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TWENTY-FIVE years ago I had the sharp zest of the explorer. It whets one's curiosity to a feather-edge to enter a country which, so far as modern civilization is concerned, is devoid of a past; where there are no works of man except the few traces of nomadic Indian occupancy and the only history revealed is that written by the great forces of Nature. Thus it was very interesting to enter the Black Hills with Custer in 1874; to penetrate a country unmapped and unnamed; to see washed out the first thimbleful of gold; to plant the standard of nationality and civilization on a lofty height and listen to strains of patriotic music resounding for the first time through those silent hills. We were the harbingers of a new civilization. The practical question to the enthusiastic miner was, "Where shall I stake my claim?"

There is another zest, more delicate but not less keen. It is the zest of the mythologist, the archæologist, the philologist and the student of letters whose interest in a country is heightened by its long past, the mellowed accretions of myth, tradition and language, its rich treasures of art and the resplendent glow of imaginative literature which invests it like a halo. That is the difference between the Black Hills