



SUSAN SHELBY MAGOFFIN, IN 1845
From a daguerreotype.

DOWN THE SANTA FÉ
TRAIL
AND INTO MEXICO

*The Diary of
Susan Shelby Magoffin
1846-1847*

EDITED BY
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NEW HAVEN
YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS
LONDON • HUMPHREY MILFORD • OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



FONDO
FERNANDO DIAZ RAMIREZ

To

JANE TAYLOR

*The Gentle Daughter of
Susan Shelby Magoffin*

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INTRODUCTION

WHILE accompanying her husband on a trading expedition into the Southwest and Mexico, Susan Shelby Magoffin found amusement and companionship in her journal. Their somewhat primitive mode of travel, over the plains, into the mountains, and across the rivers, was hardly conducive to great literary effort or style in composition. Nevertheless, there is a peculiar charm in the narrative, and it takes on a dramatic cast as one comes to realize the drift of it all. In her simple and gentle way, the young lady deftly raises the curtain from before characters and events of very great importance in American history. Her journal has a distinct value in respect to the amount of detail contained in the descriptions of scenes and events, so often lacking in other journals of the same period. Most of them give mere outlines.

The journey undertaken by this Kentucky bride of eighteen with her husband, Samuel Magoffin, was, nominally at least, a trading expedition of James and Samuel Magoffin, brothers and partners. In a trade started by James before 1828, the brothers yearly, and sometimes twice a year, took large caravans of goods into Santa Fé and old Mexico. This expedition, however, was different from the others. James was not with a wagon train as usual, but had gone on well in advance of both caravans, leaving the one he ordinarily would have commanded in charge of his brother Wil-