SOME UNPUBLISHED HISTORY OF THE SOUTHWEST

CHAPTER VII.

AN OLD DIARY FOUND IN MEXICO

(Continued)

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August 21st, Monday. A change has taken place in our programme. This morning the Gillett party left us, and our driver, "Ben," having become thoroughly disgusted with Mexico and concluding that he would never be able to earn a living in this part of the world, resolved upon making his way back to Texas, so accompanied the Gilletts to El Paso. He was a poor driver, but took excellent care of the mules, and the loss of a man in our present weakness is an item. Mr. Oury now drives the ambulance and has the four mules to care for, Mr. Neville the six wagon mules, which duty exempts them from guard and cooking. One of our mules being sick, we had been working Ben's mule in the ambulance and now have we have dismounted Billy and put Jack (our $200 mule) in, and Billy has a seat with us. "Jack" is the pet of the party, is the finest riding animal I ever saw, works anywhere, single or double, and is so kind and gentle. Addy and John ride and drive three loose mules. Capt. Dodson and Judge Holt ride in advance, select camp, kill game, etc. Capt. Sharp shoes the mules. Eight men and one woman comprise our whole force.

We are nooning near a pretty stream, and for the sake of employment, I have washed out two calico dresses.

August 22nd, Tuesday. We camped last night near an "arroyo" in a valley, where the Indians frequently hunt antelopes. I had walked off a little distance when I observed a commotion in camp, some running for the mules, all snatching up their guns and putting out the fires. Just at that moment I felt a sharp bite above my ankle and naturally concluded it was a rattlesnake, as the whole country is alive with them. In my precipitate rush for camp, I became entangled in the tall grass and came down sprawling full length, altogether not an enviable state of things for one of the most nervous of women. The alarm given us of "Apaches" by one of the Mexicans traveling with us, caused the boys to be very vigilant. Mr. Oury stood guard twice, we lost no animals, and my wound was probably given by a caterpillar, every blade of grass here supports one at least, and their bite is very painful. I spent a wretched night.

Wednesday, August 23rd. Capt. Dodson found a hole of water by following some crows. Judge Holt killed a lot of birds, the two Mexicans were out of provisions (if they had ever had any) and we invited them to dinner, which they devoured like starved wolves. Passed through "Carmel," (Carmen), a miserable place. The boys here met with a negro acquaintance from El Paso going to Santa Rosalia for his health (fine hot springs). Bought a little goat for $1.25.

August 27th, Sunday. I have felt too miserable for the past week to write. We have for several days been coming through a region infested with Indians, the numerous graves and crosses everywhere bearing evidence of their atrocious works. We met with an American at "Galliano" (Galeana)—an acquaintance of some of the party—who related to us several appalling outrages committed by the Apaches recently, who he says, are now roaming in large bands through the country, killing men, women and children without mercy. Our party was very weak, Mr. Wilson sick and one man without a gun, so we pushed forward with no slight trepidation, compelled to pass through "canyons" where they generally secret themselves, one of these being the scene of a horrible massacre last June, when they fell upon a family in camp and annihilated them. Broken crockery, fragments of bedding, etc., still mark the spot. We kept in close file and met with no adventures. Before reaching "Galliano" (Galeana) we had one day, well nigh despaired of finding water. Our two Mexican pensioners were piloting us. About dark, after hard driving, we reached the "arroyo" designated as our camping ground and to our horror found it dry. Onward we drove, the pilots assuring us of water in two leagues. No moon, and so dark we could scarcely keep in the road or in sight of each other. Huge rattlesnakes kept up a continual rattling. They were everywhere. The boys killed fifteen or twenty in the road and found it an unprofitable undertaking. About nine, we reached the foot of a long hill, where sure enough there ran a little stream, but the tall cottonwoods grew so thick, that the darkness could be felt. With difficulty we found our way through and camped on the top of the hill, near the ruins of an old mission.* The boys unharnessed, watered the mules and tied them up, too dark to hunt for grass, to say nothing of the danger from rattlesnakes. Most of the boys retired supperless. However, Mr. Oury exerted himself to the extent of making a pot of coffee (there was plenty of cold bread and meat) and recruits came pouring in to aid him in disposing of it.

We passed through "Baranca" (Barranca), a small mining town, soon after reached "Coralitos" (Corralitos), another mining town owned by a wealthy Mexican. We bought sugar here at sixty-two and

Note: *In spite of the savage nature of the Indians, and the country Mrs. Oury was passing through, evidence of an attempt to civilize them is seen in these old missions. This one was probably at or near Ojo in Sanguijuela—Leech Springs, between Carmen and Galeana.

a half cents per pound (tall loaves of Mexican sugar). In Parras we paid twenty-five cents per pound, in Chihuahua fifty cents, also at Santa Rosalia. A goat for a dollar and fifty cents. Crossed the river and camped. In the evening a Mexican came over, and after a little parleying paid us thirty dollars and a bottle of mescal for our lame mule (the only one we could spare). For two months he had been of no service to us and gave the boys much trouble driving him. The boys were dry and our funds growing short. Addy made a lot of nice biscuit, so we had only coffee to make and liver to fry in the morning and got off early, drove rapidly and reached "Janos"* about eleven, passed through and camped under a large cottonwood near a river. It being Sunday, the people were all at leisure and in less than fifteen minutes our camp was literally overrun with Mexicans of every size and grade, and they kept coming in streams all day. They crowded around almost into the ambulance, climbed on the wheels, tongue and front seat, so that it was almost impossible to move or to cook. Two-thirds of them brought things to sell. We bought eggs, tomatoes, onions, green pepper, water melons, cheese, etc.

They watched me slice and eat tomatoes raw, with astonishment if not disgust. Mr. Oury threatened several times to clear out the camp by vigorous means. It is annoying beyond conception to be almost suffocated by these unsightly, unsavory, repulsive creatures.

During the day we learned that two large bands of Apaches were camped immediately upon our road, that it would be worse than madness for us to undertake to pass them with our small force. So, after traveling two or three weeks with a perfect rush and run, we find ourselves suddenly brought to a standstill. Not water bound, but far worse, Indian bound and that, too, in the most wretched, squalid, dilapidated spot on earth. The gentlemen held a consultation and decided that to go over the mountains it was necessary to dispose of wagon, ambulance, harness, etc., (not $20. to be found in the whole town), and buy pack saddles. Mr. Wilson not able to ride, not a side saddle to be had at any price, and Mr. Oury did not think I could stand the rough trip of two days and a night without resting. Moreover, this road was equally dangerous, the Indians had had a spy in our camp (Mex. whom we were feeding) ready to appraise them of our every movement. What a predicament!

September 3rd, Sunday. Well, the consultation ended in deciding to do the only thing possible under the circumstances, go into town and wait there Micawber like "for something to turn up." Mr. Oury went in and secured the use of a corral for the animals, a small room for our baggage and the privilege of doing our cooking in a large

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Note: "A very old settlement, the site of one of the early Spanish presidios or outposts—shown on a Spanish map made in 1727. Jano is the name of a small tree which grows in the arroyos or dry river beds of Arizona and Sonora. It has a very pretty blue flower, and is good for fence posts.

kitchen. We gathered up, moved in and established ourselves in our new quarters, none wearing the most cheerful or hopeful countenances. To our disgust, the same curious herd that had infested our camp all day, had preceded us and ranged round in every conceivable attitude awaiting us. The contents of wagon and ambulance were stored away in the small room, which had been a store and had a high, rough, wide counter extending from wall to wall. Under this, the harness, saddles, bridles, etc., fitted conveniently. Upon the shelves we arranged the various boxes, books, bottles, saddle bags, baskets, guns, pistols, etc. Our trunks sit on the counter, and on the floor behind was just room enough to spread my mattress and set a chair. In front, the provisions, and bedding of the gentlemen. A snug fit though, and a motley collection, not altogether inconvenient. My two greatest trials were having to mount and climb over the wide counter (no other means of egress or ingress), which kept my knees in a chronic bruised condition; the other, the tenacious natives, swarming all over the counter, the floor, inside and out. After a few days, in sheer desperation, I closed the door, preferring utter darkness and imprisonment (no window) to such persecution. The lady of the house, who was kind to me, persisted in making frequent calls and ignored the fact that I can neither understand her nor make myself understood. However, I have picked up several Spanish words and was forced to "air" them. Mr. Wilson remained quite unwell. The other six (John did the cooking except making bread and preparing green pepper) took turns, two at a time, in driving the mules out to grass, herding and bringing them in at noon and evening to be locked in the "corral," fishing and hunting ducks, at odd times. Everything was very dear and although we used all the economy possible, our expenses for the six days amounted to twenty-five dollars. I busied myself patching and doing a variety of little jobs. Washed out a number of collars, handkerchiefs, a lawn dress, etc., starched and ironed these and also a lot of clothes I had washed in Chihuahua. (Mexicans always wash clothes by the dozen, you furnish soap, indigo and wood. Then you must give them to another person to iron by the dozen and furnish wood, starch, ironing sheets and irons.) On Saturday morning, Mr. Oury having become thoroughly disgusted with place and people, resolved upon a retrograde movement, and we soon transferred our plunder to the wagons, and shook the "Janos" dust from our feet, with alacrity. Now here we are, after a brisk drive, camped on the river bank opposite "Corralitos," in the identical spot on which we camped just one week since, but with what altered anticipations.

Then, we believed that before this, we would have reached Santa Cruz, where being out of danger from Indians, our anxieties, fears and trials, comparatively ended, our little band could scatter, each in search of employment and a *home*. Now, oh God, how gloomy the prospect!

September 10th. Sunday. Another week has dragged and nothing has "turned up" yet. Mr. Oury has become discouraged and disheartened, the mental strain and anxiety are beginning to tell visibly upon his usually sanguine temperament. No solution to the perplexing problem offers itself. Our funds are becoming alarmingly low. Not one cent coming in, and daily, several dollars going out. We buy sugar and flour here at an exhorbitant price, a goat every day, for which we pay $1.50; onions, tomatoes, green corn, green pepper, etc. We fortunately have still a supply of coffee and bacon (altho we gave liberally to the Showalter and Gillett party, and to others, besides the Mexicans have begged coffee of me and I cannot refuse them.)

We can hear nothing of the Terry's who promised to overtake us, and we now conclude that they took some other route, else settled in Mexico. We can neither sell our wagons, nor buy pack saddles here, therefore cannot undertake the mountain road. The only practicable plan that suggests itself is to send Addy and myself in the ambulance, with what baggage we can carry, to El Paso, thence by Mesilla to Tucson, thence to Santa Cruz. Mr. Oury and others never having surrendered to the Federals* cannot enter their lines, and must run the gauntlet over the rough mountain, with neither guide nor trail. It is too terrible to think of and will only be adopted as a last, desperate, resort.

It was not safe to remain even in the suburbs of town, as the Indians nightly visit the fields and gardens of the people here who drive in their herds and flocks and lock them in "corrals." So we moved in and established ourselves in comparatively comfortable quarters, the property of Don Zuloaga, who owns all this vicinity. I am quietly domiciled in a small room above, which I chose for privacy and in the vain hope of getting out of reach of these prying cormorants, this being the only room above and the roof flat over all the others, I sit, and walk around in the evening, getting a fine view of the town and surroundings.

We have a large kitchen, dining and store room, two large bed rooms for the men. Extra large "plaza" and corral, dirt floors, wooden grates for windows, white washed walls with deep bands of pink or blue at bottom, where they get splattered, as these floors must be sprinkled before sweeping. "Don Jose Maria" sent us a table and four chairs, called to see us and insisted upon my calling upon him for any needed assistance. He is a fine looking old man, does not speak English. His family reside in Chihuahua. He has a daughter and son-in-law here. His pretty little grand daughter paid me a visit, and I am making her a cunning little swiss muslin dress, braided with solferino, to present to her when she calls again. I have sewed during the week 'til my eyes ache; spent one day starching and ironing (got Mexicans to wash) some clothes, which it is highly probable an Indian Squaw

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Note: *She here refers to the U. S., not Mexican, authorities, Mr. Oury having lately been in rebellion.

may soon "luxuriate in," a rather comforting reflection. (Addy and I often spend an hour or two over our Spanish grammar. With a little instruction we would both acquire the language readily.)

Notwithstanding all my efforts and precautions (even blockading the steps) I am unable to discourage the women and children from invading my premises. The boys, two at a time, herd the mules, lock them in at night, hunt, fish and look blue. Swear a little, I imagine.

September 14th. Thursday. We have determined upon leaving here on Saturday, and we are all busy today preparing. Don Zuloaga is going to start a large train to El Paso in charge of his son-in-law, and Addy and I are to go with them. Mr. Oury and the other six are going over the mountain. My heart stands still at the thought of the danger besetting both our pathways, and nothing but desperation gives me courage. I had so earnestly hoped that the trying ordeal of being separated from my husband, which I have been called upon to bear through the long years of our late struggle for liberty, was over for me, but alas! I had conceived of nothing so terrible as this. He goes to the setting, I to the rising sun. One month is the shortest possible time, and two or more may elapse before we meet again, and no possible means of hearing from or communicating with each other. Today Mr. Oury is quite unwell, last night spent a sleepless night and is suffering from a violent headache. I fear the intense mental anxiety may yet prostrate him, and he must think and act for all.

True to Mexican principles, they are taking every advantage of our situation, and the very man who urged us to sell him even a lame mule and voluntarily offered thirty dollars, now hesitates to allow us fifty dollars for a good strong wagon, four sets of good harness, a ten gallon water keg, mess chest, bucket, etc. I have seen enough of Mexico.

September 16th. Saturday. This is one of the darkest days of my short life. Our sad, sad parting is over. My husband has gone, God knows to what fate, this very night, or at furtherest tomorrow, his precious life blood may flow to satiate the wicked thirst of the most fiendish savages the world has ever known. O, how can I endure the agony, the suspense, the terror of all this, where can I find the fortitude, the courage, the patience to sustain me through this trial? But, enough, I must be brave.

I am sitting in the ambulance, in sight of town, awaiting the slow movements of the train. The others are on their way to "Janos," where they will rest awhile and start tonight to "Babispe." They took the wagon to "Janos" and will sell it there for twenty-five dollars. We succeeded in getting fifteen dollars here for four sets of harness, mess chest, water barrel and good bucket. The remainder of the plunder I gave to a Mexican woman. They packed some mules with barely what would do them to the next town and we are taking as little as possible, though the ambulance is crowded and the load heavy. Addy

has never driven any, and the two mules we have now in the lead have always worked at the wheel, so I fear some difficulty.

September 18th. Monday. I have been in such a state of mental anguish that I could not write. The past three days of suspense and anxiety have seemed an age to me, and I know nothing of my husband's fate or welfare. At two on Saturday the train moved off. Twenty-five large wagons loaded with flour, I think, between two hundred and fifty and three hundred mules, drivers herding about twenty-five or thirty. Later Don Ramon drove out in his carriage and we took our position just in the rear of his carriage, in the center of the train. About ten they halted, making a dry camp, it was very dark and Addy had no assistance with his four mules. I was suffering with a severe headache, so went to bed. Addy made some coffee at one of their fires.

Started before daylight, drove to the mines where there was plenty of water and grass, bought wood and cooked breakfast. Don Ramon sent me a large, fine watermelon. We had just finished the last of six fine ones given me at starting by Don Zuloaga. Addy kept busy watching the mules. We were joined here by twelve Liberal Soldiers* (officers) among them, three Americans. Our train presents a formidable appearance and is not likely to be attacked. We started at two and had a disagreeable drive, first wind and dust, then a cold windy rain. Camped late, and to our unutterable astonishment were aroused from our short rest at midnight, by the noise of much tramping, hallowing, etc., to find them preparing to hitch up and start. I got out to help poor Addy, who had his hands more than full. It was intensely dark, a cold drizzling rain, and two of our mules frightened out of their senses at all the hurrahing and rushing. They form a kind of "corral" with their wagons and into this drive the whole herd to catch them. Yelling, screaming, lassoing the mules, jumping and prancing, so I could not wonder at Lion's fright, but as he almost lifted me off my feet several times, and is of gigantic proportions and not the most docile of animals, I think I was in quite as much dread of him, as of being run over, knocked down and trampled to pieces by the reckless Mexicans and their wild, misgoverned creatures. What a time Addy had, keeping the mules together, getting his harness straight, etc., it was so dark. My heart sank when we found one mule missing. I feared he had gone and what could we do? In this trying dilemma one of the American officers came up, and ascertaining our situation, kindly offered to assist us. I shall never forget that act of humanity. He rode off, found the missing mule, and helped Addy to harness and get them all hitched, relieving me of my most irksome duty. We overcame all the difficulties at last, but such a drive, dark as pitch, cold and raining. The road in a horrible condition, wagons bogging continually. Addy got chilled, took a violent headache, his nose began to bleed pro-

Note: *Probably leaving the country, because of the French, and going to El Paso.

fusely. I exerted myself to the utmost, to keep awake, so as to talk to him and keep him awake. Finally nature could no longer resist and I fell asleep. We were moving at a snail's pace, and stopping every few seconds. The animals became so jaded, we were complled to stop and rest them after daylight, without water, till ten. The road is wretched, the big wagons ahead cut it up, so it is hard pulling for the mules. I persuaded Addy to lie down, and let me drive, but his head was paining him so he could not sleep.

We camped at two, and our poor, tired mules got water for the first time since yesterday. Don Ramon has just sent me a splendid ham of mutton. He is very kind and polite, but, as I cannot understand or speak his language, we only exchange "civilities" at a distance. One of the American officers has just called and offered his services, desiring us to command him in everything. I shall occasionally trouble him to interpret for me.

(To be continued)