develop the Colorado," said long-headed Arizonians.

But some ~~years~~ ¹⁴ years ago California began to fear that the Colorado River might, in case of an exceptional flood, over-flow and destroy the portion of the Imperial Valley which the Government had made fertile by irrigation. It was by no means an unreasonable fear since the river carries awful volumes of water at times and since the Imperial Valley lies below the river level and in its track in case of over-flow. To ask Congress to dam the waters that this danger would be averted was proper enough. I never heard any Arizonian objecting to flood control, although I have heard more than one declare the danger was greatly exaggerated and hint that the upstart of the matter proves that flood control was an excuse rather than a reason. However, if I were raising vegetables for a living in the Imperial Valley I'd certainly feel safer if the Colorado was on a leash!

The upstart of the matter was to be brief - the passage of a bill by Congress, the Swing-Johnson bill, of which appropriated

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against possible ^{the} encroachments of a powerful, prosperous and entirely self-satisfied neighbor.

Though Yuma has probably not over three people to a square mile she has a magnificent area - she is larger by some two thousand square miles than the state of Massachusetts. Out of Yuma you could make, as far as land surface goes, two Connecticuts and have something left over, five Delawares and ten Rhode Islands! Nice little country you see and not without other advantages, for across her runs the great Gila River and the Southern Pacific Railroad.

Now ~~too~~ ^{very} the lady from Yuma was quite enough to arouse my interest but I soon found that Mrs. Nellie Bush, that being the lady's name, was a legislator worth looking at for herself alone. Not only had she served for six terms in the Arizona House, but she is a United States Commissioner, an attorney at law and quite as important as either the owner and skipper of a ferry which for years has served travelers making their way across the Colorado River at the town of Parker, headed from California to Arizona - from Arizona to California.

But Parker is growing, travel is increasing and Mrs. Bush realized that though it would mean the end of her ferry the town ought to have a bridge across the Colorado and as she believed the state should build it. So in the last legislature you had the spectacle of a woman bringing in a bill which adopted would destroy her own business.

When it came to a vote there were many generous things said about her unselfishness. "I have ridden on Mrs. Bush's ferry a number of times," the speaker of the House said. "I admire her for coming and fighting for her people even at her own expense and therefore I am going to vote for her bill. I'll vote aye."

"There was a thunderous applause," wrote J. Talbot Smith, "and again when it was announced that the bill had passed."

Mrs. Bush not only held the interest of the public above her own interests she had a sense of the relative value of appropriation. In her judgment there were things more valuable to Arizona than even her bridge. There was what was called the "The Barefoot Boy Bill" - a bill increasing the vocational training in the State so as to reach groups for which so far there had been no provision. Nellie Bush was for it, and when the objection was made that the state budget couldn't stand it she said:- "They have just voted me \$75,000 for my bridge but something for the children is more important. If we can't have both I'll give up the bridge."

No wonder she was popular with her colleagues. They liked her, too, for her frank tongue - her neat seizing of a situation. There was much talk of compelling the Arizona Highway Commission which for some reason was suspected by the legislature to publish in its own organ "the Highway magazine" the minutes of all its meetings.

Mrs. Bush thus disposed of the project ^{thru} neatly. —

"A magazine," she said, "published by the Commission will publish only ^{those} ~~what~~ parts of its minutes ^{where} it wants to publish."

An experienced and unafraid lady you see. She is also one who still believes in spite of her twelve years political experience, in legislative decorum, something in which the members of the Arizona Body are at times a little short. ^{at} One point in the recent session, when the discussion had grown particularly hilarious, she brought them promptly to order by calling out, "Come, come, now let's be studious instead of kids." And the Body immediately became studious."

It was the women who broke up my Samaro complex and it was a woman who turned my attention to what I am inclined to think is the most interesting water power problem in the country — far more interesting than the St. Lawrence or Muscle Shoals. That is the Hoover Dam, now building by Congress on the Colorado River between Nevada and Arizona. And the woman who made me feel that I should like to know all about how this extraordinary undertaking passed the Congress of the United States is one of the most distinguished in the State — Jane Rider.

Some time ago at the request of a newspaper editor I made out a list of the fifty women in this country who to my mind are contributing most to our educational, social and artistic life. When my list was complete I confessed great pride in the achievements it

showed. But there was one feature about it which was not satisfactory. It took on too much of the elder-statesman character. I felt the need of a younger fifty. When I was in Arizona I found my first candidate - Jane Rider.

Although a most devoted and enthusiastic Arizonian she was not born in the State. She did graduate from its University however in 1911 and six years later was made the director of the State Laboratory looking after water, sewage, possible contamination of all sort, as well as counselling with local health offices the state over. She gave me the impression of knowing every rock and rill in Arizona as well as every miner, cowboy and prospector.

Jane Rider's fame is by no means confined to Arizona. Every National Health Association knows her and last winter she was elected an associate member of the American Society of Civil Engineers - the second woman to be so recognized.

Now it was Jane Rider who gave me my first understanding of the righteousness of the indignation all Arizonians, regardless of political faith, ^{that} feel in spite of their protests, their refusal to ^{send} consult the United States, should be spending some One Hundred Sixty-five million dollars in building the Hoover Dam.

"Congress is stealing our water - stealing it and giving it to California," so one irate citizen told me. "If this goes on we'll secede!"

Jane Rider was indignant but she did not talk secession.

instead she gave me facts and figures that finally sent me to a map of the River which the United States is damming.

A A little study of ^{the} map made me entirely sympathetic with Arizona's anger and not a little curious about the political procedure which had "convinced" Congress. Look at the map yourself, and see if you do not share my sympathy with Arizona - also my curiosity about the deal!

There are seven states "on the Colorado", that is, seven states which rightly have something to say about its waters: ⁷ three of them, Wyoming, Colorado and New Mexico because they furnish it water ^{of the Colorado River from source to mouth} California and Nevada, because it separates sections of their Eastern boundaries from Arizona - they give the river little water and no part of it lies within their territory ^{is stone} - Utah, because the river is formed in her territory by the union there of two of her largest rivers, the Green and the Grand, also because some ~~about~~ one hundred and fifty miles of the river as the crow flies is within her territory. ^{come} First Arizona for all three reasons: - she furnishes more water to the Colorado than any other state, the river ^{from} from her Western boundary for some five hundred miles and also most important three hundred and fifty miles of it are entirely within the state - three hundred and fifty miles along which ^{several so I am told several} are possible sites for Dams.

Now Arizona has always looked on the Colorado as her greatest future natural resource. The river would be there to irrigate her deserts and give her power long after her ^{mines} ~~rivers~~ were exhausted.

One Hundred Sixty five million dollars to build a dam, not in the upper reaches of the Colorado River ^{leaving} having opportunity for a succession of dams, ~~the~~ Arizona's plan - a plan by which floods could be perfectly controlled, but at the lowest point - a point on the border of Nevada and Arizona, a dam which will flood back in such a way, so engineers tell me, as to destroy all or at least the best sites in Arizona making it impossible for her ^{ever} to use the water of the three hundred and fifty miles of river running within her borders.

Why should Congress have consented to such an arrangement?

I suppose that it was because California ^{has been having power to set it} ~~wanted the water, wanted it~~ ^{she wanted} for light and power for Los Angeles and smaller towns of Southern California, ^{as well as} ~~wanted it to~~ irrigate more acres in the Imperial Valley - at least the bill which provides for the Hoover Dam makes arrangements for giving some sixty six percent of the power generated to Southern California and also allows thirty six thousand ^{million dollars} to build a canal from near Yuma to the Imperial Valley; ~~this~~ Canal, seventy five miles long and in some places nearly three hundred feet, cuts through tremendous sand dunes. It will redeem the desert to produce more vegetables although the Imperial Valley hasn't a market for all she raises now. Another of our "economic monstrosities" - developments to produce what can't be used - another surplus factory. At least that is what irate Arizonians say. They would like to use their share of the water to grow vegetables themselves, I presume!

1 - "An All-American canal" ~~rather in the~~
canal ~~canal~~ tapping the Colorado in the
Mexican border & flowing through a part
of Mexico before it reaches the Imperial Valley

(2) However Arizona is going to have the
chance to dispute the "All American
Canal" - for the Eastern ~~part~~ ^{part} will have
to be in the territory. (of the necessary division
dam), it looks now as if the necessary
time necessary will be blowing
whether by that time Arizona is
in a better time than

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Arizona's
at this is?
But who can wonder? Congress has arranged to spend an immense sum of public money to give to California at least sixty six percent of the water of the Colorado River, leaving Arizona about eighteen percent and the rest to Nevada. Look at your map and call it just if you can. Then ~~contemplated~~ *contemplated* the marvels that political strategy can work!

Arizona was "mad" - properly enough, after Mr. Hoover signed the bill in 1929 and she appealed to the Supreme Court.

she continued
 "Congress should be forbidden to go ahead with Boulder Hoover Dam. It meant taking from Arizona something which belonged to her. Was it not unconstitutional for a Congress to take the wealth of one state to give to another?"

But the Supreme Court held that Congress did have a right to build the Dam but - most important - Arizona also had a right to her share of the water of the River.

This decision came after I left Tucson last Spring, so I wrote back to my friend, W. R. Mathews, the Editor of the Arizona Star, asking if they were going to secede as I had heard angry gentlemen darkly mutter!

"Will the state secede" I asked the editor of the Arizona Star - (he)
after the decision was
 "No, no," answered Mr. Mathews, "Arizona has submitted to the inevitability of the Hoover Dam. She has lost that battle. The dam will be built. In the future, she will battle for a more equitable distribution of the water than was made by the Santa Fe

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~~compact.~~ Under the terms of the ~~Santa Fe compact~~ and the Swing-
~~Johnson bill~~ *and the accompanying compact* Arizona is already using her share of the water. She
 will never accept such a division. She feels that the Colorado
 River is her greatest potential asset and that the water and the
 revenue from its development means much to her citizens a generation
 in the future. Arizona will be in a strong position to get an
 equitable division of the water because Los Angeles cannot take a
 drop of it for the cities of the Los Angeles basin until she secures
 permission from Arizona to build a diversion dam at Parker."

"At Parker" where Mrs. Nellie Bush of Yuma for years has
 run a ferry - a ferry which she did to death in the last legislature
 by securing an appropriation for a bridge. If there is to be a
 California - Arizona Dam at Parker as now arranged, Mrs. Nellie Bush
 will have bigger fish to fry than navigating an occasional traveler
 across the River. She may have been unwittingly serving her best
 interests as well as those of Yuma when she argued a bridge out of
 the legislature last winter!

If I found the present day women of Arizona engrossing
 it was no less true of their immediate predecessors - those who
 have prepared the way for them, the women who since the Civil War
 have been doing pioneer work in making homes - creating towns -
 founding schools and churches - organizing social agencies of every
 known variety - making the state something both liveable and lovable.

It so happened that I was well placed to get first hand glimpses of these pioneer women. My business in Arizona was to give a series of talks before the students of the English Department of the State University at Tucson on the gathering, correlating, digesting and retailing of biographical material. The students who took time out of their regular college work to listen to me had of course to be given credit for their sacrifice. The head of the department gave a choice between an examination on the matter, which I presented, and the writing of a biographical sketch, six to eight thousand words in length, on a subject of their own choosing. *H* stirred as I had been by the *Saharo* forests, amazed and stimulated by what it had meant for men and women to conquer them, to build this smiling town and this eager, friendly University where they once were supreme, suggested to the young people in my classes who had been born and reared in Arizona to look into the archives of their own families for subjects. I suspected back of them all were stories of real adventure, courage and endurance. Nothing else could have opened the state, *built* the homes from which these young people had come, built this college.

Many of the young Arizonians sprang to this suggestion and came to me in my conference hours with stories particularly of the women of their families, stories of what brought them to the land in the first place and what had happened to them - held them - stories to make you proud of woman-kind.

It was not part of my business to look over the sketches presented but from my talks with students a picture gradually formed itself in my mind of this Arizona woman pioneer - a composite picture - every detail of which was authentic. I believe it to be typical of the spirit and the type of experiences of the first comers - the woman who prepared the way for the women of today.

She was Texas born - my composite lady - the wife of a slave-owning cattle rancher - killed towards the close of the Civil War. She was twenty four years old when her husband died leaving her with two children, a boy and a girl. Then came the fall of the Confederacy - the freeing of the slave. What should she do? How re-organize her life to meet a new world? The question ^{many} men and women both of conquered and conquering natures must ask after every war.

All about her she heard talk of seeking new homes in the ^{unsettled} ~~new~~ territories of the Southwest. She knew men who had taken all they had, families and cattle, and gone. She resolved to follow them.

It must have been about 1868 or 1870 that she headed her cattle westward with her boy of six and girl of four, a few negroes who preferred family to freedom and a white cowboy or two. Somehow she found her way to the valley of the Little Colorado - green fields there - trees - ^a/limitless range for cattle.

In this wild land she put up her tent, built her ranch house and for years raised cattle, subject to all of the their exciting hazards of the business - the raids of lawless cowboys - of

equally lawless Mexicans - every now and then the fear of an attack by the Apache.

She became a competent cattlemaster, able to spend days in the saddle rounding up. She could throw a rope or brand a calf with the best of her men.

In spite of all that she suffered from Indians and outlaws, she somehow lived through it and in time Indians and outlaws became her friends and protectors. She grew rich without realizing it.

From the beginning the education of her children was her first thought. They must know all she knew of the life she had left as well as how to make a life for themselves in this new setting. She had been born to the graceful social ways of the Southland. She could dance and talk. She read the books of her day, could speak French and Spanish. All that she knew she taught her children. In time she acquired an extraordinary tutor, a young and cultivated Mexican, a wanderer, possibly an outlaw - she never knew. He had found his way into her territory, had been taken in and gradually had become a member of the family, an invaluable asset in the education of her children.

They grew up - married - her boy gradually became her manager, taking from her shoulders many of the burdens, though never the control.

Her girl became the wife of a mining engineer who had been called to Arizona by the opening of the great mines of the Southeast corner of the territory. A grand daughter of this woman, the

great grand daughter of my pioneer was in my Tucson class. It was she who told me of this great grandmother, now in her nineties, a woman who still could ride a *factiona* horse, who held her head *back* straight, whose eyes were clear, who still was the head of the family.

To the scores of young people who love in holidays to swarm over her ranch home, she is an unending delight. To them when in the mood she tells stories of the south - pre war days - of the failure of the Southern *Cause* - of her trek from Texas to the Arizona territory - of outlaws and Indians - of the wars of cattle and sheep men - of the trying days when the United States assumed control of the land on which her cattle had so long wandered free.

She was a woman who had accepted what came. *She* ~~half~~ *had* wrested from each situation a fuller understanding of life. Her young people felt this. They knew, too, that she had not lost faith in adventure; that the hardship and danger she had suffered had not bred in her the desire to save her progeny from sharing the life that had made her what she is. She expected them to carry on.

Is Arizona to see more women of her kind? Disasters and the hardships which follow them have always bred her like. After every great national catastrophe, political, economic, social, there have been women who seeing fortunes swept away, opportunity destroyed, have dared to follow or lead their men into new lands - there to rebuild.

The present disorganization of the world, the Great Depression, which is but the logic of the Great War, is today forcing its victims to seek fortune in new fields.

Last Spring one saw from the side of the road in the Southwest the interminable trek of thousands of men and women who had taken to the road for a living. As a rule, I take it, these people came from the regions of Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, devastated by surpluses - too much oil - too much wheat. They had hung on until everything was gone, excepting a car, a mule, household furniture, and then gathering these together, sometimes a single family, sometimes a group, they had taken to the road seeking their fortunes.

I could not but feel that possibly we had in them the making of a future - stable gypsy class. It is easy for many men and women to take to the road as a home and the "fliver" is a ^{nomadic} ~~management~~ to a wandering life. Already there is a "fliver gypsy" on our highways. Someday they will unite.

But I soon came to believe as I watched the procession, studying ^{ed} the encampments, that there were scores, perhaps hundreds of these families who had ^{would} ~~started~~ like my pioneer Arizona woman ~~to~~ make homes in ^{this same} ~~a new~~ land.

Sitting beside the road I saw many a curious caravan which strengthened their ~~notion~~ ^{and} notion. Here is one which came trailing by. It was headed by a long wagon drawn by four mules and on the wagon was an extraordinary ^{and} heterogeneous collection of farm tools, plows,

harrows, a reaper, a fine set of oil driller's tools. Back of this equipment there came a fairly solid Ford chassis carrying a tiny house quite shipshape, windows, doors. What was inside I do not know but I could guess for a woman looked out of one of the windows.

Then came more mules drawing a wagon on which was mounted large pieces of timber, wheel barrows, a small wagon and more tools; and then a wagon with household furniture, cook stove, bed springs, rolls of bedding, carpet, things saved from deserted homes. And back of that another Ford, pretty dilapidated, possibly picked up on the trek, then four mules.

"What in the world are they doing," I asked. "Those are good looking men. That's a valiant woman."

"Looking for work," was the answer. "They will stop at the ranches, pick up a day of plowing, odd jobs of one kind or another. They will visit the oil fields for evidently there are drillers among them. They may be able to pick up a job there. They are not living off the country, they are working their way looking for an opening and one of these days they will find their chance. It is not at all impossible that the outfit will find a ranch that they can work on shares and eventually buy. There is still that chance left in the country."

It gave me a new aspect for the "fliver gypsy." No doubt he is often a loafer, his love of wandering and ease has gotten the better of him, but I am convinced that again and again, and so

those that knew the road better than I confirmed my impression, these people were taking care of themselves. They were not waiting for the Government to take care of them. They know that under our system a man is his own best help and they believe in acting on their faith.

It is an exhibit of democracy, particularly hopeful in times like these. When men and women make up their minds that there is no magic that is going to put them back on their feet, that they must find their own way, some of them at least will take roots in new places.

Among these trekkers are women with the blood and the will of pioneers in them. They will win out and sixty years from now out in Arizona will be telling their great grand daughters tales of their trek of 1931 - when stripped of fortunes by the Great Depression they gathered together their unsaleable movables and worked their way to the Southwest, took up a strip of Sahuaro Forest, ^{worked} ~~ought~~ on shares ^{of} ~~a~~ deserted ranch and finally wrested fortune from disaster; telling in 1991 what happened to her in 1931 as in 1931 my pioneer^x great grandmother tells what happened to her sixty years ago:-

For life repeats itself and as always yields its sweet to those who bravely drink its bitter.

made for d
Well, this is the kind of woman, this composite creature,
that my students gave me material for, which to me is typically
Arizonian. And all of them scattered over the great state and out
of them I look for material that will keep Arizona free and daring.
Disaster like the over-throw of the Confederacy to my composite lady
was back I find of so many woman who aroused admiration. I could
not wonder as I saw what was going on in the Southwestern country
today that it might not be that Arizona was going to get a new crop
of her kind disaster of our day.

There is plenty of it abroad on the roads to the Southwest
today. When you look into it you got to feel that great things may
come out of those who are really grappling with these situations into
which conditions have thrown them. The problem of our so-called
depression, really the topics of our abundance, our craze to produce
not only a mass but all that the land will yield, all the oil that we
know about, all that the wheat of vast acres will yield, all the
vegetables that irrigation make possible, to produce and not to
consider markets.

This over-abundance the very necessities of life
that have filled the roads of the Southwest in the last two years
with a of wanderers that mapped the roads of any land at
any time.