



Hell
on
The Rio Grande

[PHOTOGRAPH OF RIO GRANDE]

The Rio Grande at Laredo, Texas
AS SEEN BY THE
..Second Maine Infantry..
1916

HELL ON THE RIO GRANDE

The devil, we're told, in hell was chained,
And a thousand years he there remained,
He never complained, nor did he groan;
But determined to start a hell of his own,
Where he could torment the souls of men
Without being chained to a prison pen.

So he asked the Lord if He had on hand
Anything left when He made the land.
The Lord said, "Yes, I had plenty on hand
But I left it down on the Rio Grande.
The fact is, old boy, the stuff is so poor,
I don't think you could use it in hell anymore."

But the devil went down to look at the truck,
And said if it came as a gift, he was stuck;
For after examining it, careful and well,
He concluded the place was too dry for hell.
So in order to get it off His hands
God promised the devil to water the lands.

For he had some water, or rather some dregs,
A regular cathartic that smelt like bad eggs.
Hence the deal was closed and the deed was given
And the Lord went back to His place in Heaven.
And the devil said, "I have all that is needed
To make a good hell," and thus he succeeded.

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He began to put thorns on all the trees,
And he mixed the sand with millions of fleas.
He scattered tarantulas along all the roads,
Put thorns on the cacti and horns on the toads;
He lengthened the horns of the Texas steers,
And put an addition on jackrabbits' ears;

He put a little devil in the broncho steed,
And poisoned the feet of the centipede.
The rattlesnake bites you, the scorpion stings,
The mosquito delights you by buzzing his wings,
The sand burrs prevail and so do the ants,
And those that sit down need half soles on their pants

The devil then said that throughout the land,
He'd manage to keep up the devil's own brand.
And all would be mavericks unless they bore
The marks of scratches and bites by the score.
The heat in the summer is a hundred and ten,
Too hot for the devil and too hot for men.

The wild boar roams through the black chaparral,
It's a hell of a place he has for a hell.
The red pepper grows by the bank of the brook,
The Mexicans use it in all that they cook.
Just dine with a Greaser and then you will shout,
"I've hell on the inside as well as without."

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