

SOME UNPUBLISHED HISTORY OF THE SOUTHWEST

CHAPTER V.

AN OLD DIARY FOUND IN MEXICO

(Continued)

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and anoted by
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July 5th—Monday: Dr. Smith arrived last evening and Judge Terry has gone to call and ascertain something relative to the road, etc. Some of our boys learned through him that the road we expected to take is impassable on account of scarcity of water, this will compel us to go to Parras,* which is a much more pleasant and desirable route, except that it necessitates considerable expense in the purchase of corn for the animals. Col. S. tells me we will pass through some pretty towns and find abundance of fruits and wine. I am anxious to taste the far famed Parras wine, that which they export being much inferior to that kept for home use. I am also desirous of seeing a better part of Mexico than that which we have seen. Last night, the monotony was broken by a visit from one of Dr. S.'s mules who unceremoniously relieved us of half a sack of sugar, for which offense "the boys" threatened him with being "tied up" of nights hereafter.

Many thanks to Messrs. Wilson and Oury, we had a nice mess of fish for breakfast. At eight o'clock broke camp and at eleven nooned. The boys scattered out and soon returned with armfuls of wood, made coffee, fried meat and some very nice fritters, which we ate with syrup made of the "peloncillos."**

We all enjoyed our meal greatly, having amazing appetites.

Dinner dispatched, each made a break for a shade, and now, as I sit in the ambulance, I can see a human figure stretched on a blanket under every bush, there are no trees, only a bush called "Huisache." Mr. Oury is snugly spread out on my bed in the ambulance and

Note: *Near Parras is the home of the wealthy Madero family. Later, Francisco I. Madero became president of Mexico, driving out Porfirio Diaz. Madero and his vice-president, Pino Suarez, it will be recalled, were murdered by Victoriano Huerta. The Parras wine Mrs. Oury speaks of, with other liquors, has been made by the Madero family for several generations.

**The name used to denote a loaf or brick of crude cane sugar. In many parts of Mexico panocha is another term for this sugar loaf.

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Addy on his blanket underneath. Declares he wouldn't swap places with anybody. "Billy" I imagine is having some trouble with the sun, every few minutes I notice his head pop up and he looks wistfully at the others, who are able to sleep. The animals are mowing the greenest and juiciest of mesquite grass with surprising activity. It is refreshing to see them revel. We have been passing all day, perfect seas of waving green grass, the finest I ever beheld, and not an animal of any kind to be seen upon it. Indeed, there are no cattle in this part of Mexico. We have not been able to buy a beef thus far and it seems to me that no country could be better adapted to stock raising. There may be no certainty about water, which I presume is the difficulty, 'tho there is an abundant supply at present, in consequence of the late rains, standing in pools everywhere, perfectly clear and equal to cistern water.

So far we have been highly favored in every respect, the weather has been remarkably pleasant, much of the time cloudy. I have not suffered at all from heat. At nights we have a strong breeze, followed by cool, bracing mornings. I sleep with a pair of blankets over me and don't think I shall ever be willing to sleep in the house again in summer.

Well, "the boys" have all finished their "siestas" and we are lazily crawling out, the sky looks very threatening, dark, cloudy and low rumbling thunder. It rains in the mountain gaps every day. We frequently see the rain distinctly ahead of us. We came through one gap this morning and still mountains are looming up in front of us. They say we are never out of sight of mountains while in Mexico. I enjoy it, having been brought up on a dead level prairie. Traveled yesterday eighteen miles, camped near a pretty "Charco" (pond). Plenty of nice grass.

About 9 P. M. a band of "Liberal" soldiers came dashing into camp and frightened me greatly. They wanted "pan" (bread) and tobacco. We gave them bread, but before the tobacco could be got out the sergèant ordered them away and impressed the order by several severe cuts with his quirt. The poor starved wretches are under perfect subjection and are miserably treated, driven like dogs and do not average one full meal once in three days. Several had their wives* with them. Mr. Oury was out on guard, and was sitting alone in the ambulance, the gentlemen outside near, but they (the "Liberals") came rushing up with such a noise and rode right over the tongue of the ambulance, so that I got uneasy and *got out my pistol*, ready for the emergency, but they were quite harmless.

Note: *It has long been the custom in the Mexican army for the women called "galletas" (crackers or cakes, because they cook and rustle food), to accompany the troops. These camp-followers, with their children, are to be seen at or near all garrisons and camps.

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July 6th,—Thursday: Before leaving camp, a Mexican officer and some men came back in search of two deserters, whom they intended to hang, if caught. One of the soldiers asked me for bread, which I freely gave him (he offered me 50c for it), seemed very grateful and divided it with the others. We traveled about ten miles and nooned at a nice "charco." The Terry party watered and drove on without ceremony. The question had been pending several days, whether we should take the Parras road or not. Judge Terry had decided to go, but our party still hoped to hear something in favor of the other which was much shorter and cheaper. When we started in the afternoon, Mr. Oury left it to the men and the majority voted in favor of Parras, so the Parras road we took. It is now nearly dark and we have just succeeded in finding a very small hole of water and not good grass. The Terrys were already camped here. Don't know whether we continue together or not.

July 7th—Friday: The Col. and Mrs. Terry came over and made "all things straight." They had no intention of separating, but Mrs. Terry had some work to do and wished to get to camp early. After traveling several hours, we learned that two miles back we had taken the wrong road, so we cut across and had some rough jolting. When we came to the road there was much diversity of opinion and much parleying, at last somebody made a break and we all followed, crossed a stream, ascended a steep hill, and then traveled in the blazing sun a short distance. We halted at some ruined Missions.* Here our mules rested, but found an indifferent dinner. We found butter—made coffee, a "stem" of mutton, boiled eggs and corn. We have had mustard pickles all the time and the finest El Paso onions. The water was horrid, a beautiful clear running stream, but strongly alkaline. We frequently find it so.

One of the gentlemen caught twenty-five perch in a few minutes. Judge Terry and some of the boys remained to fish in the evening. In the forenoon, Capt. Dodson, Addy and some others went by a "Hacienda," which they say is the grandest one they have ever seen. It is situated in a lovely valley in a gap of the mountains. The "Lord" owned a large number of "Piones," whose dwellings were built regularly around a large square and numbered. His dwelling was handsome and contained a chapel richly furnished. We passed some celebrated hot springs enclosed with a high stone wall, belonging, I think, to him. In the afternoon, they (our boys) called at a ranch on the roadside and frightened the poor resident creatures painfully. They all hid, except one man who sputtered French at them industri-

Note: *I believe Mrs. Oury refers to the old mission or missions at Nadadores, founded early in the settlement of Mexico. A string of these missions developed from Mexico City, through Zacatecas, to the northeast; and another string from Mexico City, through Guadalajara and Durango, to the northwest.

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ously, but learning that they were not French soldiers,* come to annihilate them, they poured forth in swarms, and the mystery is, upon what do they subsist, living on a dry hill with nothing edible in sight save a flock of goats! The intense heat now reminds me that we are going South. We traveled twenty-five miles. I was quite tired and retired immediately upon making camp. One of the boys slew a big wild cat.

July 8th—Saturday: Passed some pretty farms, wheat already harvested. The ranches resemble small towns, often there are two or more stores. At 11 o'clock, reached a town where the boys stopped and got "Mescal," **etc., one mile further we came to "Monclova," a real Mexican town, containing 1000 or 1200 inhabitants. We camped in a large corral close to an "Acequia." Bought corn and green stalks for the mules. Addy "confiscated" some brush from a fence and made me a cup of tea and got me some "Mex." bread. I had eaten neither supper nor breakfast and the tea almost cured my head.

In an adjoining corral there were twenty-five deserters from our army*** in a most pitiable condition. They had enlisted in the "Liberal Army" and now, too late, repented their folly. The authorities had stripped them of their arms and horses and left them powerless. They are poorly clothed, poorly fed, have no quarters and no opportunity allowed them of earning a cent wherewith to alleviate their wants. They perhaps deserve such a fate, but my heart aches for the wretched creatures. Some inquired "if the Confederacy wasn't about played out." Monclova, like all Mexican towns, has narrow streets, flat-roofed "adobe" houses, large Catholic Church, high stone pavements, narrow doors, carved in diamond shapes, windows of wooden grates projecting in front of each, filled with women and children. Indeed, every corner, door and street is literally lined with men, women and children of every age and class. The men generally shirtless and often hatless. The women almost without exception wear only a chemise and dress skirt, while two-thirds of the children are perfectly nude. Generally the women are dark, homely, slovenly and utterly devoid of taste. I have seen few that are fair and I noticed two or three *handsomely* dressed men in Monclova. One attractive feature of the towns in Mexico is the verdure, though water is carried in ditches through every part of the town and these are bordered with splendid tall pecans, willows and other growths. Green fields and gardens greet the eye at every turn, in which grow luxuriantly the fig, quince, pomegranate, peach and grape (onion was the only vegetable

Note: *It will be recalled that at this time (July, 1865) French soldiers were in Mexico supporting Maximilian's occupancy.

**A very strong alcoholic drink made from the plant of this name. When refined this drink is called Tepemete and Tequila.

***The late Confederate army.

I noticed). None of the fruit was ripe, to my intense regret. The garden and field fence is usually of brush, thickly matted with green vines. Occasionally in town they use high "adobe" walls, tho' on the ranches you oftener see hedges of "bear grass" which grows here to perfection.

Each town of any size is provided with a long promenade, "Alameda" in a retired spot, where the pleasure seekers repair to enjoy rest, quiet, music and social chats. Magnificent trees of a century's growth line the broad avenue and effectually shut out the almost torrid sun. While, for the weary, are seats, in the shape of divans, at every few steps—made of cement and nicely painted. The further end is closed by a seat in the form of a semi-circle in front of which is a tall white pillar. They have also flowers but no fountain. We nooned beneath the inviting shade of immense pecans (in the corral) planted in rows and more than a century old.

Capt. Dave Terry and Mr. Kavanaugh (one of his mess) own several nice race horses* and lose no occasion of testing their speed. "The Judge," and indeed all the party, participate in these races. After much parleying, they succeeded in getting up a *foot race*, which all the sporting men of the party remained to witness, while we sober folks jogged on to camp. The Mexicans would only risk \$50.00 on the race, outsiders declined to bet, and those embryo sports failed to realize the "young fortune" they anticipated. We intended stopping at "Castano," nine miles from Monclova, but, being informed that in three miles we would find good grass, we filled the kegs, watered the animals, and moved on.

Mile after mile and no grass, dark overtook us. However, it was bright moonlight. The "Capt." was back at the race and nobody willing to take the responsibility of saying what was best to do. At last we halted and held a conference. Our men went out half a mile and found not a blade of grass. Two wagons determined to stop. At this crisis, "The Capt." came galloping up, and not in a decidedly amiable mood, as all soon ascertained who ventured near his battery. Col. S., less guarded than the others, received the full brunt. "We had been instructed to camp at Castano, where we could buy corn, and instead, we had come six miles from anywhere and camped on a rocky, barren hill. No grass, no corn and the mules tired." The Mexicans evidently were afraid of us and meant to send us some distance. It was late, so we made coffee and retired, everybody out of humor.

Note: *The taking of race horses into the southwest (and into Mexico) seems to have been quite customary in the early or pioneer times of that section. After the Civil War, Genl. G. W. Cole, late of the Union Army, took some fast horses to Texas; and in 1878 Lieut. J. B. Kerr, 6th U. S. Cav'y, took to Arizona, from Kentucky, two horses, Butcher Boy and Childers, and "cleaned up" on the sports who brought horses over from California, looking for "easy money."

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July 9th—Sunday: Started early in search of grass, which luckily we found not far off, also a nice pond of water, and decided to remain 'til next day. Some Mexicans drove a beef in and sold it to the Terry party for \$15.00. Could not be induced to part with another. The Terrys are very kind and obliging at all times, particularly Capt. Dave. He offers us a part of everything he buys, so we had a share of the beef, the first we have had in Mexico. And we relished it, though it was not fat. At dinner Mrs. Gillock, whom I have never spoken to, sent me some grape pie. They have no servants and she and her adopted daughter, Mrs. Gillett, do their own cooking. They buy chickens and everything they see to eat. The only ladies of the party so far, who interchange any civilities, are Mrs. Terry and myself and the credit is due entirely to her, for I called once only at her tent. Mrs. Strobe, I have barely seen passing at a distance. She has three children. All their negroes have left them except one woman, who was a "plantation hand." Capt. S. and his half brother, Geo. Jackson, were wealthy planters on the "Caney" and have still a good deal of money.

July 10th—Monday: Bought our first water from a tank belonging to a Mexican, found good grass. It is worthy of note, being the first offense of the kind, that Messrs. Oury and Wilson actually bestirred themselves and made flap jacks for dinner!!

Four P. M. and I've just awakened the Capt. to give the "hitching up order." We are still between two ranges of mountains. The sight is so novel to me that I have strained my eyes gazing at them. Thousands of peaks, at times bathed in sunshine and dazzling bright, again black as Erebus, frowning ominously through the slowly fading mist or fog. The flower season is past, tho I have noticed Cacti of every variety abounds. There are several varieties of Bear Grass. The "Meque" from which a liquor called "Mescal" is made, resembles the Bear Grass, leaf much wider, thicker and a paler green, the root is roasted for food, and, indeed, the plant is put to innumerable uses. The dagger grows tall here and has a trunk the size of an oak tree. But the terror of both man and beast in Mexico, is the thorns. Everything is armed with them. The sharpest, longest, fiercest thorns in the world. You can't avoid them, they are everywhere, on everything. The very atmosphere seems to bristle with them. One of our mules has been disabled several days from the prick of a mesquite thorn in his leg.

We drove back to the tank, watered and filled the kegs, preparatory to making a dry camp. A pedestrian enroute to Buena Vista,* took supper with Col. S.'s mess, and seemed inclined to continue with us.

Note: *Probably Buena Vista near Saltillo, where General Taylor defeated Santa Ana on February 23, 1847.

July 11—Tuesday: Took coffee and started early, camped at 12 o'clock on the side of a mountain, used water out of holes in the road and had to *pay* for it. We are feeling the cunning meanness of these people now. They deceive us daily, tell us we will find grass and water in one or two miles and we have to travel ten to fifteen miles to find it.

In the afternoon we passed a ranch where there was a large tank. The Mexicans were, I presume, afraid of us and told us there was plenty of water and grass a short distance ahead, so we did not fill the kegs. Fortunately, Mr. Neville would fill one and with this we cooked supper and breakfast, as we traveled 'til dark and found none. Those who had no water fasted.

July 12th—Wednesday: Started very early, expecting to find water and grass in a few miles, but such a barren country as we have come over today exists nowhere outside of Mexico. Naked as a pine floor, occasionally a brush, cactus, dagger or mesquite, but not a blade of grass. At last we halted at 12 o'clock at water, but the grass is very poor. I imagine some of the men are nearly as hungry as the poor animals. Whew! What a feast is in store for us, a nice fat cow, which we engaged at a ranch and they have just driven in. Well we had a "square" in reality, broiling steak, fried steak, liver, tomatoes, coffee and splendid biscuit, made by Addy, who thereby secures the "situation," the others asserting emphatically that they will never attempt it again. Mr. Neville says that with his twenty years constant practice, he never once succeeded in making such biscuit. Now, how can I employ myself,—I have nothing to read and have finished my shirt making, slept all morning (traveling). Mrs. Terry is not close by and I couldn't venture out in this blazing sun. Our boys are all asleep and I am alone. We are finding a fruit (Pitahaya)* now, which is creating a mania in our camp, and is delicious. It is about the size of an egg, when ripe the thorns fall off and you can peel it with the fingers as you would an orange. The inside is bright pink dotted with millions of tiny black seed; resembles the strawberry in flavor, is very palatable in its native state, much improved, they tell me by the addition of sugar and cream. We use the sugar but cream is scarce here.

After much deliberation and a short nap, I mustered courage, donned a clean dress and collar and paid Mrs. Terry a call, found her knee deep in patching, etc., says these resting days are her working days.

Note: *The fruit of a certain cactus which grows from Northern Mexico to Central America. It is something like the fruit of the sahuaro or giant cactus of Arizona, but larger and more delicate. Another fruit of this kind is the tuna or Indian fig, which is the fruit of a certain species of the prickly pear plant or nopal.

July 13th—Thursday: We had camped on the side of a little hill near a ditch, a flat between, where there was a little grass for the mules. At breakfast we discovered that the flat was filling with water and there was a great rush to get the mules, which was barely effected before several feet of water covered the ground. Evidently a heavy rain had fallen above, indeed, all the country over which we have come lately appears to have been deluged. We got off at six o'clock with the prospect of having to drive twenty-one miles to grass.

Capt. Dave Terry succeeded in making a race with a Mexican, so "the Judge" and several of his party went back to the ranch to witness it, but all overtook us at eleven A. M., considerably crestfallen, both their horses having lost. Luckily the Mexicans could only be induced to risk \$20.00, else they could have bankrupted the Terrys. They do not seem to realize the fact that their horses are in no condition to run, being jaded from constant travel. This little defeat may save them a great deal. The Mexican being too timid to risk anything against the second horse, they ran him anyway, and lost.

A Mexican overtook us in hot haste in search of medical aid for a sick woman. Capt. Strobe has some knowledge of the science of healing and agreed to return. Both his and the Terry animals are upon the point of giving out. The Gillett's have already halted. The Mexicans stated that there was no grass from there to Parras (a literal fact) and offered to pasture all the animals gratis. Judge Terry wisely overtook his teams and turned them back. They couldn't have made the trip and there was certainly excellent grass only three miles back.

Col. Showalter, Capt. Sharp and Capt. Oury drove ahead steadily, with no interruption till night. Twelve hours constant pulling and only to find a little patch of grass literally black with mosquitos, which effectually prevented the poor creatures from eating. As there was nothing to stake to, they were tied up for the night after an hour's grazing and turned loose at daylight. We overtook in the afternoon a train loaded with cotton, which detained us an hour, as they were stretched across the creek, preventing our crossing. They drove oxen and unhitched upon a bare hill. Perhaps they carry forage.

I was startled about nine o'clock by a tremendous cracking of whips and jabbering of Spanish, and our men calling out to the others to "look out" for the horses, but they passed without molesting us. The Gilletts came up at daylight, owing to the wretched condition of their animals. We never expected to see them again. They had rested at noon, driven 'til dark, fed with mesquite* beans (which are abun-

Note: *These beans make excellent forage for stock—they are much relished by cattle. In the days of the Civil War, and just after, in Arizona, the Quartermaster's Department of the army paid \$2.50 a sack for mesquite beans for army animals.

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dant here, much better and sweeter than in Texas, and considered good food for mules), rested again and caught up. They report that the Terrys expect to remain two or three days at the ranch, if so, we will see no more of them.

July 14th—Friday: Let the mules graze 'til 8 o'clock, then started in search of good grass, which we soon found, but it was unavailable on account of the mosquitos, and we kept onward. This land has all been submerged, and is perfectly smooth, level and clean, and being white, is very trying to my eyes. The only relief afforded to the wearing monotony, being the fantastically shaped peaks towering up on each side of us. Addy and several of the boys witnessed the "mirage,"* which I missed by being asleep. I can stretch out comfortably on my mattress and sleep as though in a room, as we travel, to the envy of all the other ladies, most of whom have children and have to "sit up." The ambulance is immense and my large mattress being doubled back in day time, fills the back part, leaving comfortable seats in front, and I vibrate from bed to seat at will. Am leading rather a luxurious life.

At half past ten we halted. The grass is excellent but those ravenous mosquitos are determined to devour man and beast, the poor mules are dancing round and keeping up a desperate switching. Mr. Neville has put on "Frijoles"*** and as they require a long time in cooking, the boys ate a cold lunch and have gone to sleep, 'tho from sundry ejaculations I deduce that something (perhaps the mosquitos) is disturbing their perfect repose, notwithstanding the precaution of gloving their hands and *batting* their faces.

Again, I am at a loss for employment. O! for something to read. In sheer desperation I must make somebody else some shirts. Mr. Oury, Mr. Wilson and Addy are getting short. I will get cloth in Parras and be kept busy hereafter. Goodness!! what am I to do with myself, the sun is pouring down without mercy or remorse and I am being roasted alive. Not a tree within ten miles. Not a breath of air stirring. The ambulance is standing on a sheet of white ground. God deliver me from another sight of this portion of Mexico.

Dinner at four. We were just seated when a little shower came up which greatly refreshed the temperature. Riding so constantly

Note: *A distant false lake or body of water, caused by heat waves, often seen on the plains in our Southwest and in Northern Mexico—frequently false trees and houses appear near these false bodies of water. Mirages have lured to their death inexperienced, weary travelers who are deceived by never reaching the false water.

***Beans of the red or brown variety, a staple food in Mexico. This is not a Spanish word as many suppose—the Spanish word for bean is "haba." The dictionary of the Spanish Academy gives the word frijol as an American word, probably meaning an Aztec word. In Columbia the word for bean is caraota. Since the true Spanish word for bean is haba; and in Mexico and Columbia it is frijol and caraota, it would seem that in the latter two countries the words for bean are Indian, or, as the Dictionary of the Spanish Academy states, American.

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without a particle of exercise is beginning to tell on me unfavorably, so I concluded to take a little jaunt to a mountain which to me appeared within a stone's throw, tho some said it was two, others four miles off. Mr. Wilson assured me I would find Pitahayas at the base, and in company with Addy I started to it. There was a strong breeze and we walked briskly but the mountain seemed no nearer, while the camp was becoming a mere speck in the distance. Nothing discouraged, I increased speed, tho the sharp rocks and still sharper daggers pricked me at every step. But I reached the goal and tho I found no fruit, felt better for the run, the distance being about three miles, I think.

The loud peals of thunder and threatening rain warned us to hasten our return. Inadvertently we caused them a serious alarm in camp, and when we arrived found them all armed and equipped, coming to rescue us from the Indians. Addy had proposed my attempting to hit a prickly pear with his pistol, which I fired three times, he twice. Mr. Oury feared we had been attacked.

When the wind lulled, the calm brought myriads upon myriads of the most ravenous mosquitos, that had resolved upon a feast of American blood, and all our efforts to thwart them were ineffectual. The boys tied their heads up in towels and handkerchiefs, each armed with a brush fought desperately with the malicious foe. Some made smokes. "No sleep tonight, boys," and they walked around looking disconsolate. Mr. Oury and Col. S. had mosquito bars, which they stretched and succeeded in outwitting the famished fiends. I burned sugar in a frying pan and while it lasted, kept them off, but afterwards they came in scores and devoured my face, neck and hands. Capt. Dodson burnt an old sugar sack, but the rest of the boys had no means of defense, and not silently, *endured*. They look drowsy and worse from the unequal struggle today.

July 15th—Saturday: We bade the mosquitos adieu at an early hour, came eleven miles and nooned, have nice grass and water. I took a jaunt to the top of a mountain near by and got a pan full of "pitahayas." The exercise has made me perspire, and relieves me. Usually I do not perspire and suffer intensely with the roasting heat.

We all relished our dinner of "Picadio," splendid biscuit (Addy retains the situation), good coffee, mustard pickle and the pitahayas with sugar. Mr. Neville is toasting a supply of coffee. Addy has washed the dishes and scrubbed out the mess chest. The others are stretched out asleep. In the afternoon we came ten miles over very bad roads, boggy and rough, camped on the side of a mountain, where a Mexican presently came to collect pay for the grass. His master lives four or five miles off.

Mr. Oury told him to tell his master to come and he would settle with him in the morning. However, he did not come and some others, belonging at the same ranch, say he acted without authority,

which we suspected. It requires all our wits now to ward off their low, mean cunning.

Immediately after supper, we had a hard storm which created a sensation in camp. Mr. Oury came into my domicile and kept dry. Addy crawled into the wagon and out soon again. Capt. Dodson had a full benefit, being on guard. Mr. Neville lay and took it, but "Billy" kept up a terrific racket. Got under the ambulance and nearly root-ed it over. It was a woebegone, forlorn looking set that stood round the fire drying next morning.

July 16th—Sunday: Started at ten, came over rough road and up one very steep hill, coming through the gap. Mr. Oury at the head of the Cavalry (he has ridden Addy's horse for two days) came to a ranch in three miles of Parras, and then learned that we are on the wrong road. So back we turned, took another road, which soon gave out. Mr. Oury galloped on to hunt a road, went round a moun-tain, back to the ranch, overtook us and turned us again. They had misinformed him regarding the road, refused to sell us corn, saying the French* had taken it all. Assured us we would find excellent grass two miles off.

Imagine our feelings, when halting after a long, hard day's travel, at finding a field full of weeds, and not one blade of grass, the mules tired and hungry and nothing to give them. Mr. Oury had ridden dinnerless all day on the roughest of horses, and now, such a prospect. No wood for miles around, ground soaking wet and muddy, a heavy storm almost upon us and those poor, tired, hungry mules begging for supper. It was one of our darkest, gloomiest hours so far, and I promise that a gallon of Brandy would have been acceptable just then. Well, these difficulties must be met, so the boys wandered off and gathered some dry weeds with which they could cook supper, in spite of the rain, and now, the question arose, what could be done for the mules, which were tied up to the wagons. After some delib-eration, Mr. Collins (our driver) known only as Ben in camp, who is faithful and trusty—he belonged to the old Regular Army as team-ster, afterwards served in the same capacity through our war—gives his undivided attention to his team, and under his care our mules have improved daily, while those of all the others have broken down; and the new Mexican, who had voluntarily "attached" himself to us, went back to the ranch to get some wheat to feed with, but as diffi-culties seemed to multiply with us, a furious storm came up, lasting during most of the night. The darkness could be felt. Withal, they found their way back to camp with some wheat, but the mules breakfasted instead of suppering. This ranch,** which resembles a small town, is the property of an immensely wealthy Mexican. He has

Note: *The French soldiers supporting Maxmillian on his throne in Mexico.

**The Madero family has for many years been making wine and brandy, hence the 640 acres of grapes mentioned above.

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one vineyard of 640 acres square, enclosed within a wall 14 feet high, another large one at his residence, where also are many fruit trees, mostly pomegranates. A large granary occupies the center of the grounds and there is an air of system, neatness and order throughout.

July 17th—Monday: Mr. Oury rode Dick in search of grass, which he found two miles distant and we moved up. The grand sensation of the day was a visit to Parras. So we all donned our "Sunday clothes" except Mr. Oury and Addy, who persisted in wearing their flannel over-shirts and road clothes. The ambulance* was cleared of everything except the seats, my basket and a keg for brandy. Col. S. took a seat with Mr. Oury and myself, the others rode horseback.

At eleven o'clock we drew up on one "plaza" in front of the main hotel and soon I was abundantly supplied with peaches, apples, figs and grapes. The grapes are delicious, from them the "Parras Wine and Brandy" is made. I remained in charge of the stores, while the boys rushed around catering and having the animals shod. Mr. Oury had to visit the French "Commandante" and secure from him and the Mexican "prefecto" permission (and a passport) to continue our journey.

Parras is a place of considerable importance. The main plaza is very handsome, is laid out in walks, bordered with lovely roses, dahlias and other flowers. The triangles, diamonds, etc., as plots, intervening, are thickly carpeted with luxuriant grass, dotted with shubbery and flowers. The wide stone walk surrounding it is provided with numerous seats, made of cement, painted dark red and considerably ornamented. Each side of these divans would accommodate six or eight persons and they are on both sides of the walk. They have a fine brass band, which discourses enlivening music during the evening and altogether it appears to be an inviting resort. A handsome, highly ornamented church occupies the opposite corner, and I regret not being able to see inside, but Mr. Oury was too busy to take me anywhere. The streets were full of French Soldiers. The officers wear elegant uniforms, scarlet pants trimmed with black, dark green and black jackets fitting closely, and the whole elaborately ornamented with silver braid and buttons. They are superbly mounted on beautiful Arabian horses, and it is a dazzling spectacle to see them fully equipped and mounted. No expense has been spared in fitting them out. The soldiers wear yellow linen blouses and pants with wide red belts, pants tight at the ankles but very wide in the legs. Tiny red caps, tassel behind and no brim, adorn the back of their heads. Several now have loose slips of linen over the blouse and pants, extending to the knee. The Colonel in command has been very polite and courteous to Mr. Oury, but of this, more anon.

(To be continued.)

Note: *Ambulance at the time this diary was written, and for many years after, was a sort of stage-coach, not, as understood now, a conveyance for the sick.