

15

ENA'S DIARY -- NOVEMBER 1872

Ft. McPherson  
/Sunday, / 3rd Nov. 1872

I write a farewell to this place and its "peoples" Hurrah! for the Medicine! They can't winter me in here. I start out with Bert and Dr. Carver tomorrow.

"You bet." I am glad to go! I am going to "trap;" have got all my tricks ready.

I will have to catch up with my journal when I get on the Medicine. Wonder when I'll come in here again. I weigh 118 lbs.!

"Wolf's Rest"  
Medicine Valley  
/Wednesday, / Nov. 6th

Calm and beautiful as a summer's dream the Sun steals to rest behind the looming hills of the Medicine!

How delightful I find the restful freedom and splendid quiet of today!

Evening before last the Dr., Bert and I arrived here. Yesterday was passed amid a rush and tumble of men horses guns and shooting. Today they all went on a big camp hunt except Mr. B a workman and Wilk Snell; who arrived yesterday, on his way to the "Muddy" but was too ill with his teeth to proceed further today.

Wolf's Rest  
Thursday - Nov. 7th

I slept finely last night. The weather has grown much warmer; I am glad for the hunters -- our boys I mean.

They will be back today -- tired and hungry. We must get something to eat for them.

Wilk and I went to walk last evening. The weather ~~was~~ perfect!

I went the paths or some of them that I use to go But did not feel the way I use to feel. I strust I shall get entirely strong this winter.

Wolf's Rest  
Friday - Nov. 8th

I have just had a big play and quarrel with my "little bubber". He has gone to sleep, and I turn to my journal for a moments chat! We had a visit from some Sioux today. -- Long Man, his squaw and a girl he has for sale. Four horses is the price. I shot with Long Man and beat him. He seemed very much amused at my shooting. I gave the young squaw all sorts of colored corn.

We are going to commence to trp to ~~to~~ tomorrow.

"Wolf's Rest"  
/Saturday,/ Nov. 9th '72

Today I have really commenced to trap! O! and I am so tired! Poor little Einna, how she did plod through the tall grass after Mr. P/almer/. and the Doctor. We saw two deer. If I had had my gun I would have "knocked one down." I am going to hunt soon.

I must go to Sioux City to see my Indian visitors tomorrow. I like the pappoose and squaw. I must cultivate her acquaintance.

"Wolf's Rest"  
/Sunday,/ Dec. 8th '72

One month since I have traced a line within this book -- or any where else scarcely. -- One month, and nothing to tell what has been written within the mystic pages of Life's strange book! And why has it been thus? And do I dare call myself in foro conscientiae?

Wolf's Rest  
My Room, Sunday night  
Dec. 15th '72


One week since my last entry. Have been very ill with rheumatism. The attack was sudden. My right arm stricken to my side Tuesday evening and before the gloaming of another Sun I could not move hand or foot, -- utterly helpless and suffering the most accute pain possible -- I am better, but very weak and can scarecely use my arm or hand, as I give proof by the wretched scrawl I am making here. I am too weary to think or write.

Very quiet here now. Bert and the men off hunting and trapping. Only the - - - - -

Night -- 11 o'clock  
Wolf's Rest  
Dec. 23rd '72

Tomorrow is Christmas eve! The night wanes, yet I cannot sleep; so last with a weary dissatisfied sigh, I turn to my long neglected journal!

The changes of a few short weeks come trooping upon my half-confused memory in troubled haste! But out of the painful chaos steals one fair thought and nestles about my heart with a tender softness, sweet as the music of some half-forgotten dream! Need I say it is a voice, silent yet eloquent as Love's, from my Sunny Southern home! Ah! Mamie -- your long, spirit-speaking letter has been very pleasant to me.

She is wild to see me -- thinks my "pictured face" the most charming  thing and the dearest treasure she has!

She tells me much of the South. Nous verrous /We will see!/  
-----

I am better of my rhuematism, but far from being well;

I have and do suffer intensely. Mayhaps its "all for the best." Who ~~kan~~ tell? The Dr. is stil with us. In fact Mr. P., madame, the Dr. and I are the sole occupants of Wolf's Rest at present. Bert looks in on us every three or four days. He is about Medicine Lake just now, I expect. He will try trapping and hunting up there for a while. We hear from Mrs. Snell and family every now and then. I have just answered a note from Mary in which I made due acknowledgements for their very kind invitation to spend Christmas within the Pales of Civilization.

I don't know what would tempt me, just now to leave my little cabin! Although I have been so ill the freedom and utter want (?) of society in my Prairie Life still hold my wayward fancy with a potent charm!

It is odd and pleasant to say that I really get letters from "irrepressible Jennie" as I use to call her at Snell's.

How queer that she should become possessed with such a desperate fancy for me. I wonder how she really feels about me? Wish I knew, "just for beans," as we children use to say, when at a loss for a reason to give.

I have seen Texas Jack once since my return to the Medicine. He made me a dash call one evening while out here with the Earl of Dunraven. Jack was guide, etc., for the Lord and his party. He told me then that he and Buffalo Bill expected to go east on quite a tour. They have been gone some time now. Of course the papers are full of their sayings and doings; but being "out of the world" of course I only guess at these things.

Mr. Lewis has not been heard from in some time. I presume he is sojourning at McP\_\_\_\_\_ Station. Mr. /Isaac/ Wimer has his effects in charge out here.

I have not seen Mrs. W. since I've been out here. Why is it that I never could visit? Dick S. told me "good bye" until Spring some days ago. He will "winter it" among the Indians with the "Clifford outfit" hunting and trapping.

I have had quite a number of Indian guests; of that more anon Suffice it to say that I was not sorry when "Long Man" took down his lodge poles and started for "heap Sioux." He gave me a gift before leaving in the shape of two huge (without the h!) lumps of cha-hum-pee, which looked rather the worse for wear, as he gravely drew them from the darkened recesses of his calico shirt! In a moment of necessity I magnanimously used some of this gift for the Dr's coffee; but strange to say he seemed highly incensed when my generosity came to his knowledge, nor could I reconcile that ungrateful fellow even after telling him how carefully I had "scraped the outside."

I have written dear Mamie a long letter and told her lots about the Indians. It must be after 1 o'clock. My oil has burned out -- I must fill the lamp and then try to sleep.

Christmas night  
/Wednesday, December 25, /~~1872~~  
Wolf's Rest, 1872

Goutte a goutée /drop by drop/ ebbs the tides of Life! Now turbid and troubled -- now capricious and dimpled -- restless and sensuous -- alluring and dangerous, all by turns, yet drop by drop ebbs the tide and we are gliding slowly and surely into that vast depth of awful mystery which men call Eternity!

What is Life? What is death? If I am no more than the speechless brute, why is the curse set upon my life so much heavier, that I can suffer to ask these questions, yet must die and be but as the mindless brute?

I am writing a l'abandon /at random/, and my thoughts are not clear even to my self. Qui pense ? And why should I, when my head feels so weary, and life itself seems to grow chill and dim as I listen in a dreamy far off way to the wild moanings of the icy wind as it sweeps through bare branches of the swaying trees! Listen! to the strange pleading voices that seem to come and die with the wind as tho' some lost spirit had cast a prayer upon the stormy night and wailed its worless woe when the bootess prayer hadst died away amid the cruel darkness!

Christmas night! why has this dim indifference settled upon my spirit? Where is the old impatient longing? The rrrstless burning thoughts of "coming days?" -- The Future! Where are my proud, sleepless dreamings? Have they died -- all died at last? How long have I known Life to be a lie -- a mocking, cheating cruel lie? It seems to me a weary, weary time! Well, -----

Night My room -  
/Thursday,/ Dec. 26th 1872

I have sitting up by the stove thinking? Trying to decide for my self the worth of living! Trying to weigh the question calmly and in all justice to others. What is their right and who best can claim the worth of my distorted life? What can I do by living? Is the good greater than the possible bad? I have lived through much -- very much; has it been thus ordered for some wise purpose, or is it only the chance escape of a human creature? I promised to be true and good -- I gave the promise faithfully, thinking it possible. It was not for me to know. Ah! Well, we can but wait and see the tangled web drawn out.

Cha Tepe  
Wolf's Rest  
/Friday,/ Dec. 27th '72

Ten o'clock at night, and alone! mon pere, ma mere and I have just had a cozy little supper in my room. The Dr. left at noon today. There was a snow-storm in the morning; and a fall of about from 8 to 10 inches. It was the first snow-storm I had ever seen. What a misapplication, when we term the noiseless drift of misty snow wreaths, a "storm." I was charmed and felt the spotless robe that veiled so softly the dead decay of Nature, cast a mist of its pureness upon my own life -- shrouding the sear and blight of youth's brief spring -- time with tender softness, until half forgot the gray ashes that smouldered there could never again give birth to the fair flowers of Hope and Trust -- unlike the yielding bosom of our gentle mother Earth, There could be no second Spring-time -- no resurrection!

How very quiet! My little cabin looks familiar and cheerful. Half an author's den, and half a hunter's lodge, with its strange yet picturesque commingling of books and pistols; manuscripts and cartridges; guns and pictures; book-casings and horns of almost every description -- Elk horns, buffalo horns, deer, etc., from which are suspended walking boots, over-shoes, cartridge-belts, etc., etc. while on the floor are spread buffalo robes, gunny sacks and "sich like." My bed fills one corner; my writing table another; there is a crimson curtain before my single window; a couch of wolf-skins at my feet, and a warm fire in a grateful stove. A little clock ticks ~~cheerily~~ cheerily awayaway by my book case, and the friendly light of my solitary lamp gleams with a softning radiance as I look around upon the contents of this rude log cabin, yet feel my heart swell beneath a gentle influence

as I realize that this is home -- my home, untrammelled, free and mine!  
With no shadow upon its threshold and no Death's head at the feast of  
good-will and hearty independence!

I hunt and shoot -- sew and read -- play ~~work~~<sup>or</sup> work -- write or talk,  
when ever I feel like it. I should be satisfied -- and am I not --  
i.e. as much so as it is possible for any sane creature to be?

Friday night,  
Dec. 28th '72

Mr. /Daniel/ Fergus has just called to deliver me a note from  
Dick S.

They were at Frenchman's Fork when he wrote. Quite a lot of news  
in a "nut-shell:" -- Pawnee and Sioux fighting; quite a little engage-  
ment (for Indians) on Christmas day, and the chief Whistler, reported  
killed. Dick wrote for pencil and blank book -- had neither to send!  
We people of the wildarness have a queer habit of "getting out" and  
"staying out" of things that civilized animals would deem quite necessary  
to decent existence! I think it delightful to know that I have lived on  
buffalo Straight for two days and slept on the ground with no roof but  
the skies, and yet "lived and did well."

Wish I could get hold of Some news papers.

I went hunting this evening; the Snow is melting, which renders  
walking unpleasant. I feel ill and impatient tonight. What spirit-voice  
is saying so softly to me in wordless whispers,

"We can live on and suffer and endure

Still saying softly when despair is nigh;

The way is weary, but the rest is sure,

Bear up, brave heart! for one day we shall die.



Cha Tepe,  
Saturday - Dec. 29th

The red glow of the setting sun streams through my little window and falling like liquid gold upon the open leaves of my journal, invites me to the pleasant task of having a pen-chat with my self; so I have laid away my sewing -- which is a scarlet hunting suit -- although I know I ought to work for at least two hours yet. But I am tired; have been out all the afternoon with pa, hunting. Walked seven or eight miles and saw nothing to shoot at but Shea-ahs /beaver?/, would not waste my cartridges at them. Saw lots of coyote tracks; followed the trail of a wounded one some distance.

I shot one over, a day or two ago, at the distance of 500 yds. Expect it was the same one. The wolves make the night wild with their dismal howls; I sometimes go out and listen to them, -- over the desolate hills in every direction you can hear the shrill scream of the coyote making strange concord wity the deeper howl of the large gray wolf. I wish yet half dread to get my letters from the Post. The Dr. will send them out by Montie I expect.

We have just had our cozy little supper -- pa, ma & I around my stove. Pa and ma goes to the kitch, or cook room and "yanks" out the "grub"; then we "warm it over" on my stove; when that is done each one gets his or her plate and cup and we "takel" the "grub-pile in good earnest! The excitement of eating over, each returns to their work or amusement, as the case may be, and quiet is restored to the camp. At present Mr. Palmer is busily  engaged in roasting a coon before the fire in his room; he has the unfortunate quadruped tied in mid air by a string with a dish underneath to catch the drops of greese

that oozes slowly out. Every now and then he calls out to me to say that the "coon is roasting brown."

Ma she sits near me knitting; and I have been talking about the way I can walk! Pa said I tired him out. That when we started out our 8 miles tramp he could keep up with me, but after a while it was no use for the further I went the faster I went. I laughed and told him that I was no "one mile plug" -- I was an "all day horse."

It is queer how rapidly I can walk. I walk slow if in conversation; but let me get to thinking I forget time, place, and myself, and just "streak" ahead.

Monday -- 30th Dec. '72

We were only one day after date.

Yesterday was Sunday -- we were keeping today! Ma and I cut out lots of clothes yesterday; pa and I went hunting etc, etc., but today we have tried to be good! Ma was dismayed when she heard of the mistake and is dum with the enormity of our ignorance! We still would have been in blissful ignorance but for the arrival of Herbert, Black Bruster, Tritcher and McLary: All just from the Post. Herbert has made but a narrow escape with his life: Kicked over the eye by a horse and rendered senseless for some time. He saw Mr. Lewis and has delivered me his message, etc. Also saw the Dr. who had just got in with Clifford. He - the Dr. - was stopping at Snell's. Bert says Mary and her mother are entirely alone -- and are packing to move to North Platte. The Dr. sent me a note which Herbert left at Fox Creek. I got papers from /Texas/ Jack -- If sensation is a mark of success he and Cody certainly have not failed in the object of their visit.

The last intelligence, they were in Chicago -- drawing thousands to Nixon's Amphitheater. "Ned Buntline" takes the character of Cale Durg. He writes the play which they are presented under. It is a dramatization of some of "Ned's" stories of the "far West," called "Scouts of the Prairie" etc., etc.,

"The Daily Report" of the 17th inst. says: "The First appearance of Buffalo Bill last evening was a signal for such a shout as never before welcomed an actor in Chicago."

"The Inter Ocean" gives the author, play and actors a somewhat more questionable praise -- for instance in speaking of the audience it says, "The audience was not what the ordinary critic would stigmatize as select and cultivated; but it was appreciative, yea, enthusiastic. It was a "Dime Novel" audience -- etc. etc. It was worth more than all the play to watch this audience. It numbered fully 2,000, and never out of an English pit was any thing ever seen like it. Auditors and actors were in deadly earnest about the performance and that is something Mr. Barrett, Mr. Booth or Mr. Fechter can accomplish nowadays with all their splendid Hamlets, etc.

Again, in speaking of Buffalo Bill he is termed a "tall, handsome-looking fellow" but ill at ease and "quite at a loss what to do with his hands."

This spicy and somewhat ironical article winds up by saying: "It is the most successful drama which has ever been presented in this city. It has drawn one immense audience and will draw more of the same kind."

Poor Cody! The idea of looking "ill at ease." He is out of his sphere. I have seen him the very personification of graceful ease and manly beauty; but it was not in a crowded city, before the glare of the footlights, and amid the crash of orchestra, and flash of stage-gewgaws;

but dashing over the free, wild prairie, and riding his horse as though he and the noble animal were bounding with one life and one motion!

Well, <sup>en/</sup> "there is money in it" that goldfact renders every other consideration insignificant. Verily Life is a humbug; and he that is the biggest humbug, has the best chance for humbugging the rest of his fellows. Such fame is not lasting -- cito maturum, cito putridum -- but what boots it?

I must stop writing. -- Commenced the copy of my poem "The Farewell" today; had 19 p. copied before I left the South. Got the Dec. and Jan. nos. of Goday's Lady's Book from my thoughtful friend ----- . Not a line of writing to say whose attention it was, but I knew the handwriting.