

with cattle, leave daily for different eastern points: the stock-yards are necessarily extensive, and the business carried on heavy. Being situated on the very outskirts of civilization, it naturally becomes the nucleus to which the most vile and desperate characters — outlaws, gamblers, and desperadoes, horse thieves, and murderers — are gathered; as a consequence, crime, drunkenness, and its attendant evils are common, and are not concealed. Almost every night has its row, and murders are of frequent occurrence.

A woman who lives here, and whose husband works in the lumber-yard where we were loading some wagons, told us that they had lived here but two months, and in that time there had been twelve murders committed in the town; several other persons had been carried away from gambling and drinking saloons with broken heads and other wounds, of whose death or recovery she had not heard. In going to the post office I scarcely saw a man who had not a bowie-knife and at least one revolver dangling from his waist, while the most horrid oaths and imprecations, even from the lips of women, constantly assailed my ears as I walked in the street.

Being obliged to remain here over night, we went out, and made our camp about a half mile from the town, and established a night-watch, in order, if possible, to prevent our horses and mules from taking too abrupt a leave before we were in readiness. Camp was visited no less than three times during the night

by prowling marauders, who, being promptly challenged, made some excuse for their visit, and withdrew.

Wichita, where we arrived on the morning of the 11th, and where we recruited our provisions for crossing the plains, is situated on the east bank of the Arkansas River, in a broad valley of exceedingly rich soil, where good water is easily obtained by digging, and bids fair to be a place of considerable importance, being surrounded by an excellent country, which only awaits the tide of immigration to become one of the most productive parts of the west. But few homesteaders' claims as yet are taken in this lovely valley. This place is named from the Wichita Indians, who, with a portion of the Caddoes, remained loyal to the government during the late rebellion, and were driven from their homes in the south-west by the more civilized Indians, many of whom, having become possessed of negro slaves, sympathized with the Confederate States, and made war upon those who remained loyal. The latter fled to this place, and, making their camp here, remained until after the close of the war, when they returned to their country, in the south-western part of Indian Territory.

Wichita is nearly as large as Newton, about thirty miles from it, and eighteen months of age. It does not appear to have as extensive a business, on account of not being located on any railroad line, though there is a branch line in progress of construction from Newton, which, when completed, will be likely to remove most of the cattle shipping to this place.