

I had just fussed and turned about till sleep came to my relief, but it brought with it a gust of wind that I thought would blow our house, the bed its *inmates* and all into a mass too much on the chaos order to be separated ever. To add to all the pleasure and beauty of this, it commenced lightening, right in my face. It actually seemed that everything was angry with me from some cause or other & were now taking their "satisfaction." The wind carried with it the heat, but put in its place a chilly damp air. I commenced pulling for couver, but that was out of place and after a search in the dark, I found that Mr. Ringling (the dog) had very gallantly made his bed on it. I hoisted him from this berth though, and with my burthen crawled back to my own, to "*make the best of it.*"

But for our yesterday's travel. We left at 7 o'clock in the morning—came some six miles, the road tolerably good, nooned it on the Prairie with little water and no wood but that provided at Cottonwood. After dinner to get rid of the hot sun, we spread out a buffalo robe in the little shade made by the carriage, and took a short siesta of a few minutes. The drive in the evening was not so far though quite as good. The roads are very heavy, wagons are sticking constantly in the marshy ground through which we have principally come today.

Saw an antelope this P. M. It was not quite so venturesome as the one we saw at Council Grove and did not come near. Rather a sensible creature that! He knows something of the cruel and wily man!

*Camp No. 18 On the wide Prairie. Sunday June*

*28th, 1846.* This is my third Sabbath on the Plains. And how does conscience tell me it has been spent? Oh, may my heavenly father grant me pardon for my wickedness! Did I not in the very beginning of it forget—yes, and how can I be pardoned for the great sin—that it was the Holy Sabbath, appointed by my heavenly father for a day of rest—and classed it so much with the days of the week, that I regularly took out my week's work, knitting. Oh, how could I ever have been so thoughtless, so unmindful of my duty and my eternal salvation!

Passed the whole day with little wood, and no water for the cattle, but some little about in puddles. Had some difficulty in crossing a swampy place, this evening; the teamsters had to mow grass and put in it, before they could pass their teams.

*Noon. No. 20. Little Arkansas River. June 30th, 1846.* Come my feeble pen, put on thy specks and assist this full head to unburthen itself! Thou hast a longer story than is usual to tell. How we left *Camp No. 19* yesterday (Monday) morning after a sleepless night, our tent was pitched in the musquito region and when will the God Somnus make his appearance in such quarters? It was slap, slap, all the time, from one party of the combatants, while the others came with a buz and a bite.

We traveled till 11 o'clock with the hope of finding water for the weary cattle. The sun was excessively oppressive. Col. Owens' mule teams left us entirely, but his oxen like ours were unable to stand the heat. They were before us and stoped—we followed their

example, as much from necessity as any thing else. The oxen, some of them staggered under their yokes, and when we turned out for want of water—there was none within five miles of us that we knew of—some of the most fatigued absolutely crept under the wagons for shade, and did not move till they were driven up in the evening. One poor thing fell in the road and we almost gave him up for lost. His driver though, rather a tender hearted lad I presume, went with a bucket to a *mud hole* and brought the *wet mud* which was a little cool, and *plastered his body over with it*. He then got all the water from the water kegs after the men had drank, which was not more than two or three tin cups full; he took this and opening the ox's mouth poured it down his throat. He then made a covering over him with the ox yokes standing up and blankets spread over. In the course of an hour or two the poor thing could get up, and walk. But his great thirst for water led him to searching in the deep grass, and when the wagons started at 5 o'clock, he could not be found. Roman, the old Mexican who attended the loose stock, hunted some time for him, but to no purpose. Other sick ones needed his attention and it was probable this one had gone back to the last night's camp ground, and as it was too far to send on an uncertainty and pressing times, we gave up the search.

It blew up a little cooler towards sunset and we travelled pretty well, to make water was our object; both man and beast were craving it. The former could occasionally find a little to quench his parched thirst, by searching ravines that were grown up with tall

weeds, this tho' muddy, and as warm as a scorching sun beaming into it all day could make it, was a luxurious draught. Now, about dark, we came into the mosquito regions, and I found to my great *horror* that I have been complaining all this time for nothing, yes absolutely for *nothing*; for some two or hundred or even thousands are nothing compared with what we now encountered. The carriage mules became so restless that they passed all the wagons and switching their tails from side to side, as fast as they could, and slaping their ears, required some strength of our Mexican driver to hold them in. He would jerk the reins and exclaim "*hola los animal[es] cómo estande bravos!*" [Ho, animals! how wild you are!] The moon was not very bright and we could not see far before us. Suddenly one of the mules sprang to one side, reared, and pitched till I really believed we should turn over. Magoffin discovered something lying in the road, and springing from the carriage pulled me out. It was a dead ox lying immediately in our way, and it is no wonder the mule was frightened.

In my own hurry to get out I had entirely forgotten the mosquitoes, and on returning to the carriage I found my feet covered with stings, and my dress full, where they had gotten on me in the grass. About 10 o'clock we came upon a dark ravine, over which *las caras* [*los carros*—the wagons] would probably experience some difficulty in passing, so we stoped to see them over. The mules became perfectly frantic, and nothing could make them stand. They were turned out to shift for themselves, and Magoffin

seeing no other alternative than to remain there all night, tied his head and neck up with pocket handkerchiefs and set about having the tent stretched. I drew my feet up under me, wrapped my shawl over my head, till I almost smothered with heat, and listened to the din without. And such a noise as it was, I shall pray ever to be preserved. Millions upon millions were swarming around me, and their knocking against the carriage reminded me of a hard rain. It was equal to any of the plagues of Egypt. I lay almost in a perfect stupor, the heat and stings made me perfectly sick, till Magoffin came to the carriage and told me *to run if I could*, with my shawl, bonnet and shoes on (and without opening my mouth, Jane said, for they would choke me) straight to the bed. When I got there they pushed me straight in under the musquito bar, which had been tied up in some kind of a fashion, and oh, dear, what a relief it was to breathe again. There I sat in my cage, like an imprisoned creature frightened half to death.

Magoffin now rolled himself up some how with all his cloths on, and lay down at my side, he dare not raise the bar to get in. I tried to sleep and towards daylight succeeded. On awaking this morning I found my forehead, arms and feet covered with knots. They were not little red places as musquitos generally make, but they were knots, some of them quite as large as a pea. We knocked up the tent as quick as possible and without thinking of breakfast came off to this place, passing on our way our own wagons and those of Col. Owens encamped at Mud Creek.

On our arrival here the buffalo and pillow were spread out and I layed down to sleep and I can say it took no rocking to accomplish the end. The tent was stretched with the intention of remaining here all night. The crossing is quite difficult, the sun extremely warm and it was supposed the oxen could not go on. About 11 o'clock *mi alma* came and raised me by my hand entirely up onto my feet without waking me. The whole scene had entirely changed. The sky was perfectly dark, wind blowing high, the atmosphere cool and pleasant and *no musquitoes*, with every appearance of a hard storm.

At 12 o'clock breakfast was ready, and after drinking a cup of tea I fell on the bed completely worn out. After two or three hours sound sleep I got up washed, combed my head, put on clean cloths—a luxury on the plains by the way—and sallied forth in the cool air somewhat refreshed. I brought out my writing implements and here I am.

Noon. 21. *Little Cow Creek. July 1, 1846.* According to the calculation of Mr. Gregg,<sup>12</sup> a gentleman

<sup>12</sup> Dr. Josiah Gregg was quite a mechanical genius, as well as a Santa Fé trader, traveler, explorer, and author. On one of his many trips to Santa Fé he was employed by a priest to build a clock in the tower of his church, the contract price for which was one thousand dollars. Dr. Gregg, however, finished the work in much less time than was anticipated by the priest, and he refused to pay more than seven hundred dollars. When building the clock Dr. Gregg placed in it the image of a little negro, which, when the clock would strike, would come outside and dance. Some months after Dr. Gregg's return to the United States he received a letter from the priest stating that the little negro had ceased to perform his mission, and if he would return

who made several expeditions across the Prairies and who wrote a history of the trade &c, we are 249 miles from Independence.

We camped last night at Arrow Rock creek—most of our travel yesterday was after 5 o'clock P. M. till 10—8 miles. I was quite sick and took medicine which has made me feel like a new being today. I am at least *50 per cent better*.

We had a fine dinner today and I enjoyed it ex- and repair it he would pay him the remainder of his money, according to the original contract. The following spring Dr. Gregg returned to Santa Fé and repaired the clock. Upon inquiry, he learned that the priest's flock had told him the reason the negro would not come out and dance as before was because he had not paid the full price agreed upon. Dr. Gregg received his three hundred dollars and heard no more of the clock.

Dr. Gregg was born in Overton County, Tennessee, July 19, 1806, the son of Harmon and Susannah (Smelser) Gregg. In 1809 Harmon Gregg moved his family to Illinois, and from there to the territory of Missouri three years later, settling in the Boone's Lick Country. Josiah Gregg was a physician, but probably never practiced his profession, as he began life on the plains at the age of twenty-five. He was a war correspondent for American newspapers during the Mexican War. He wrote *Commerce of the Prairies*, which is generally accepted as a great work. His death occurred while on an expedition into the mountains of California in the winter of 1849. He was captain of a party of forty, organized for the expedition, but only eight of them made the start. The others backed down when the Indian guides refused to go on account of an unusually severe storm. The Indians prophesied that snow in the mountains would present an insurmountable barrier, and their fears were justified by the terrible sufferings and casualties which came upon the explorers. Dr. Gregg died of exhaustion, due principally to lack of food.

ceedingly, for I had eaten nothing but a little tea and half a biscuit since yesterday dinner. It consisted of boiled chicken, soup, rice, and a dessert of *wine and gooseberry tart*. Such a thing on the plains would be looked upon by those at home as an utter impossibility. But nevertheless it is true. Jane and I went off as soon as we got here and found enough to make a fine pie. I wish the plumbs and grapes were ripe; there is any quantity of them along all the little streams we pass.

One of the wagoners chased a wolf today. We see them frequently lurking about, ready to come pick the scraps, if the dogs chance to leave any, where we have camped.

Camped tonight at big Cow Creek, three miles from the other which we left at seven o'clock. The crossing here is very bad and took us till moon down to cross. It is good water and wood, so we struck camp.

*Camp No. 22. Bank of the Arkansas River.* Prairie scenes are rather changing today. We are coming more into the buffalo regions. The grass is much shorter and finer. The plains are cut up by winding paths and every thing promises a *buffalo dinner* on the 4th.

We left our last night's camp quite early this morning. About 9 o'clock we came upon "Dog City." This curiosity is well worth seeing. The Prairie dog, not much larger than a well grown rat, burrows in the ground. They generally make a regular town of it, each one making his house by digging a hole, and heaping the dirt around the mouth of this. Two are generally built together in a neighbourly way. They

of course visit as regularly as man. When we got into this one, which lays on both sides of the road occupying at least a circle of some hundred yards, the little fellows like people ran to their doors to see the passing crowd. They could be seen all around with their heads poked out, and expressing their opinions I supposed from the loud barking I heard.

We nooned it on the Prairie without water for the cattle, within sight of the river, but some six miles from it. The banks are quite sandy and white, having the appearance, at a distance, of a large city. It is shaded by the trees in some places, having very much the appearance of white and coloured houses.

Came to camp tonight before sunset. Col. Owens' Company, which got before us this morning, were just starting after performing the last office to the dead body of a Mexican. He had consumption. Poor man, 'twas but yesterday that we sent him some soup from our camp, which he took with relish and today he is in his grave!

The manner of interring on the plains is necessarily very simple. The grave is dug very deep, to prevent the body from being found by the wolves. The corpse is rolled in a blanket—lowered and stones put on it. The earth is then thrown in, the sod replaced and it is well beat down. Often the corral is made over it, to make the earth still more firm, by the tromping of the stock. The Mexicans always place a cross at the grave.

Our camp is on the bank of the Arkansas tonight. Its dark waters remind me of the Mississippi.—It makes me sad to look upon it.—I am reminded of

home. Though the Mississippi is a vast distance from there—it seems to me a near neighbour, compared with the distance I am from it—now three hundred miles from Independence. The time rolls on so fast I can scarcely realize its three weeks out.

*Camp No. 23.* This has indeed been a long day's travel. We left the Arkansas river, along which we have been traveling far and near since we first struck it, this morning by a little after 6 o'clock, and by 10 o'clock reached the Walnut Creek, a branch of the Arkansas, and eight miles from it. Crossed it with ease, the water quite deep though—and nooned it 4 miles farther near the Arkansas. Today I have seen the first time wild buffalo. A herd of some ten or 12 were just across the river from our nooning place. The teamsters all afire to have a chase started off half a dozen of them—and much to our surprise, for we expected nothing of the kind, killed one—so after all we are to have a buffalo dinner tomorrow.

Started this P. M. about 4 o'clock traveled well till 6 o'clock, when a very hard thunder storm came up and detained us *in the road* till after eight. A thunder storm at sunset on the Prairie is a sublime and awing scene indeed. The vivid and forked lightning quickly succeeded by the hoarse growling thunder impresses one most deeply of his own weakness and the magnanimity of his God. With nothing before or near us in sight, save the wide expanse of Prairie resembling most fully in the pale light of the moon, as she occasionally appeared from under a murky cloud and between the vivid lightning, the wide sea. There was no

object near higher than our own wagons, and how easy would it have been for one of them to be struck and consume the whole crowd, for with it was a high wind, sufficient to counteract the effects of the drenching rain.

We traveled on till 12 o'clock and stopped near the "Pawnee Rock"—a high mound with one side of sand stone. It derives its name from a battle once fought there between some company and a band of the Pawnee Indians. It has rather an awing name, since this tribe are the most treacherous and troublesome to the traders.

*July 4th 1846. Pawnee Fork. Saturday.* What a disastrous *celebration* I have today. It is certainly the greatest miracle that I have my head on my shoulders. I think I can never forget it if I live to be as old as my grandmother.

The wagons left Pawnee Rock some time before us.—For I was anxious to see this wonderful curiosity. We went up and while *mi alma* with his gun and pistols kept watch, for the wily Indian may always be apprehended here, it is a good lurking place and they are ever ready to fall upon any unfortunate trader behind his company—and it is necessary to be careful, so while *mi alma* watched on the rock above and Jane stood by to watch if any should come up on the front side of me, I cut my name, among the many hundreds inscribed on the rock and many of whom I knew. It was not done well, for fear of Indians made me tremble all over and I hurried it over in any way. This

I remarked would be quite an adventure to celebrate the 4th! but woe betide I have yet another to relate.

The wagons being some distance ahead we rode on quite briskly to overtake them. In an hour's time we had driven some six miles, and at *Ash creek* we came up with them. No water in the creek and the crossing pretty good only a tolerably steep bank on the first side of it, all but two had passed over, and as these were not up we drove on ahead of them to cross first. The bank though a little steep was smooth and there could be no difficulty in riding down it.—However, we had made up our minds always to walk down such places in case of accident, and before we got to it *mi alma* hallowed "woe" as he always does when he wishes to stop, but as there was no motion made by the driver to that effect, he repeated it several times and with much vehemence. We had now reached the very verge of the cliff and seeing it a good way and apparently less dangerous than jumping out as we were, he said "go on." The word was scarcely from his lips, ere we were whirled completely over with a perfect crash. One to see the wreck of that carriage now with the top and sides entirely broken to pieces, could never believe that people had come out of it alive. But strange, wonderful to say, we are almost entirely unhurt! I was considerably stunned at first and could not stand on my feet. *Mi alma* forgetting himself and entirely enlisted for my safety carried me in his arms to a shade tree, almost entirely without my knowledge, and rubbing my face and hands with whiskey soon brought me entire to myself.—My

back and side are a little hurt, but is very small compared with what it might have been. *Mi alma* has his left hip and arm on which he fell both bruised and strained, but not seriously. Dear creature 'twas for me he received this, for had he not caught me in his arms as we fell he could have saved himself entirely. And then I should perhaps have been killed or much crushed for the top fell over me, and it was only his hands that kept it off of me. It is better as it is, for we can sympathise more fully with each other.

It was a perfect mess that; of people, books, bottles—one of which broke, and on my head too I believe,—guns, pistols, baskets, bags, boxes and the dear knows what else. I was insensible to it all except when something gave me a hard knock and brought me to myself. We now sought refuge in Jane's carriage for our own could only acknowledge its incapability.

By 12 o'clock we reached this place six miles, when we found all the companies which have come on before us, having been stoped by an order of Government.

*Sunday 5th.* I am rather better of my bruises today. It is only for a little while though, I fear; such knocks seldom hurt so much for a day or two. I am yet to suffer for it.

We are still at "The Pawnee Fork." The traders are all stoped here by an order of Government, to wait the arrival of more troops than those already ahead of us, for our protection to Santa Fé.

We are quite a respectable crowd now with some seventy-five or eighty wagons of merchandise, beside

those of the soldiers. When all that are behind us come up we shall number some hundred and fifty.

And it is quite probable we shall be detained here ten days or a week at the least. I shall go regularly to housekeeping. It is quite a nice place this, notwithstanding the number of wagons and cattle we have for our near neighbours. With the great Arkansas on the South of us, the Pawnee creek to the S. W. and extensive woods in the same direction. From the west the buffalo are constantly coming in, in bands of from three or four to more than fifty.

The sight of so many military coats is quite sufficient to frighten all the Indians entirely out of the country. So we have nothing to fear either on account of starvation, thirst or sudden murder.

*Monday 6th. Camp No. 26.* Ours is quite the picture of a hunter's home today.

The men, most of them, have been out since sun rise, and constantly mules loaded with the spoils of their several victories, are constantly returning to camp. It is a rich sight indeed to look at the fine fat meat stretched out on ropes to dry for our sustinence when we are no longer in the regions of the living animal. Such soup as we have made of the hump ribs, one of the most choice parts of the buffalo. I never eat its equal in the best hotels of N. Y. and Philad<sup>a</sup>. And the sweetest butter and most delicate oil I ever tasted tis not surpassed by the marrow taken from the thigh bones.

If one cannot live and grow fat here, he must be a strange creature. Oh, how much Papa would enjoy