

ENA'S DIARY -- AUGUST 1872

/Fort McPherson,
/Thursday,/ Aug. 1st

Wilk /Snell/ will take me on the Medicine tomorrow or next day. -- I must see after my books and mss. Besides I feel some curiosity to hear and see something about "the flood". I wonder if they have ~~heard~~ heard or seen any thing of my canary? Pretty little truant! I should not wonder if he had not forgotten his patrician blood and become enamoured with some tiny brown plebian of the forest! -- I miss my birdie -- poor little pet, to think I brought him all the way from the "far South"! He use to wake Mamie and I up every morning with his cheery songs. -- Ah! me -- what a changeful mystery is Life!

/Friday,/ Aug. 2nd

We start in the morning very early for the Medicine. Mr. Lewis says I must ride on horseback and so we, Wilk and I, will go in his, Mr. L's, waggon. We are going to slip my saddle and riding habit in the waggon, on the sly. Wilk says he can manage it. I know Mrs. Snell would not let us carry "The outfit" if she knew of it. It favors too much of hunting, over-exercise, and consequent illness. But, let come what will if there is any chance for it, I am going to see buffalo before I bless this garrison with my angel presence again!

Ft. McPherson
Tuesday - Aug. 6th

Well we have returned! Arrived about 11 o'clock this morning. Left the Medicine just at dawn of day! I am not ill but a little uncertain. I must give, at least, a synopsis of the trip and to begin at the beginning let me say that we did not get off so very early as

was anticipated; yet having made good time we arrived at the Medicine before the sun grew warm - i.e. about half past 10. -- We went at a "rattling" rate. I heard afterwards that we were taken to be "the Red Willow mail-line on its first trip." Every thing looked queer and changed on the Medicine.

We went directly to my house on the hill which I have named "Raven's Cliff" for two reasons - viz: I saw ravens, and heard their cry there for the first time in my life; and again, the bluffs are very steep -- So precipitous that the epithet "cliff" is not at all in appropriate.

But to make a long story short we found the denizens of "Wolf's Rest" up there. Ma busy among sundry and heterogenous heaps of household goods that had just been moved up. Every thing was utterly out of order, the water having only gone down the day before so that they could bring things across the creek. Madame looked used to the chaos, which seemed like domestic maelstrom, to me sweeping all that came near into its vortex!

I could not resist my penchant for fun and when Madame gravely told me how she had gotten onto her bed and clung on to Mr. L____'s et Lamb while the men worked for dear life to save setting hens; youthful chickens, and "Such like," I aroused her spirit by laughing aloud!

They had to ferry the milk over in tubs and -- but oh! I haven't time to tell the wonderful wonders attending this flood, which came on without warning; sweeping trees and bridges in its course and making the beautiful little grove around Wolf's Rest a dreary waste of water. They were half expecting me it seems! Bert looked like a hearty

good-natured savage! George D _____ arrived after a while with a bag of cats! He looked muddy and smiling. In the afternoon the boys took me in a waggon to see Wolf's Rest! The water had all run off from around the house. Tepe Chees Cheela was a "thing of the past." -- Nothing left to tell that ~~it~~ it had for a brief while been the resting place of a souther waift ~~■~~ - dreamer - a poet or a fool; which of the two last I shall have the world decide for me, before long!

After spending a night of mosquito-horrors, my weary limbs forgot their lassitude when at sunrise the next morning my gaze was arrested by the sight of buffalo on the far hills! Heavens! I forgot I had not slept and that I was or should be ill! Then what a rush and skurry for horses, rifles, pistols etc.

In less than "no time" we were off. Five of us - viz: Bert M., Wilk S. Mr. P., George D. and last but by no manner of means least, Enna R. - slim and long and wild as a lute! No, I was not -- that is a scandal on poor little me! I was eager of course but cool enough for "business"! Dressed in a black habit with white hat and untamed curls! And so we started! Wilk and Bert wished to lariat a calf so we did not attempt to shoot any of the head "buffs." Made a dash for the main herd, and in less than five minutes they were all on the "dead go!" Shades of Nimrod! What a wild grand chase it was. -- I could hear the steady tramp and roar of their feet as the huge creatures swept over hills and down canons at a speed that put our horses to their best.

I did not attempt to shoot when we first started. -- My horse went wild at once and it was more than I could do to take care of him! But I managed to see the fun at any rate. Wilk and Bert "went

for them" in good Indian style. -- Bare headed and riding as horsemen should! They were soon in their midst shooting right and left! I passed one huge old bull "wounded unto death"! He was splendid in his massive agony! Writhing in the fearful throes of a gory death, his eyes still gleaming with a fierce defiance and his long glossy black mane dripping with purple blood!

But on we swept -- until I felt that chance or no chance, I must try one shot at least! Having quieted down my horse somewhat, we singled out a small number to the right and went for them in good earnest! Father and Dillard were with me -- Mr. D carrying the gun, which being a needle-gun was more than I could manage; we run in about 75 yds. of them, when my horse commenced to plunge at such a rate that I knew I could get no nearer, so I sprang off and fired. I wounded my buff, but lo! when I turned to my horse, intending to follow, of course, I saw that insane beast dashing off in the most unceremonious manner, with George close at his heels! Anon George got his horse almost neck and neck, but alas! all attempts to grasp the rein were futile and away they went across the plain; leaving the little wild huntress of the Medicine in about as exasperating a lurch as could be imagined! Far out on the boundless prairie and my steed growing but a dark speck in the dim, blue distance! Nothing daunted however I started to walk to where I thought I might get another shot at my wounded buffalo, when suddenly, and to my left, I saw Herbert coming at full speed up a "divide", with a crippled buffalo close at his heels. I watched him for a moment and soon saw from his maneuvering that he was trying to keep his game at bay! I was quite out of breath and at a loss as to what I should do when I saw another horseman gal-

loping across the plain! -- It proved to be Wilk Snell who most kindly came to my rescue! But our time was but slow however as I rode his horse while he walked, and it was with no small delight that I discovered my knight errant rapidly approaching us and gallantly leading my run away steed!

It did not take us but a short time to make the distance to Bert and his wounded buffalo! Yes, he had it at bay and for what purpose do you ask? Why for me to shoot, that I might say I had killed a buffalo!!! The mere offer was an outrage and an insult to my fame as a huntress, and a "no. 1 Shot" -- a fame so justly mine; the memory of which I had brought from the "Sunny South," if I could bring nothing more! -- Of course I refused at once; telling them all, in no very gracious manner, that I had never worn "borrowed plumes," and so must decline the honor(?) of giving the death shot to a poor brute that could not get out of my way, simply for the purpose of having it to say I had killed a buffalo! And then I clinched this courteous refusal by saying "That I did not do such sneaking business!" They all expostulated -- telling me they would not mention that I had shot a wounded buffalo at all -- but just to shoot, as some of us had to do the business and it might as well be I. Putting the case thus, I consented to shoot. -- Finis coronet opus -- and we were soon on the chase again. I had several good runs but my horse became so unmanageable that I could not even pretend to shoot. At length we came across one of Bert and Wilk's wounded buffalo. -- We had quite a time with it. I could not ride my horse in 50 yds. of the bull, so got off and going in about 20 yds of him took my little pet pistol from my belt and tried its "ability to kill." I believe the lordly old fellow did turn his head and look

at me, which was about all the notice my pistol and I got. Then for trial sake I shot him in the head after which he made us all "get up and get"! Wilk shot and killed him, and after taking the tongue and a little of the choice meat, we turned our faces homeward!

My arms were worn out in the effort to hold my horse and as he "got no better fast," Wilk put me on his black horse and taking another of his own, we started for Raven's Cliff. The rest were to pack more meat and then come on. The men were tired -- worn out after such a race; can it be wondered that that I felt a "little uncertain." -- Yet I did not feel weak. Excitement is the only stimulus to action that I need. The weakness of limb and delicacy of frame is, for a time utterly ignored by the fevered strength of will and spirit. I felt miserably dissatisfied with the part I had made in the day's sport and tho' we were on our home-ward course I was eagerly watching for buffalo.

The herd had been so scattered that my hope to get a chance for a shot was not at all unreasonable. They all had asked me to hurry on for home; and I knew their uneasiness for me was rather serious -- even Bert's, "devil-me-care" look had changed to one of curious anxiety and astonished amusement as he watched me; and when I told Wilk of my hopes about more sport, he shook his head dubiously, and at last said "No -- I had had too much of that business already." I kept my peace until we saw across the canon just before us, three bulls going up the divide -- then I said "I must try my hand" -- that I would not go home until I had had a fair shot and that I knew I could do my self justice on the horse I then rode! Having thus emphatically expressed my intentions, monsieur, my handsome cavalier, handsomely, as well as quickly acquiesced and we started! It was a fair and splendid race!

The buffalo were directly our opposites when we started, making for the head of the canon that divided us from them, -- and our only chance lay in making that distance ahead of them so as to give me time to spring from my horse and shoot, as we had to use the needle-gun and it was too heavy for me to hold "off-handed" -- i.e. without resting on my knee. The buffalo seem to understand that it was "a race for life" and their long heavy gallop seem to grow longer and heavier still as we speeded on, almost neck and neck, over the hard smooth prairie.

How the quick blood, bounded and quivered in every vein, with each spring of my good horse, as he carried his petit burden so lightly and swiftly! -- not splurging and snorting like that crazy horse of Bert's did! And then one "who!" from Wilk, and a check of the rein from me was enough to bring ~~the good fellow~~ the good fellow to a "stand still" -- and off I went to the ground in "good order" -- ready for the gun placed quickly in my eager, but not trembling hands! We had distanced our buffalo about 10 yds, perhaps, and as the huge fellows came thundering past, it was but a breath when I had knelt and fired at the foremost bull.

The dull thud that came back to us, as well as the sudden lurching off of the bull from the lead told that I had made a home shot. "That was a good one!" exclaimed Wilk as he caught the gun from my hands and raised it to fire, but I arrested the movement by darting in front of him and catching the gun.

"Don't you shoot my buffalo -- I'll have no other shot in him but mine -- it was a dead one, and I shall follow him up now!"

Laughing at my excitement and telling me he had no intention of shooting my gun, Mr. Wilkins fired at, and wounded one of the two remaining bulls! Shot him about the region of the lungs, I reckon by the way he leaped in the air and snorted gory foam! But I would not wait for more shooting! My buffalo had disappeared down a pocket about 75 yds distant; and I was going to see what skill as a shooter I had made! We found the splendid fellow still and entirely dead, not a 100 yds from where I had shot him. -- His magnificent head thrown back and the fierce defiant eyes turned up, red and sightless toward the skies! Ah! I love strength -- power -- anything that almost oppresses me with a sense of its greatness! And this grand brute -- fallen there and resting in a majesty born of the strength so lately its own, thrilled me with a kind of awe, which is the only sort of admiration or homage I ever yield -- the felling is the one pleasure I ever truly have -- and nothing stirs it but something "grand" or "gloomy" or "peculiar"!

We took the "frontal", (I believe it is called) the tail and the tongue, and then waiting for the rest of the party to come up showed my prize -- the trophies we had taken, and after receiving their "Westernized" congratulations with hearty-a good will, an unaffected pleasure, we all started for "Raven's Cliff" in good earnest. Arrived there about 3 o'clock in the afternoon -- regaled Mama with an account of our gallant deeds -- drank buttermilk -- ate a good "square" dinner; and then I laid down, feeling, I don't know how, but a "little uncertain", I reckon! After spending another night of mosquito-horrors father got us up before day light, and after drinking some hot coffee,

most kindly made for us by ma, we started just as Day was pulling on his gray morning-robe; and arrived at McPherson about 11, as I believe I stated at the beginning of this day's jotting!

The news that I had killed a buffalo preceded me here! How such on dits fly! I wonder at what distance I shot that fellow? Wilk says 120 yds; I believe.

McPherson - /Thursday,/ Aug. 8th

This morning Mr. Lewis came to me with a peculiar smile on his face, and handing me the "North Platte Democrat" pointed out a passage; I took it, and read among the "personals" quite a little speech about my self. I am termed the "Lady Shootest," and there upon is turned a neat ~~d~~escription of my buffalo killing together with a graceful little compliment as to my skill as a shot, and also something about my being an author, poet, etc., which by the way might have been left unsaid. -- I did not expect to keep my shooting quiet of course, but as regards unpublished mss. -- pshaw!

Mrs. Snell has gone to North Platte -- Leaving Mary and I in charge! How we will get on remains to be seen. Abby, the "blooming pod" seems to take kindly to the situation! Mr. S___ /Snell/ is away and Wilk goes for the Medicine -- ditto, Mr. Lewis, also that man with the gartered elbows, who I have taken such an unaccountable liking for! Curtis has gone with the rest -- and not a pair of pants (except inanimate ones!) remains to be seen around, or rather in the house.

Sunday -- 11th Aug.

I'll write but a line tonight to say that M___ /~~M~~aby Snell/ and I were afraid to go to sleep last night for fear we would not wake up

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in time to stir the girls out in the morning, but the consequence was we both went to sleep after breakfast! Of course if we had been up and dressed no one would have come; as it was Mrs. /William/ Read /Reid/ woke us up -- she and children dined here. When I was in talking to her, while May went out to look after Abby and the dinner, two young gents drove up, came in, and asked for Miss Snell. -- I was in dowdy black with uncombed curls, and tho' I did not blush, and seated the visitors with my usual polite nonchalance, I did not leave the room with much reluctance!

Nor did I return tho I heard one of them (the editor) came to call on me.

Friday - Aug. 16th

Madame /Snell/ returned today from North Platte. We were not sorry to see her. The officers ditto -- they raised a cheer when they saw from the aspect of the table that Mrs. Snell had returned.

Tuesday - Aug. 20th

Bert came in from the Medicine today. Nothing new. /Arthur?/ Ruff, from the Silver Mines, is with him. Bert again asserted that he could and would beat me shooting; So Mary he and I went to walk this afternoon to the Soldier's target and we tried the matter I beat him, but that will not keep him from vowing the next time that the subject is mentioned that he can beat me, if he never does!

Saturday - Aug. 24th

Bert left today. I have been very ill. With hot fevers and delirious for two nights! I talked in my wild strange manner -- making every body laugh with an increasing flow of sarcasm and witty nonsense! I feel better and reckon I'll be all right again in a day or so.

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Dick S _____ /Seymour/ was in, during my illness. -- I think him an unselfish, honest-hearted man; and I trust most sincerely that he will do well. He had gone out on the Medicine.

/Tuesday,/ Aug. 27th

Miss /Elizabeth/ Burke and Miss Rickly dined here today. Never met either one before We called on Mrs. Cody en masse! Mrs. Cody has given another branch to the family tree.

/Thursday,/ Aug. 29th

Mary left for North Platte yesterday. Is to return in a day or so. -- Shot pistols with Wilk ~~me~~ today and beat him! Wash ta! Played cards with him last night and beat him -- washta again!

When I was ill I shot a snake's head off while in bed! It came up through the floor in the next room and I shot the reptile through the door. I weighed 105 lbs. today. -- Don't know whether I've gained or lost. Mrs. Snell weighed 124 -- Wilk 148; and Abby 140 -- she is not so good a man as he is by eight pounds!

McPherson - /Saturday,/ Aug. 31st, 1872

Mary returned yesterday. She had some photos taken while in North Platte. They are good, and I must go and have my shadow permanented! Col. Beard of Texas is here, quite ill from a horse-throw. I had a conversation with him on last evening and we chanced upon a subject which I must know more of. Some would say be jeu n'en vant pas la chan delle! but I cannot and if I could, will not! Ah me! pas a pas on va bien loin! /Step by step they go ahead quite distant! Yea the "mills of the Gods" grind slowly" and precious small, just now! -- I am getting wonderfully well. Ironed nearly all day, day before yesterday -- and was so nervous

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I did not sleep at all during that night; but nothing daunted I went for the business again yesterday morning and ironed most beautifully my own flannel dress; a morning dress; and a puffed polonaise! Last night I slept, you bet.! I must sew some today!

O! I won over three thousand dollars from Wilk at polka, night before last we played with five dollar nickels. -- We had two five cent silver pieces that were as "good as a bank" for #1000 each!