

X.

THE GEYSERS OF THE YELLOWSTONE.¹

THE traveller by railway across the American continent, after traversing several hundred miles of barren plain and sandy desert, finds at last that the line begins sensibly to descend. The panting engine moves along with increasing ease and diminished noise as it enters a long valley that leads out of the western plains, sweeping by the base of high cliffs, past the mouths of narrow lateral valleys, crossing and recrossing the watercourses by slim creaking bridges; now in a deep cutting, now in a short tunnel, it brings picturesque glimpses into view in such quick succession as almost to weary the eye that tries to scan them as they pass. After the dusty monotonous prairie, to see and hear the rush of roaring rivers, to catch sight of waterfalls leaping down the crags, scattered pine-trees crowning the heights, and green meadows carpeting the valleys, to find, too, that every mile brings you farther into a region of cultivated fields and cheerful homesteads, is a pleasure not soon to be forgotten. The Mormons have given a look of long-settled comfort to these valleys. Fields, orchards, and hedgerows, with neat farm buildings, and gardens full of flowers, remind one of bits of the old country rather than

¹ *Macmillan's Magazine*, 1881.