June 1872

"ON THE MEDICINE"

Medicine Creek,
Wolf's Rest
June 7th

I should have commenced a journal before. I cannot trust to memory the much that is now filling my life's strange book with a chapter all its own!

But I have little space and less time for comment. I shall detail nothing.

A brief jotting of names, character, adventure, incidents and circumstances must suffice.

First of all, I have been introduced to "Texas Jack" [Omohundro] -- one of our "Western Heroes" -- and a fine picture of handsome, dashing, manly manhood he is! Certainly one of my beau-ideals of a hunter or a "Scout." Hope I shall see more of him and that I shall like his character as well as I do his face. He made a very graceful presentation in the way of a handsome toy-bag of China-work -- its original purpose I do not know; but he used it for cartridges, and so shall I -- i.e. if I keep it; for it is but the Souvenir of a challenge to shoot; and after having the bravado to take up the gauntlet thus thrown down, if he does beat me (and I expect it will be "even So"!) I shall not have the courage to retain such a memento of my defeat, but give it back with my pistol to boot! But enough of this hero for the present, only that he now heads a party out on about as wild an adventure as even my wild brain could devise -- viz: lassoing buffalo--full grown ones--for the purpose of shipping them alive on the train. Some say it is dangerous work; some prophesy not only broken arms and legs and crippled horses, but dead men as well as dead horses!

I don't anticipate any thing; and am the better for my stoicism, I ween!

Bert [Paddy Miles] is with the party, and his last words were "I only wish you could go, Einna!"

How sweet it is to be a woman! At least for me to be one--Never mind, I'll make the best of the gifts of dame Nature and if I do no good as a woman, why I'll do not harm; and -- well -- why! I'll get up a buffalo hunt myself before many moons shall pass!

Dick S[eymour]., my very good friend, is also with the party; and (I must not forget!) poor S_____ and his shirt are numbered among them too -- alas! Should aught befall that shirt -- I cannot go on -- words are too weak -- where wouldst then be my dream of being a Servist, shouldst this monument of sucess be so soon numbered with "the things that were"???

I saw Charlie Emmett among the party also. He was interpreter for the band of Sioux that came to our camp the second day after our arrival here--a "cut-off" band of which "Whistler" is chief.

Col. [Washington Mallory] H[inman]. of North Platte called today; he says he has traveled north, south, east and west, but has never seen so much "romance" or aught so "romantic" as we of Medicine Creek!! He did not qualify or specify the who, which or how! He is "Prospecting" for a Saw-mill. Think him rather a haut gout of gens de pere!

Our county clerk, Mr. [J.W.] Kirby, dined with us--he returns my book and is pleased with Joaquin Miller or rather his "Sierras."

I told him that we of Wolf's Rest would take Stockville and its bipeds by storm before long. But until I get a saddle, me thinks I refrain from taking that jaunt again.

Mr. [William] Black starts for the Platte tomorrow--I'll be busy next week as he is to bring me beads and buck-skin! I hope to hear from H_____ on his return. Mr. [ ] Lewis our "sheep-man" is in a stew building a Shearing Pen -- he was to have

had more "help" and would have had it but for this "buffalo outfit." As it is, Jack Fritcher and George Dillard are the only young "lords of Creation" left to guard the sacred shades of "Wolf's Rest."

I must stop writing for tonight.

Saturday night - June 8th

Mr. Snell of Cottonwood [Springs] is our guest tonight. He is en route for the Red Willow. Will bring a young woman back with him. They are to stop with us, can't do other wise as Mrs. P[almer]. is the only femme converte; and I am the only femme sole in about 30 miles. Don't know where I'll put her to sleep. My tent is too small for more than three--viz: my dog, my bird and my self--and now I may mention that I've lost my bird; I returned from a walk this afternoon to find his cage empty! Mr. D[illard]. and myself have searched widely, but in vain. Poor little pet! Yet it is possible that I may find him tomorrow. They really asked me if I had cried about my lost bird! I almost wish I could shed tears so easily! Pshau! how silly--better wish that I were less of a womanish woman even than I am!

One Lieutenant [William Henry] Miller called in here today on his way to the "Post". I found him to be a man of refinement -- or rather of refined education! He quite charmed me with his graphic descriptions of Western life, Indians, etc. He spoke of the Poets--he declaims finely! I have half an idea that he tried to draw me out--i.e. to speak of myself, but had too much tact to press the subject.

Sunday night -- June 9th

Found my bird -- pa was up by dawn hunting for him -- Mr. Snell was anxious too; got the weary little truant back in his cage all right after some little trouble.

Nothing of him-portance today! Mr. L[ewis]. and Mr. D[illard]., two very good friends(?), walked with madame [Mrs. Palmer] and myself to the Spring. Ces Messieurs dined with us.

Ah! I must not forget: "Storm King" [John King] paid his respects also, and seemed less of a storm than usual. Mr. Lewis asked him over to his camp. After exacting a promise that he would be permitted to make mush and drink milk the "Storm" consented to go.

I have just been out of my tent to look at the night: The Medicine wears a haunting beauty beneath the pale light of a young moon! What a strange wild charm this new world has! My life seems half a dream! What a wayward fate is mone--but I cannot think. My little tent looks friendly. My books, pictures, pistol, all belong to the familiar "by-gone" -- Only the buffalo robes that make my couch and the white canvas drawn above me tells that I am camping in the wilderness of the "Far West."

"It is well we cannot see
What the end may be--."

Monday night June 10th

I had almost forgotten a line for my journal, and as it is I cannot say much; for 'tis late, and I am tired--sick and tired--of what? Who dares to ask? And yet me thinks a few might imagine. I've been writing to H_____. It has turned out as I should have expected! How we cling to the honeyed lies of Life! Truth is so distasteful!

The "Buffalo Outfit" has returned. Mr. Snell and the young person [Wilk Snell?] have arrived! I'll see a "buff" tomorrow without the gods will darkly!

"Tepe Chees Cheela"

Saturday afternoon June 15th

I have been abominably lazy of late--fully indisposed as well as ill disposed all this week and as a consequence or rather as one of the consequences I've neglected my newly-made companion--viz: my journal.

But let us to business!

I saw the whole "Buffalo Outfit" Tuesday morning. "Texas Jack" [Omohundro], Charlie Emmett, Andy [Barrett], "The Half-Breed" or the wonderful "California Horse Tamer," and [Sidney Barnett,] the Saratoga Man. Was introduced to and shook hands with the Horse Tamer. He is a rather fine looking man, yet somewhat stolid in his appearance. Had a pleasant little chat with Texas Jack. In fact with all of the white men. Their wagon came in and the "Saratoga Man" showed me a young antelope which he was taking East. The little creature was docile and fearless. Wish I had one. They caught seven or eight buffalo. All died save one and it was left here. I rode with Mr. Snell out to see it. He sent his "girl" on with our "Sheep man", [Mr. Lewis,] and so had a lead horse with side saddle. [Paddy] Miles, [Richard] Seymour, [George] Dillard, [John] Fritcher, [William] Black and Mr. P[almer]. brought up the rear. They got the poor beast on his legs after a while, and he really tried to fight! An Indian and a buffalo never yields to its conqueror or succumbs to pain! But this little "animule"--what a caricature of defiance and fierceness.

Tepe Chees Cheela

Thursday night -- June 20th

I have made a saddle out of buckskin; fringed it with buckskin; fancied it "muchly". Dillard brought the tree for me from the

Post [Fort McPherson]; and quite a time we had of it. At first every one teased and tried to discourage me, but I hung on to the job, with desperate tenacity, until it was finished, and today I went for a ride on it. D[ick].S[eymour]. went with me. Saw three antelope going; and on our return run across a few buffalo and Mr. Dick killed a huge bull. I was delighted, of course! Though as I had no gun, it was no hunt to me.

Jack [Fritcher] and Bert [Miles] have just returned from the "Sheep Outfit." Mr. Seymour and Mr. P[almer]. have gone to mutilate the fallen "buff", and I am in my Tepe trying to write, and expect I would succeed but for the increasing mouth or "chin-music" of Mr. George Dillard who is gracing one side of my table!

Friday night -- June 21st

I have been to ride again today, but under rather unpleasant circumstances! How? Who dares to question!

Even this Sans mundane part of the world (i.e. the people who make it.) is at a tort et a travers! Well, what matters it, since I am Sans Souci? Ha! Ha! The Gods will strangely! May I not dream to night that

"Of all sad words of book or pen
The saddest are these, 'It might have been!'"

ON THE BANKS OF THE MEDICINE
Saturday afternoon -- June 22nd

My tepe is too warm and so I've brought my journal out here to scrawl a line or so. It will be a scrawl, I expect, in more than one sense; for I am by no manner of means alone with thought, paper and a willing pen. Wilk Snell is fishing about two rods of my seat; my irrepressible George is gracefully reclining near my

side. Mr. Snell, Sr., is my vis-a-vis; while Bert is prone upon Mother-Earth just beyond Mr. S.

A game at cards i on the tapis. I quit writing that I may play.

Tepe Chees Cheela
Night -- 11 o'clock

Alone for the first time since morning. Wilk, George and Bert have just left me. We have sung every song imaginable and a good many almost unimaginable I'm inclined to think; and _____ and _____ what for this "day's doings?" Dick Seymour has left "Wolf's Rest"--can't say I regret it, as I think it best in more way than one that he should go. He has gone in to the Post.

I went to ride with Mr. Wilk today. Would have had a very pleasant time but for a miserable pain in my chest and side. I feel ill all the time! I wish to God I could feel well once more! Some times I think I never shall.

Wilk Snell and his father came last night. Mr. Wilkens was with us on our first introduction to the Prairie.

[He] Drove us out here. I think him quite handsome and very pleasant in his manner. It seems like "old times" to meet again. He taught me how to make biscuit, "wash dishes", stew coffee and "sich like"! O! such biscuit as I did make -- Such lumpy prodigies of flour and fat that would shrink up instead of puffing out. Those initiating days are never-to-be-forgotten by me. Why? Because, they are rare with pity adventure and royal hardships! I shall always like Wilk Snell for the kind and sensible manner in which he acted when I was a "Stranger in a Strange land."

Tepe Chees Cheela

Sunday night, June 23rd

I have been ill all day. The Mr. Snells left this morning. Mr. L[ewis]. came before their departure. I, with the rest of the Medicine "pilgrims", had promised to go to his camp and take dinner; but George [Dillard] could not find the horses, and as the feast was ready, in fact "the fatted calf e'en slain", some one must do honor to the occasion and so, as usual, it was left to me. I accompanied Mr. L. on Kate-mule. [William] Black had quite a fine dinner prepared. G[eorge]. came for me--came dashing up on the "Winged Serpent of the Medicine" for the express purpose of escorting me to "Wolf's Rest". We drove Falcon and Bill-mule from Clifford's--arriving at our destination in due time.

This is a strange world--all strife and turmoil--talk and bickering--envious hate and petty rivalry. In my short life I have listened and seen until I almost--ah! well, tho I sicken on the poison of Life and turn with loathing from its paltry ambitions and cowardly depravities, what boots it, Since I fulfil my destiny? Yet it is a sad strange lot to live yet know the mockery of living and the nothingness of life! To feel yet realize the falseness of trust and the vanity of hope!

Monday mor -- June 24th

I went to ride with Dillard before breakfast this morning. Did not go far--was too ill to ride. I heard something that shocked me this morning about _____. Well, if it ever again injures me for trying to think well of and aiding people, let the injury come! I fear nothing from woman or man, only to save my already morbid sensitiveness from donning the armour of a haughty deception, I must be careful to feel or express perfect

confidence in none! (Omnia tempus revelat! Nema me un pune lancessible.) If I like any one and they prove at all worthy of respect I shall be glad; but Goddess of Reason, aid me that I may not anticipate good in any!

Tuesday mor -- June 25th

Went to ride again before breakfast. George was my cavalier; and the "Winged Serpent of the Medicine" my steed. I am feeling better today. Lieut. [William Henry] Miller called yesterday. He is certainly a brilliant scholar. I hear that I am creating "Sensations" out here. Something I have never failed to do wherever I've been. People here think that it is because there are so few women on the frontier. They are foolish! It has always been so; and it really gives me but poor gratification, less pleasure and a great deal of trouble at times! Of course I take "this sort of thing" as a kind of "matter-of-course"; and to be admired, petted, loved, and "Such Stuff" has become almost second nature; and doubtless I could miss this attention strangely, if not sadly, were it not given. Yet reading human nature as I have been forced to do, my position gives me the opportunity to see and hear much that is fanciful--much that is ignoble, foolish and even despicable--and the end is always unhappy, of course! Poor human nature! Heaven help me to bear and forebear! I know that I am far from faultless; yet did I believe my sense of honor so deadened and my sympathies so callous--well! Let it rest! I will keep my own counsel and wait for the End! I've promished to go into the "Post" on the 4th of "Ju-new-years" as George has it. Wish my black satin was made. I must 9Le [pay] U [?] that _____ _____ _____; also send word to _____ about 12S [his] IlJa& [shirt?] and the rest. Mem. both!

Tepe Chees Cheela

Friday night -- June 28th

I've been so ill that I have not had the soul to write here or elsewhere.

Tepe Chees Cheela,

July 1st

Because my ill feelings and lots of company I have neglected my poor journal. What shall I say first? Who has been here? how and when? Pshaw! I can't think--yet I must hurry for 'tis so late--the night is more than half spent now.

"Dashing Charlie" [Emmett] (so-called) has spent the night with us. Mr. Weyman also. Ah--pshaw! I can't remember. But I do mem. that I've had a tramp on horse back with Bert and George way up the Medicine--caught a gopher, or what I should call a ground-squirrel, on the prairie. Carried it eight miles and then let it get away. Twas a pretty little thing! "Like to" have seen a "Swift" -- which is some sort of evanescent quadruped which Bert termed "like a flash of sunlight" and as a consequence I looked up in the heavens for the "flash" and thus missed seeing the "Swift."

We put up a claim-post -- shot pistols --eeat green grapes -- declared our selves "lords of all we surveyed" -- dared the hills to dispute it -- and then, well pleased with a proud knowledge of the courage we had so gallantly displayed, we turned our faces toward that haven of rest known not widely but so well, as Wolf's Rest. O! I saw a beaver dam up the creek also. Lots of people are going to settle up there -- i.e. cattle men.

Ft. McPherson

July 9th

We of the Medicine came in here the day before "the fourth". They, Bert and G[eorge]. & J[ohn]. [Fritcher] returned on yesterday.

I am to remain here until I find some change in my health. Mrs. S[nell]. has not moved yet but will shortly, then I can be more private. Her daughter is to be at home next week. Fancy, I may like her. I rode in! We just rushed through. I really enjoyed the ride ill as I was. Mr. L[ewis]. thought it was little less than madness. Ha! ha! Wonder how my pet wild-cat is thriving. Hope some of them will hunt rabbits as industriously for it as its poetical mistress did! Went to see the horse-race fourth of July's eve. The pony I bet on beat! Washta! Some wished me to go to North Platte on the fourth--but some how and for several reasons I could not "see it." Have met "Texas Jack"--looks quite as handsome as ever. Dick S[eymour]. was in also. I was glad to see him looking well ------ I am interrupted!

Lieut. M[iller]. has been chatting with me for the past half hour -- he says I am looking very ill, and I know I feel so! I am too miserable to write!

Wednesday -- July 10th

I am still wretchedly unwell -- but I have not given up. Went to ride with T[exas].J[ack]. this afternoon--had a good ride of it only my Injine pony, Falcon, got de mal en pis, and I don't know if I can ride him again, tho' I have made an engagement to ride tomorrow afternoon.

I've spent one night with Mrs. Cody--she took me in out of charity because I have to get up early over here, with the promise that I might sleep just so late as I pleased. But I did not sleep late--I was delerious all night -- talked or rather raved in my usual crazy style. Hope I said nothing mal a propos, as Mr. Omohundro slept in the adjoining room. Mrs. Cody is quite kind and pleasant in her manner. She has two charming little children. Kit Carson, the boy, is a handsome, precocious little fellow--not more than three years old, or rather not three years -- and just as keen as the little rascal can be! He gives promise of a future!

Thursday -- July 11th

I was so ill this morning I just could force my self out of bed! The steam and odor of the stove and cooking seems to suffocate me, but of course I will not remain in the officer's dining room while they are at the table, altho' when I've chanced to meet them I find them very courteous. Never mind we will get moved before long. I get out of the house just as often as possible.

At noon I was over to Mrs. Cody's; and I saw a wind-storm for the first time. Such clouds of dust whurring and rushing like mad everywhere! After it, we had a rain, which while it rendered every thing very muddy, still did away with the dust, and made riding possible. Mr. "Texas" had quite a time lassoing my little rascal of a pony! We found it pleasant after getting out on the prairie -- no mud -- and my (I mean our!) Western Hero made himself just as pleasant as possible -- delicate, yet kind and manly in his attentions to my poor, tiny, forlorn little self! In short almost every body is just as kind to me as can be. Mrs. Snell is just as good to me as possible. So is Mr. Snell--and Wilkins and I get on famously--sometimes he humours my whims and sometimes teases me to the very extent of my amiable(?) temper!

I must not ride Falcon again; Mr. Omohundro says it is dangerous and I should not attempt it. Bert told me as much before! I wonder if I care any thing for my neck? Some people always seem to think I should. Ha! ha!

Ft. McP., Friday -- July 12th

I have not been able to stand up at all today. Every nerve in my body is unstrung utterly! I've had chill and then burning fever -- and oh! what a crush and rush of people, and I in the midst of it all! Texas Jack rec^d. a telegram this morning which takes him a hundred or two miles from here. He is appointed [trail]

agent for the Pawnee Indians [on their summer buffalo hunt]; will have about three thousand under his charge, I believe. He came to bid me good-by at noon. Looked fine with all his hunting accoutrements about him and mounted on a good horse!

Mrs. Snell threw an old shoe and the broom after his retreating form! The broom turned toward the house, so of course he'll come back all right! We all laughed and had a noisy time of it.

The broom and shoe business was in fine keeping with the chivalrie appearance of our hero. That made the fun. Mrs. Snell is one woman among a thousand! Got more Soul in her than half the smiling misses you meet! Ah! what is more insipid than these Sweet Sentimenalisms -- These "mere white curds of asses' milk"! That -- bah!

I am too ill and cross to write. Dick Seymour has been here all day -- would like to talk to him about that writing business but don't feel able.

Ft. McPherson
Sunday -- July 21st

I have kept no account of "time, place or people" for a week or over; so journal you must come in for your share of neglect with the rest of the world. One palpable fact is mine though, by every right of sense and feeling--We have moved! I have a large pleasant room all to my self now, but have been so ill that I have not enjoyed my freedom as much as I shall before long -- for I intend to get well shortly! If I had not been so well cared for by Mrs. Snell and her family, I should have died. The only trouble is Mr. Wilkins takes me to ride, sometimes, and most beautifully over-does the business by going too far and riding too fast. Now I am a very moderate ridest, and never want

to go over full speed at any time! But I don't mind that, for he is almost as good to me as Mamie [Timmons] used to be -- helps me take the apothocary's drugs by tasting before I drink just like dear old Mamie used to do!

George D[illard]. is in! He says the "Medicine" misses the presence of a divinity or its divinity! He looks well, of course! He brought me in a most absurd letter from Bert--full of all sorts of nonsense and fun. B. says G. has not swept around their tent since I left! It is quite a joke on Mr. George. I read just such a letter from Bert a few days ago, only it was accompanied by the corpse of my wild-cat. Poor Brute! it died a most ignoble death -- chained in a barrel, and then choked and smothered out of the world. I suppose the men that had my pet in charge got a little afraid of it and concluded to put themselves out of harm's way! Well, Twas a handsome, fierce looking creature and I'm sorry they did not keep it at Wolf's Rest until my return, [even] if it did catch a chicken now and then!

Night, and a continuation of
the above

"Weary and worn

Tired and torn" and such a ride as we, Mrs. Snell, Mr. Wilk and I, have had! I suppose we have ridden sixteen or eighteen miles on the dead stretch, almost. I feel a little uncertain but what does it matter since I have enjoyed to my heart's content, a natural scenery of such grand, imposing and bright beauty that my life grew pained with a sense of its own insignificance as I gazed on the broad expanse that lay, calm and perfect as a picture, before me! I shall not attempt a description. Have neither the time nor the words; but will suffice the matter by saying that we climbed to a high peak on the far hills, from where we gained a

view that swept the Platte valley for miles. It looked as smooth and as green as an "emerald sward", while the river winds about it as a broad belt of silver -- brilliant with the shimmer and sheen of a gorgeous inset! And the hills--far back and looming grandly, they wore a beauty that stirs the very depths of my spirit -- a charm that appeals to my soul as nothing else can; grand in their own unsoftened sternness while Nature wantoned, in all the charm and change of summer -- beauty, at their very feet; their darkling pockets, and yawning canons rife with a wierd wildness that gathers about the haunted mind in an almost fearful fascination! Ah! I think I shall love this wild new world! I wonder if the passion of its spell will be strong enough to chain my restless Spirit? Quien pregunta, no yerra, but what boots it, when Heaven, nor Hell, nor Earth, shall answer?

Wednesday -- July 24th

I was introduced to "Buffalo Bill" on yesterday. He has just returned from a scouting expedition--been away for six or weeks I believe.

I, very unexpectedly, received a call from Texas Jack, evening before last, I believe it was. He remained in but a short time; had a few Pawnees with him. I do not think them as fine looking, not so erect as the Sioux; but they say they are better "braves" than the latter. When asking one of the Pawnees if he was not afraid to venture so far on the hunting ground of the Sioux, it was fine to see the expression of unutterable scorn that lighted up for a moment, the stolidity of his face; then instantly relapsing into the grim Stoic, he quietly crossed his throat, giving the sign of the Sioux, and said they were "heap squaws".

Mr. Omohundro said the Indians were in fine spirits; plenty of buffalo, and the pappooses all fat.

Friday -- July 26th

Miss Snell is expected home every day. George Dillard has been in a quandry about going to the "Medicine." Report says they have had a "flood", that Wolfés Rest has been from two to four feet under water! Mr. Lewis is some what anxious about his sheep. Bert has them in charge now. I hope nothing very serious will take place. Mr. L.____ is my very good friend, I believe; at least, he has given me every reason to think well and kindly of him; which I certainly do and shall continue to do until he gives me reason to change.

I feel a little anxious about "Wolf's Rest" or rather what it contains of myself.

Mr. Cody has invited me to shoot with him; says he hears I am a good shot, etc. But I don't know about shooting again. Pshaw! What is the use to notice the gab of the fools that over run this good world of ours? When I shot with Texas Jack (it was not a shooting-match) and acquitted myself with decided credit, there was such a fuss made over it, that I thought I would not shoot again while in here; not because I think any sensible person could attach the least possible blame to it; but because these people, or some of them, may misconstrue my intentions and think I am trying to make my slef famous as a shootest. I scorn any thing like an egotistical display! I shoot because I love it; because I know I am a good shot; and because it is my pleasure! I am no stickler for praise. Never stoop to the currying of favors!

Saturday -- July 27th

The daughter of my hostess has made her arrival; the son also -- Mr. James -- a young brother of Mr. Wilkens.

Talk about my being a "mere shadow", why Mary Snell is but the photograph of a shadow! She is not so small as I am, but thinner. When I say she is a good, amiable girl, I think I have