

more sense than to "buz before the bite." It was solitude indeed. The howling of ravinus beasts, and the screech of not less ravinous birds. I layed perfectly still with *mi alma* breathing a sweet sleep by my side. I could not waken him, just to keep me company, when he was so well engaged. So I remained quiet occasionally knocking off a musquito and listening to the confused sounds without and a wishing that my faithful Ring would not sleep so soundly. Just then, as if he had heard my thoughts and was anxious to prove to me that I was too hasty in my decision as to his vigilance, he gave one spring from his hiding place, and in a twinkling had driven them off entirely. As lonely as I was, I laughed out right. Sleep had entirely deserted me, so I "*kept watch*" till daylight. All the morning I have been nodding.

We nooned it at a small creek—the name I do not know—While there we had a visit from an Indian of the *Kaw* tribe. They are a friendly nation. He stayed to dinner, eating I believe at both camps and left the ground when we did. His tribe are wanderers over this part of the Prairie, and often meet and eat with the traders. He was entirely in a state of nudity, except the breach clout which all of them wear. His horse, dog, and rifle were his companions. He smoked his pipe while we were preparing dinner, and watched with a scrutinizing eye. How exceedingly silent he was. I did not hear him speak but two words, and they were telling his name.

Our camp tonight is on a hill, the opposite side of

the creek from the wagons; the musquitoes there are too thick to thrive among them.

Bluff Creek Camp No. 8. All day we have been traveling in the rain, not even stoping for our dinner. The oxen travel better in such weather, and Mr. Hall, the superintendent of affairs, wished to push on. As we were quietly joging along in front of the wagons a beautiful little animal of some kind attracted our attentions. I supposed it a dog, or a wolf at first, my dearest after many suppositions settled on its being nothing more than a stone. To settle all doubts we drew the spy-glass—and what was it? Nothing more or less than a timid though curious antelope. It did not run, but all curious as we were about it at first, to know what great objects we were coming toward it, it slowly advanced to meet us, but it advanced to its own destruction, poor creature!

Mi alma had his rifle, loaded only with pigeon shot; as we came within sixty yards of it, he fired with one barrel, and missed, the little thing jumped to the side of the road, and instead of scampering off over the adjacent hill as I should have done had I been in his place, he turned to behold the now still more curious objects. The fire from the other barrel wounded it in the shoulder, and it went limping away. *Mi alma* started back for his bullets, as grape shot were too small, but just then one of the teamsters with his dog came bolting by in pursuit of it. It ran off over the hills, poor creature no doubt to die. Since it was left with life and pain attached to it, I am sorry it was shot at.

We stoped about 6 o'clock for each one was anxious to gratify his growling stomach. *Mi alma* and I went as usual to fishing in the little stream, but found nothing. The oxen make a perfect stamper row among the finied tribe, so we were obliged to retreat.

Council Grove, 145 miles from I [ndependence]. Friday 19th. Camp No. 9. We are now at the great rendezvous of all the traders. Council Grove may be considered the dividing ridge between the civilized and barbarous, for now we may look out for hostile Indians. Council Grove is so called from the circumstance of the U. S. agents* who were sent out in the year 1825, to measure a road from Missouri to Santa Fé, from their having met here and held a consultation with some Indian tribes,† who promised in a treaty not only to let go unmolested the traders, but also to lend their aid in defending them against their more ruthless neighbors of the mountainous regions further west.

It is a thick cluster of trees some miles in length, through which runs a small creek called Council Grove Creek. There is a quantity of fine timber consisting of oaks, hickory, walnut &c. Each company coming out generally stop here a day or so to repair their wagons, rest the stock, get timbers for the remainder of the journey; these are lashed under the wagons. They also mould bullets & prepare their fire arms for now they are coming into the region of game.

* Messrs. [Benjamin] Reeves, [George C.] Sibley and [Thomas] Mathers.

† Osages.

Another thing is the washing of cloth[e]s; there is a great borrowing of soap and slopping of water now.

We got here about 1 o'clock, just as some two or three companies were leaving. The creek bank, which is short and steep, made some little detention in the crossing of the wagons, they had to double teams several times. It is amusing here to hear the shouting of the wagoners to their animals, whooping and hallowing; the cracking of whips almost deafening.

We struck our camp on the hill. There is a large mound just by us, from the top of which is a splendid view is to be had. On one side, to the west, is a wide expanse of Prairie; as far as the eye can reach nothing but a waving sea of tall grass is to be seen. Out the other, for miles around are trees and hills. I went up onto it at sunset, and thought I had not seen, ever, a more imposing sight.

In our travels today we stoped two miles the other side of Council Grove, at what is called Big John's Spring.⁷ The origin of its name I have not learned, but in place of it I found by experience that it is the

⁷ Big John's Spring. This was a remarkably fine spring, discovered on June 13, 1827, by and named for John Walker, a member of the party of the three Commissioners appointed to survey the road to Santa Fé in 1825-1827. He was expert in lettering with his pen-knife and tomahawk. Because of his gigantic size he was called "Big John." On the date mentioned Walker took to Sibley some of the water from the spring and asked him what name it should have. The latter directed him to cut in large letters on a big oak that grew near the spring "Big John's Spring." (Sibley, "Route to Santa Fé" in *Western Journal*, vol. 5, p. 178.)

most delightful water we have had on the road. It is quite a romantic place; just from the side of the hill around which the road winds, we ascend a rather steep bank, at the foot of which is a natural basin of half a foot or more deep, filled [with] cristal liquid as cold and pure as ever mortal can need. The scenery around is very wild and rather awing. While I stood apparently very calm and bold as *mi alma* bent down to fix a little *toddy* with water from the clear flowing stream, I could not suppress the fear, or rather the thought of some wily savage or hungry wolf might be lurking in the thick grape vines, ready the first advantageous moment to bounce upon my shoulders. I would not tell *mi alma* these foolish fears, for I knew he would ridicule them, and this was torture to me, but Ring, my faithful Ring, came by me just then and I commenced patting his head which made him lie at my feet and I felt *safe* with this trusty soldier near me. We took dinner quite late today and in consequence go without supper, for want of appetite. For my part I am off to bed as soon as it is dark.

Camp No. 10. Still at Council Grove. At early sun rise this morning Col. Owens and Armijo's company arrived. Stayed in camp nearly all day. About sun down Mr. M. took me to see an adjacent spring. It bursts from the foot of the mound I spoke of yesterday and in a thick clump of high grass. It is rather a strange place, one comes upon it without ever thinking that such a thing could be near. It is quite deep, though not larger than half a bushel. The water is perfectly cool and clear. Besides this we took a long

walk around and through the hills. The scenery is truly magnificent. At one view we have stretched before us lofty hills entirely destitute of shrubbery; at their base gurgled along in quiet solitude a pearly stream laving the feet of giant trees that looked down with scorn upon the diminutive creature man. In the green and tender grassed meadow just before us the foreground of the scene, were seen quietly grazing hundreds of cattle and mules, while others fatigued from daily toil were seen resting their weary limbs near the shade trees. To the right of us as we stood facing the N. E., might be seen a small *village* as it were, formed though of wagons only. A "corral" had been formed, or in English the wagons were so arranged as to form a great circle into which the stock are some times driven for a night's protection, and always for a "catch up." Around and inside of this the teamsters were actively employed repairing their wagons, and making further preparations for "the road." This view was all to the North and N. E. as we stood on the high and celebrated mound of Council Grove. To our backs lay other and similar scenes, beautiful alike for the artists pencil. We have one in our Company, Mr. Stanley^s rather celebrated for his

^s John Mix Stanley made sketches and paintings of the wild scenes encountered on the expedition into the wilderness of the West during the first half of the last century. His works were among the most interesting of that period. The Smithsonian Institution in December, 1852, issued a catalogue of his pictures describing them as "accurate portraits painted from life of forty-three different tribes of Indians, obtained at the cost, hazard, and inconvenience of ten years' tour through the southwestern prairies,

Indian sketches. His acquaintance I have not yet made, but at any rate a sketch of this would do his hand credit.

Camp No. 11, Sunday 21st. We left our two days' camp this morning by 6½ o'clock. The "Diamond Spring"⁹ at which we are now lying being but twelve miles distant we made the whole drive at once. Got into camp by 2 o'clock.

The Company today presents rather a more extensive van. We have a strange compound of Americans, Mexicans and negroes; Horses, mules and oxen. This may literally be considered our start *No. 2*, after

New Mexico, California and Oregon." This catalogue listed 151 pictures left on exhibition. All but five of them were burnt by fire January 24, 1865. One of these five, showing a buffalo hunt, is reproduced in this volume.

Stanley enlisted in Lieut. Emory's detachment, and accompanied him to California. The illustrations in the Senate edition of Emory's *Notes of a Military Reconnoissance*, are the work of John Stanley. In 1853 Stanley accompanied Isaac I. Stevens on his "Explorations for a route for the Pacific Railroad from St. Paul to Puget Sound." A great many of his sketches have been reproduced in Mr. Stevens' Report. (Bushnell, David I., in *Smithsonian Report*, 1924.)

⁹ Diamond Spring was discovered by "Old Ben Jones," a hunter of Sibley's party, on August 11, 1825. "It gushes out from the head of a hollow in the prairie and runs among clean stones to Otter Creek." It furnishes enough good, clear, cold water to supply an army, and is superior to the fountain in the Arabian Desert, known as the "Diamond of the Desert"; the name of the latter suggested a good name for this spring, which might well be called the "Diamond of the Plain." Sibley camped there June 10, 1827, and had Big John carve the name on an Elm. (Sibley, "Route to Santa Fé" in *Western Journal*, vol. 5, p. 180.)

a respite of two days and the augmenting of our fources to forty-five wagons. We compose three or four different camps. It is a village on a hill this, for we are strewn in all directions; where the abodes of men are not seen, the stock are in grazing, appearing as much, to the distant spectator, like little dark huts of some kind, while our tents and largest wagons appear like magnificent domes.

Camp No. 12. Ouch, what a day this is! We started in the rain, came in the rain, and stoped in the rain. Last night was a very cold night, and about day-light it commenced raining. We started at 9 o'clock having had difficulty in yoking the oxen. After travelling only a mile two of the wagons stuck at the crossing of a small creek and we were there detained some time, but finally got off, and arrived here by 4 o'clock. This camping ground is called the "Lost spring" from what cause I do not know. It is 12 miles from "Diamond Spring."

We met Capt. Bent¹⁰ this morning, on his return from his fort up the big Arkansas river. While he was in conversation with Mr. M. [Samuel Magoffin] I closed a letter to Papa. It was a hurried affair, for I had only a few minutes to do it in, and then the wind and rain were blowing in my face, blotting my paper, and shaking me so I scarcely knew what I wrote.

This is certainly one of the "varieties of life" as well as of traveling. To be shut up in a carriage all

¹⁰ Capt. Charles Bent left Fort Bent June 12, 1846, and arrived at Independence June 29 following. Leaving St. Louis on July 24, he arrived at Fort Bent August 17, 1846.

day with a buffalo robe rolled around you, and with the rain pouring down at ten knots an hour. And at the close of this to be quietly without any trouble to one's self, into the middle of a bed in a nice dry tent, with writing materials around you and full privilege to write anything and every thing that may chance to enter one's head whether foolishness, as this is, or wisdom. We have rainy days any place and they are not more disagreeable on the plains than in N. Y. I have books, writing implements, sewing, knitting, somebody to talk with, a house that does not leak and I am satisfied, although this is a juicy day *en el campo!*

Camp No. 13. "Lost spring" June 23rd. If I cannot spin a yarn today it is not because I have no field for action! Here I am in the middle of my bed, with my feet drawn up under me like a tailor. I have taken refuge from the rain, which from the time we went to bed last night till this time 3 o'clock P. M. has continued to fall—not exactly in torrents, but quite fast, and driving against the tent as though it would wash us away every moment. But we continue dry over head and that is *something*, for our neighbours over the way, are washed head and foot. We were late rising this morning for we had nothing to do; when we did get up, we eat our breakfast and *came back to bed again*; that is, we sat in the middle of the bed to keep our feet dry. The water ran through the tent like a little spring, so we just turned the carpet up to the pole, and left that part of the house to see after itself.

Alma mia soon grew tired of sitting with his feet

as high as his head, so he put his head into my lap,—me at my work in the mean time—and dozed a little and talked a little. Soon we both lay down for a nap, but just as we were fixed for this our neighbour Col. Owens, feeling apprehensive for our welfare and anxious to let us know his own fate, stepped in. He has been compelled to take up his alls and find another resting place, for to use his own words "the floor of his *house* looked as though a parcel of pigs had turned a trough of slop over in it and then wallowed till it was a perfect mire." Rather a sad predicament that; he found us in rather a more *thriving* condition.

As bad as it all is, I enjoy it still. I look upon it as one of the "varieties of life," and as that is always "spice" of course it must be enjoyed.

If I live through all this—and I think from all appearances now I shall come off the winner—I shall be fit for one of the *Oregon pioneers*. We are here without a stick of wood to get anything to eat, all that was provided at the last camp having been used last night & this morning—some of the men though have gone off, perhaps several miles to find some. I believe there is not a tree in sight of camp. And this should no longer be called the lost spring for it is "runing high" now, and taking all before it.

Thursday 25th. Camp 15. Cotton wood creek 12 miles. We are here and as much as a bargain! I have been trying all day to recollect the scenes of yesterday, for I did not write them then.

I believe I have at length found them at least in part. We left the Lost Spring about 7 o'clock yester-

day morning with the intention if possible to reach Cottonwood before night, and without stopping for dinner. But the previous rains foiled our attempts at this. The roads were very heavy and often the mud entirely blocked a wagon wheel. Our speed averaged not more than one mile per hour. At 3 o'clock P. M. after a travel of 6 or 7 ms. we stopped to noon it on the open prairie without wood, save a little that was saved of our scant supply at the "Lost Spring."

Col. Owens and his partner Mr. Awld¹¹ were more

¹¹ James Aull, born in Wilmington, Delaware, in 1804, was the son of John and Margaret (Elliot) Aull. He removed from Newcastle, Delaware, in 1836 to Lexington, Missouri, following his eldest brother, John Aull, who had been engaged successfully in merchandising in western Missouri since 1819. Later, another brother, Robert, joined them, and the three, known as Aull Brothers, conducted stores at Lexington, Liberty, Richmond, and Independence, Missouri. The brothers were well known throughout the western country, and accumulated great fortunes; John and Robert being known as the capitalists of western Missouri. They were energetic, active, and liberal men in the period between 1820 and 1860, and contributed largely to educational and civic enterprises. James Aull joined Colonel Samuel C. Owens in the Santa Fé trade, and strangely both of them met violent deaths on their expedition of 1846. Aull was brutally assassinated by Mexicans in his store at Chihuahua on June 23, 1847. Being alone in his store one evening, four Mexicans came in ostensibly to trade, but when he turned his back they stabbed him to death, carrying away most of his goods and money. A fine repeating gold watch was overlooked, and this, together with Mr. Aull's Bible, was faithfully preserved and brought back to Missouri by his negro servant, Andrew. Mr. Aull was buried in the Catholic Cemetery at Chihuahua. Unsuccessful efforts were made by his brothers to locate the remains and bring them

pushing in their attempts. Their ox teams (they have five) passed us and came on I believe safe to this place. But his mule teams (some eighteen or twenty) were from the time we stopped till 6 o'clock passing the little wet weather creek near which we camped. At 6 o'clock we left and about a mile distant found the Col. in a sad predicament indeed. He had one wagon fast in a mud-hole with the tongue twisted off, and two others so much disabled he could not move them; his teams had given out and there he was for the night.

Seeing all this made our wagoners ambitious to get on, so they set to work in right good earnest, and after the usual quantity of swearing, whooping, and cracking of whips, they succeeded in passing their wagons. It was now nearly dark, and they had to drive to the top of a long hill before any kind of a camping place could be found.

When they got there they had neither wood nor water, so the night was spent in fasting and wet cloths.

We drove all of our concern, that is, the little Rock-away carriage we are travelling in, Jane's dearborn

back to Missouri. It was their desire to have them reinterred in the Cemetery Square at Lexington, originally donated by James Aull to that city in 1836.

No man in western Missouri commanded a greater degree of respect and affection in those days, when Independence and Lexington were the starting points for Santa Fé and Oregon trails, than James Aull. He was an elder in the Lexington Presbyterian Church, which was built on the lot adjoining his residence. An unassuming gentleman, of energy and judgment. He never married.

and the baggage wagon, on about half a mile further to where Col. Owens had one or two more wagons stuck fast near a small wet weather branch or small creek. It was now after 9 o'clock and quite damp. So just as soon as our tent could be stretched and the bed made, which took us till after 10—I slipped off to roost.

I was so tired I could not sleep; it commenced raining too and beat so near my head, I thought every minute I must surely get a ducking, but I kept dry though, and a little before daylight got a short nap.

Soon the wagoners were stirring, anxious to cross the creek before it should rain any more. The principal pass way was blocked by Col. Owens' wagons, so they doubled teams and cut around to make one of their own. Then tent was soon knocked up and off we came to "Cotton Wood" to get our breakfast, for we had not a stick of wood to cook with there, and hungry necessity compelled us to come, we had had nothing to eat since dinner yesterday. We crossed the creek without difficulty, the banks are long but not very steep; the rain has made them quite slippery, but our little light carriages passed them easy. We got our dinner, or rather breakfast about 1 o'clock. Seven of the wagons with doubled teams came over this morning, the others are coming in now, late P. M.

While Jane and I were on a little stroll after dinner, I carelessly walking along stepped almost onto a large snake; it moved and frightened me very much. Of course I screamed and ran off, and like a ninny came back when the snake had been frightened by me

as much as it had me, and had gone I can't tell where. I came back to look for it.

The last wagon did not get over till 9 o'clock. It stuck in the mud and when two drivers with eleven yoke of oxen failed to move it some more hands went down from camp and they "whipped out" a teamster's term meaning they fell to work with their whip handles and beat the poor oxen, whooping and yelling all the time, till one is almost induced to believe their throats will split. They continue this till fear of their oppressors will compel the brutes to pull till they move it, and as a reward for their perseverance they come off with bloody necks from the yoke's rubbing, and their heads and backs well whip-lashed. It is a hard life both for driver and animals, and this day has been so especially, the drive was not long but difficult.

Camp No. 16. I have not yet described "The Cotton Wood." I went down this P. M., after the little shower we had, to see it. And such a ramble it was.

The camp ground is on a slight rise, and some three or four hundred yards down is a steep bank covered with cotton wood trees, (which give it the name). Just below rolls a placid little stream, resembling some the Council Grove, though not so grand or lively. Its waters were darkened by the recent rain and perhaps that makes the difference. Just at the water's edge are quantities of gooseberry and raspberry bushes. They were nearly rifled of their fruits by the wagoners, before I went to them. Above these and on the side rather of the cliff, is a thick plumb

grove—these too I missed for they are not yet ripe; however I pulled some of them only to say I had picked three kinds of fruits in one spot on Cottonwood creek.

Jane and I climbed entirely down this bank as steep as it was. Women are venturesome creatures! And we found this still more true when we were ready to return. We had difficulties now that were entirely unseen coming down. We had wandered farther up the stream than the place where we descended and there found our road steeper and more slippery. But we took it all in good part and procured long sticks to assist us in our undertaking. I took the lead stopping at every step to laugh at my own picture (an old woman with her back bent double, her cloths held up to her knees and a long staff) and to place my walking stick in a safe place before venturing to rest my precious self on it. We finally reached the land, for we considered ourselves in the water before as one false step would have landed us in the little stream, and to me quite fearful from its dark looks.

One of the prairie pests to me is a green bug, which I can do more justice to in describing by calling it an *aligator in miniature*. Its legs and body are both very long and remarkably slender, and it goes creeping and feeling about everything before it. I am no friend to bugs, worms, or snakes, and though the good people here assure me there is no harm attached to it, its very looks frighten me. I never walk in the grass without holding my dress up high, from fear that its long arm may chance to grapple me. These things, snakes

and musquitoes are the only disagreeable parts of my prairie life.

To have peeped into our tent this afternoon one might have been induced to believe I disliked the rain, but the idea is mistaken! It is truly fun for me. I kick up the carpet, put all things from the floor on to the chairs, pull off my own shoes, and then take my seat in the middle of the bed, which I am induced to introduce as my boat, not from its shape, or appearance in any way, but from its keeping me dry from the pond of water below me. I might spin a long yarn and say it is a perfect river, with fishes and great animals, but not so, it runs in a little stream only frightening off the bugs, and this part I don't object to. I am their sworn enemy and it does me no harm to see them floating down the stream.

Camp No. 17. Out on the Prairie with no wood and little water. I am in as good humour this morning as any one can be when they have been kept awake all night by the outward elements. We got to camp last evening rather late and I put off writing till this morning, but I am afraid the *good humour* I am in will not let me recollect the events of yesterday.

I must first record the *trials* of last night—It had something the appearance of rain at dark & accordingly I prepared for a drenching during the night. But it did not come though. But I am sure I should prefer it if I knew that another such was in store for me. The heat at first was so great, I had to pull all but my chemise [off], and even that would have been sent off without regret, had not modesty forbid me.