

LOLA OURY SMITH

By *EFFIE R. KEEN*

In passing through Riverside, California, recently, I had the pleasure of a visit with Col. Cornelius C. Smith, U. S. Army, Retired, and members of his family. The country home of the Smith's is at 4933 Jurupa Avenue, near Riverside, and is a treasure house of trophies gathered from the far places of the world where his duties as an army officer carried the colonel during his years of service.

Col. Smith is a native of Arizona, and a contributor to this magazine. I had heard of his mother and had some data concerning her. This data, and information given by Col. Smith, make up this sketch, which will interest old timers of Southern Arizona.

Dolores Oury Smith, affectionately known to old Tucsonians as Lola Oury—the eldest child of the late Wm. S. Oury, prominently featured in "Some Unpublished History of the Southwest," by Col. Smith, and now being published in this magazine—was born in Sacramento, California, in 1852. When a little girl of four, she came in a covered wagon with her father and mother to Tucson. Her sister, Louise, who afterwards married Col. J. B. Girard, Surgeon, U. S. Army, was born on this journey.

At the age of ten, Lola was taken by her father to St. Louis, Missouri, and placed in the Sacred Heart Convent in that city, where she remained until she was sixteen, returning to Tucson early in 1868. In July of that year she married Capt. Gilbert C. Smith, U. S. Army, then stationed in Tucson. The wedding was interestingly reported in the *WEEKLY ARIZONIAN*, of Tucson, under date of July 4, 1868, as follows:

"Wedding in Tucson"

"Although cupid is not young, he is not the least the worse; his locks are still golden; his cheeks glowing, and the bright, twinkling glance of his eye is a radiant as ever.

"So we must judge from his success in Tucson, for we, today,



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have to chronicle a wedding celebrated with much good cheer. On Wednesday evening Capt. Gilbert C. Smith, U. S. Army, long the popular quartermaster at this place, was joined in the holy bonds of matrimony to Lola, daughter of William S. Oury, Esq. The prominence of Capt. Smith and the Oury family, one of the best known in Arizona, makes the event the great one of the season. The din of generous preparation had been heard for many weeks, and the ceremony was witnessed by perhaps the largest gathering of notables ever convened at a wedding in the territory. The governor and all the civil officers living below the Gila; Gen. Crittenden, his staff and officers from nearly all the military posts; the leading American and Mexican citizens of Tucson and other towns, and the ladies (God bless them!), were all in attendance. The house had been tastefully decorated with evergreens and flowers, and was brilliantly lighted, the guests were dressed in a manner that would have been creditable in the large cities of the Atlantic, and the supper was a complete triumph. To say that 'all went merry as a marriage bell' is to give but a poor idea of the hilarity of the occasion. Everyone seemed in glowing spirits. The parents of the blushing bride were wreathed in smiles and had a hearty welcome for their guests; the bride herself was exquisitely dressed and looked better than ever before, which is saying much. The vicar and his assistant performed the wedding service according to the interesting form of the Roman Catholic Church, and the bride and bridegroom sustained themselves with admirable dignity, seeming fully to realize

'That marriage rightly understood
'Gives to the tender and the good
'A paradise below.'

"We won't pretend to say how many warm kisses the bride received, or how many cordial, and we believe, most sincere congratulations were showered upon her and the gallant captain. If good wishes avail anything, then indeed must their wedded life prove a 'paradise below.' After the congratulations the dancing began, the music being furnished by the Camp Grant troupe, and it was kept up until broad daylight, with a proper interval for the feast of edibles and drinkables which had been so lavishly spread. Those who call Arizona a dry desert country should have seen the groaning tables and tasted the various luxuries. The substantial were washed down by some of the choicest wines ever brought to the territory, and the health, long life and complete felicity of the newly married was the ever ringing merry toast."

Mrs. Smith was a beautiful, a clever and a remarkable woman, possessed of wit and charm, and early took a prominent place in the social life of the old army, and

in communities near wherever her husband happened to be stationed. She is remembered by her friends as a talented and accomplished woman. She danced perfectly, sang well, was a brilliant conversationalist and a superb horsewoman. She possessed to the highest degree that attribute which made the person to whom she was talking think that he or she was the one being in the world in whom she was thoroughly interested. Among her Mexican friends, who were legion, "Lola" was "muy simpatica," and what more could a Mexican say in praise and admiration?

On her periodic visits to Tucson she never forgot to see the lowly, as well as those in her own sphere. She was known throughout the entire army for vivacity and hospitality, and her home at the various posts where she lived was always an open house; a place sought by officers and their ladies, and where there was much social activity. She numbered among her friends, in early days in Arizona, many officers who later in life gained distinction—General Chaffee, commander of the American forces in the Boxer troubles in China; General Shafter, commander of the army in Cuba which defeated the Spaniards; General W. H. Carter, who became adjutant General of the Army; Generals O. B. Willcox, Geo. S. Anderson, J. B. Kerr, George Crook, E. A. Carr, Nelson A. Miles, Zenas Bliss, Thomas Slavens, MacArthur, whose son is the present chief of staff of the army, and many other old time officers.

Mrs. Smith had three sons and two daughters, the sons all becoming army officers, and the girls marrying in the army—surely a creditable record of a mother's influence. She was a proud and spirited woman, accepting the sufferings of her long last illness—cancer—with the patience and resignation of a martyr. She died in Washington in 1909, at the age of fifty-seven. She had been a widow for ten years; when she passed, her body was placed beside that of her husband, Colonel Smith, in the National Cemetery at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri.