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Article Summary: The author, son of an army surgeon, lived at Camp Sheridan from 1877-1880. He describes the family's quarters, meals, pastimes, and holiday celebrations with Indians. He quotes at length from his mother's diary.

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CAMP SHERIDAN, NEBRASKA¹

BY WILLIAM T. CORBUSIER

MY father² was stationed at Chattanooga, Tennessee in 1877 when he received orders to move to Camp Sheridan, Nebraska. The family by now was adept at moving and it did not take them long to pack and be on their way via the Union Pacific Railroad to Sidney, Nebraska. Fort Sidney was nearby on the west bank of the

¹ For the account of family life in the garrison at Camp Sheridan some material has been drawn from notes, memoirs and writings of my father, Colonel William H. Corbusier, from my own research and from memories of intimate family happenings told me years afterwards. Main reliance for the narrative, however, rests on my mother's rewritten diary which has been quoted at length.

² William Henry Corbusier served as a regimental surgeon of volunteers during the Civil War. After the war he entered the regular United States Army, first as a contract surgeon and later as a commissioned officer. He saw service in the Indian campaigns, in the Spanish-American War and Philippine Insurrection, and in many peace time army posts across the country. Before his retirement Dr. Corbusier had served as Post Surgeon or Department Chief at more than thirty posts and had inspected as many more in the United States and in Alaska.

William T. Corbusier of Long Beach, California has prepared an account of his family's experiences during his father's long career as an army surgeon. He here makes the portion pertaining to their service at Camp Sheridan available to NEBRASKA HISTORY readers.

Platte River at an elevation of about 4,300 feet. Bvt. Lt. Col. Charles Winne, First Lieutenant and Assistant Surgeon, was the Post Surgeon and met them with an ambulance drawn by four mules, for the next leg of their trip. From Sidney they made the drive of 120 miles to Fort Robinson in three days stopping the first night at a house on the north fork of the Platte River, and the next day on the Niobrara River. When about half way they met Capt. Curtis B. Munn, Assistant Surgeon, and family on their way to the railroad and exchanged ambulances so as to return each to the post where it belonged. At the north fork, after a good supper of antelope meat, Mrs. Corbusier examined the beds which they were to occupy and as she wrote later found them to be "bunks of rough boards supporting bed ticks of hay, and some dirty, ragged comforts. When I asked one of the daughters of the house for some sheets, she called to her sister to bring the sheets from the sick man's bed. Needless to say we didn't use the sheets but tossed the dirty covers from the bed and slept on our wraps."

Fort Robinson in 1877, was garrisoned by two or three troops of the Third Cavalry, with Bvt. Lt. Col. Frederick Van Vliet, Captain Third Cavalry, in command. Captains Peter D. Vroom and Joseph Lawson, with 1st Lt. Albert C. King, were among the other officers.

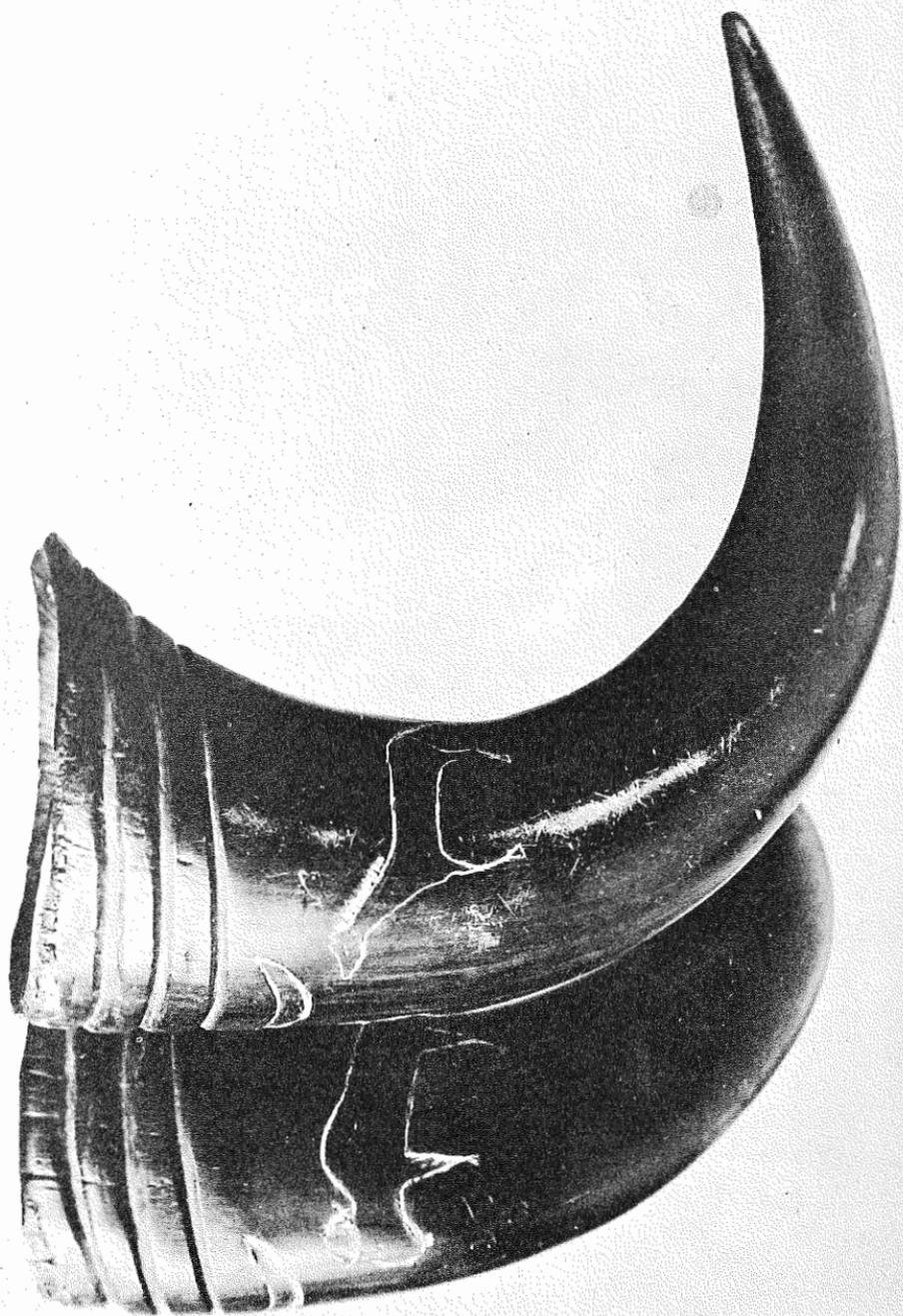
Mother now takes up the story.

The next day, after our arrival at Fort Robinson November 23, 1877, we were given a fresh team and drove east forty miles to Camp Sheridan, our destination. After passing the old Red Cloud Agency, not far from the Post, there wasn't a habitation on the road or within sight, and we met no one. Cattle and cowboys had not yet entered that country but began to come in a few months later.

Our new destination, 162 miles from Sidney, was located a mile below the old Spotted-Tail and Brule Agency, on the East bank of Beaver Creek, which empties into the White River a few miles north. The buildings were on a terrace which, flat at first, gently sloped eastward up to the foot of the hills a few hundred yards away. In the op-



William Henry Corbusier, circa 1875



Sioux Prayer Horn Used at Sun Dance in 1879, in possession of the author

posite direction and across the creek, was a high bluff which obstructed our view of the country beyond. On this bluff and on the hills back of us, were several scaffolds on which the Sioux Indians had placed their dead. The agency had been removed to the Rosebud Agency not long before. A Frenchman, who on occasion acted as a guide, and his Indian woman and half breed children, half a mile above the Post, and an American just across the creek below, who was the beef contractor, were the only inhabitants within forty miles.

A more detailed description of the Post is given by Acting Assistant Surgeon, Charles V. Petteys. The Post Surgeons kept a log of the goings and comings in the post and various other details.

"Camp Sheridan is situated in the north west corner of Nebraska; latitude about 42deg. 50min. North; Longitude about 25deg. 37min. West. Cheyenne is 230 miles and Camp Robinson (Red Cloud Agency) 43 miles distant southwest.

The post was located Sept. 9, 1874, on the east or right bank of the West Fork of Beaver Creek, a tributary to White River, into which it empties about 12 miles farther north. To the east, south and west is high rolling ground, intersected by deep canons, in and on the banks of which are forests of pine, in some of which are also cottonwood, ash and elm. Looking north, the valley of Beaver Creek opens out; the ground still broken and hilly with a rapid descent to White River. The camp is near the summit of what seems to have been the shore of a large lake, probably of brackish water, judging by the shells found in the deposits. This ridge, seen from some of the hills in the basin enclosed by it, appears to extend from the Black Hills circularly to the south, east, north and west to the Black Hills again, with a radius of about forty miles. White River and the South Fork of the Big Cheyenne have their sources and feeders in this ridge, breaking through it. The grass along the streams is rich and nutritious. Hay is obtainable along the bottoms and the uplands, the latter of decidedly better quality. There is an abundance of pine timber, for building purposes, within three or four miles; also plenty of fuel . . . ; game comprises black and white tailed deer, bears and grouse. Ducks and geese fly over. The climate is good; rather dry. Storms come from every direction, sometimes violent. Ree-corn, potatoes, onions, cabbage and even tomatoes, can be grown. The season is short. Principal diseases in summer, diarrhoea (sic) and dysentery; in winter, catarrhal affections, rheumatism, and neuralgia. Some, but not much, scrofula among the Sioux."³

³ "Camp Sheridan (Spotted Tail Agency) Nebraska," *Report on the Hygiene of the United States Army* (Washington, 1875) Surgeon-General's Office, Circular No. 8, pp. 374-375.

At Camp Sheridan Dr. Corbusier relieved Capt. Eagon A. Koerper, Assistant Surgeon, who shortly left for another station. Deane Monahan, Captain of Troop G, Third Cavalry, that garrisoned the post, was in command. His junior officers were 1st Lt. Emmet Crawford, Third Cavalry; 2nd Lt. William P. Goodwin, Fourteenth Infantry, and later, 2nd Lt. Halverson F. French.

In her diary Mrs. Corbusier spoke of "Captain" Crawford, for as such the family always thought of him, but he received his promotion after leaving Sheridan.⁴

Our quarters, which were a one story frame building of battened upright boards, were quite comfortable. A gallery (porch) ran along the front and a vestibule gave entrance to three rooms, one on each side and one at the back. The latter opened into the dining room and back of this were the kitchen and servant's room. A cellar beneath the kitchen was surrounded by sawdust held in place by boards, to keep out the cold. Against the fence at the back yard were the stable and chicken house, and near the back gate stood the water barrels which were to be seen at every frontier post. There were five sets of officers quarters, with wild cucumber vines trailed up the galleries. Across the parade (grounds) were the hospital and the men's quarters, and at the north end, the sutler's store. Then came the quartermaster and commissary storehouse of stone.

We had to camp out in our quarters during the three coldest months of the year, as our household effects did not come until we had written several times and sent out a tracer. The tracer at length located them under a great pile of sacked grain in a storehouse in Sidney. This experience taught us to always send out a tracer as soon as we arrived at a new station. By this time we had become quite experienced in making ourselves comfortable to live the simple life. The quartermaster furnished us with a few tables, barrack chairs and beds were borrowed from the hospital. Fortunately there was a saw mill at the post and from a supply of green lumber we made other furniture and covered it with calico from the sutler's store. In a few

⁴ Actually Lt. Emmet Crawford did receive his promotion to Captain on June 24, 1879 while still stationed at Camp Sheridan. The town of Crawford, Nebraska, was named for him. Captain Crawford was killed on duty in the Southwest in 1886.

months the drying lumber produced weird but artistic effects. With the arrival of our few possessions we added folding dining room chairs, two folding rockers, a folding high chair, all of black walnut with woven cane seats and backs, mattresses in sections, sets of bed springs and feather pillows, a spring lounge with detachable legs, and a sewing machine. With such articles as brass curtain poles, a few carpets, draperies and other things easily packed, we were well provided.

The next spring I raised geraniums, nasturtiums, and other flowers, and, although there were no indications that vegetables had ever been raised here, we planted a garden down near the creek. When we were about ready to reap the fruits of our labor, a cloudburst washed everything away. We heard a peculiar noise, and on looking south to the head of the creek, saw a great copper-colored cloud, the shape of a scroll with wide protruding wing-like sides, unroll itself and pour down a deluge of water which rushed along with such force that it carried large trees and rocks before it. The men hurried down with ropes to tie the bridge which spanned the creek, but it was tossed upon the crest of the water and carried away before they were half way to it. In the twinkling of an eye utter desolation remained. But our day was to come and the next year we were successful far beyond our expectations in raising as fine vegetables as can be found in the most fertile parts of the country.

When the contractor delivered our fire wood, father had it piled so that it would nearly enclose an acre or more of ground on the first terrace above the creek. Here we planted and gathered more lettuce, peas, radishes, beans, leeks, onions, sweet corn, cucumbers, spinach, squash, tomatoes and a few potatoes, than we could eat. It furnished an ample supply for our friends at Camp Robinson and the Agency⁵ who had not been so successful as we were, and, which was just as important, created a happy diversion and exercise for the boys whose vigor was always seeking an outlet. When the cold weather came on we pulled the tomato vines up by the roots and hung them in the cellar where the green fruit continued to ripen for several weeks. Captain Crawford, who was then in command of the post,

⁵ Undoubtedly this was Pine Ridge Agency which had been established in the fall of 1878 for the Oglala Sioux who had formerly been at Red Cloud Agency near Camp Robinson. The Pine Ridge Agency was about twenty miles northeast of Camp Sheridan.

had the former agency ploughed and his men raised a fine crop.

When in the fall the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Carl Schurz, accompanied by Count Donhoff, Mr. Webb Hayes and a gentleman connected with the *New York Times*, on their way to the Pine Ridge Agency, took luncheon with us, we had on exhibition a table full of the finest specimens of each vegetable from our gardens. At the luncheon we also had a roasted hind quarter of antelope, a kind of meat none of them had ever eaten before. I remember that the Count said, in his very German accent, "Antelope meat is very fine, Mr. Schurz", and in his enthusiasm he gave his nose a peculiar twist and off shot his pinc nez and flew out almost a foot and then sprang back to fall against his chest. The snickers of the boys were fortunately drowned out by the "puff, puff" of the Count as he replaced the pinc nez on his ample nose.

We were in the wild plum belt and gathered bushels of the fruit, some of it red and some yellow, much of which I pickled and preserved in every way I knew. The men put up a barrel of spiced preserves by my receipt. Buffalo berries were also very plentiful. They are red and grow in a rather high bush, having leaves of an olive green hue, but are not very palatable when raw. I made delicious jelly from them which resembled currant jelly in color, but having a balsam or pine flavor. They require prolonged boiling before they will jelly, as I learned on my first attempt. I had what looked like a mixture of milk and blood, which would not set so I left it in disgust. After a while Eliza⁶ tried it again and brought me some of the perfect jelly.

Spike tailed grouse, which were very numerous, were delicious when young, but in the winter tasted very strongly of the sage which they fed upon. If drawn as soon as shot, however, and laid in salt water for a few hours before cooking, the sage flavor is not so noticeable. Father⁷ and Captain Crawford hunted them as soon as they were large enough, and in the winter we always had a row of them hanging on the north side of the house. Here also were great flocks of large blackbirds and more than once we had "four and twenty baked in a pie". The first ones were shot by Captain Crawford while teaching the boys to shoot. Frank (Francis) who was the youngest, called the Cap-

⁶ Eliza was the Corbusier family's household help.

⁷ Surgeon W. H. Corbusier was called "father" by his wife.

tain, "Campo" and he called Frank, "Franko". The boys were devoted to him. He messed by himself for some time, until one day his soldier cook was taken sick and father asked him to come to us until his man was well, but he seemed so happy that I insisted that he remain with us. Captain Crawford stood six feet, one inch in his "stocking feet"—straight as an arrow. He was gentle, kind and chivalrous and ever ready to undertake any perilous duty for which he might be detailed.

At the end of the year Eliza left us to return to her mother who had written that she was dying, but was found in a good state of health so she wanted to return to us. But in the meantime grandmother sent us a woman from Elmira, New York. Louie was a fine cook and never tired of work, but about once a month had paroxysms of rage and then she would fling saucepans, flat irons or anything else at hand, at our soldier striker, Lewis. He would rush down the steps into the yard to get away from her, and at length said he couldn't stand such treatment any longer and wanted to return to his troop and go out and fight Indians.⁸ But he was too good a man to lose, as he took excellent care of the horses, cow and chickens, and I prevailed upon him to stay with us. Louie said that Lewis didn't know how to milk so she did that herself, saying that at a dairy in Elmira she had milked forty a day. She came in her bare feet one day to wait upon the table and Captain Crawford, happening to look down, was very much surprised when an explosive "Well!" came from her, and she seemed ready to spring upon him. Another time she brought in a platter which was so hot that the steak upon it was sizzling, and placed it so far away from father that he had to draw it toward him. She just waited to watch him burn his fingers, and as he shook them and looked at her she snapped out, "Well, couldn't you see it was hot". We couldn't help laughing as she stamped out of the room. Her spells always ended with a flood of tears and she would be very repentant and beg to stay with us.

During the latter part of the first summer we experienced a very damaging hail storm. The hail stones were very large, many of them measuring seven inches in circumference and weighing an ounce and a half some time after the storm. The storm came in from the north and

⁸ Louie's treatment must have been really unbearable, for, an officer's striker was a choice spot and carried with it many privileges and comforts that the other men lacked.

then shifted to the west, shattering dozens of panes of glass on those sides of the buildings. Young chickens were knocked down and killed and horses and cattle considerably bruised. Much suffering was the consequence, as glass could not be immediately replaced and the windows had to be boarded up. Large quantities of hail stones came in the houses causing damage to the furniture and soaking bedding, carpets and clothing.

Coyotes were numerous and sneaked about at night uttering their plaintive yelps. They would sometimes get on the roof of our chicken house looking for a place to get in, and skunks would often find an entrance. Among the hills back of us a few hundred yards, we saw every morning in mid-winter, packs of great grey wolves prowling about. The men poisoned many of them for their skins with which to make carriage robes. They bored holes in a log and these were filled with lard or suet with strychnine mixed in. The wolves licked at the holes and died near by. Down Beaver Creek were hundreds of dogs that had been abandoned by the Indians when they left for the Missouri River, and had since increased rapidly. They lived in holes dug in the banks of the creek and had become as wild as the wolves, with whom they frequently engaged in terrific fights. Before cattle were brought in, black tailed deer were plentiful and could be hunted close to the Post, providing much sport for the men and a welcome change in our diet.

In the fall of the year the grass would dry up, and many times fires threatened the Post. On their first approach all of the soldiers were turned out with gunny sacks, to burn a wide space around the Post and men were left to see that the fire did not jump it. This activity was always the occasion for much hilarity among the men, as their life at most of the posts was very monotonous. Between thrashings at the fire which they had set, several of the men would rush upon some victim and smack him from all sides with the slimy, wet gunny sack and then, just like children scream with glee and go back to their chore.

Sheridan was out of the danger zone—that is, almost—so many hours were spent in improving the horsemanship of the family. Every sort of steed was employed in this process. As soon as a boy was old enough to be bounced about, he was taken in father's arms and given the feel of a horse, then seated behind him to hang on for dear life.

And by the time he could take his first step he was strapped on alone—bareback or saddle until he was confident to go it alone.

The first nag they owned was a little, very dark bay mare who seemed to appreciate a joke, at the same time considering somewhat the general comfort of her riders. She would pick a nice sandy spot, stop suddenly and buck off the two older boys who felt there was safety in numbers, then she would turn with erect ears and look down at them and, until they became familiar with her tricks, even lie down with them. This proved to be excellent training as Claude, the oldest boy, soon learned to handle her and went on to break-in the wildest horses. The next acquisition was a white colt that had been hanging around the Post, having been left behind by the Indians. Phil tried to mount "Ghost" by a very novel method. He tied him to the fence, put a box at the colt's heels and climbed on it. Then up went the heels and so did the box and Phil. The box suffered the only damage and Phil rather enjoyed the encounter.⁹

Father had two other horses which he purchased from the Indians, one of which he later traded for a black cowpony that had been hard ridden from Texas by one of the cow boys who were delivering long horns to the Agency. He was very black, having one wall-eye, a white face and white hind feet. He was afraid to enter the stable, but was so weak and thin that two men managed to push him in. The next day he refused to come out, so he was left for a couple of days to get used to his quarters, but it was a long time before he would enter or come out without a snort and a plunge, and a stranger couldn't induce him to come out. That fear was what saved him and the other horse from being stolen after he was fat and well groomed. It was while father was presiding at a literary and debating club, which he and Captain Crawford had assisted the men

⁹ Years later, Capt. Philip W. Corbusier of the Fourteenth Cavalry was on the crack polo team at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Still later, during World War I, he was a major in charge of the Remount Station at Leon Springs, Texas.

in organizing. That night there were many cow boys and others from the Agency to hear the question debated whether the Indians would be better off if they were transferred to the army. In the Corbusier house all was quiet and darkness was just beginning to settle. Only the occasional "who" of an owl or the "pluff" of a horse disturbed the quiet. Louie's room faced the stables and as she rocked quietly in the semi-darkness, she thought she heard an unusual noise, and on looking out the window she saw one of our horses outside the stable and saddles on the ground. Two men were trying to get Baldy out, but he stood bracing himself with his forefeet set, pulling back as if he were holding a steer, and snorting with anger. It was this snort that Louie had heard, and she rushed to the door, yelling at the top of her lungs to father that someone was stealing the horses. The sergeant of the guard, at the guardhouse near by, heard her and was soon in the yard, but the would-be thieves got away in the dark—empty handed. Father tried to break Baldy to the harness and hitched him to a very heavy cart. It might just as well have been a feather, as he carried it far out on the prairie at break-neck speed, the man who was holding the reins dropping out of the back of the cart as it dashed through the corral gate.

The Oglala Indians, who had been removed from the Red Cloud Agency the year before to the Missouri River, where the Indian Bureau attempted to establish them, returned to their old country and located about twenty miles by wagon road northeast from Camp Sheridan in the fall of 1878. And here the Pine Ridge Agency buildings were erected. Doctor V. T. McGillicuddy, a former acting assistant surgeon of the army, was sent as their agent. He proved himself well fitted for the position, managing them and their affairs in such a manner that he soon gained their confidence, and, as long as they were under his charge [they] remained peaceful and contented. He procured wagons and had them haul their own supplies furnished by the government from the Missouri River. They built houses, dug wells, began to cook on stoves and adopt other ways of the white man. He enforced the simple laws by means of police of their own people. All white men living with Indian women — "squaw-men", as they were called — that wished to remain on the reservation were required to marry

them according to our customs, and be it said to the credit of these men that, with few exceptions, they complied with his order without demur, and the very few that went away soon returned to marry their faithful companions and give their children legal status. These women were gentle, industrious, and made them good wives.

The teepee belongs to the woman, and if her husband misbehaves, she can, and often does turn him out. The famous old chief American Horse was once disciplined in this manner and came to me, very much grieved, for help, but I could only tell him to behave himself and it would not happen again. The Indians did not whip their children, and the boys were treated with great consideration. A boy would consider it an indignity to be struck by a woman. I recall a Piute boy who took poison parsnip because his mother whipped him, and father had great difficulty in saving his life. The boys were taught very early to ride horseback and to use the bow and arrow, and the girls to perform the simple duties that would later be required of them.

Four missionaries established themselves at the Agency, three Episcopalians and one Roman Catholic. Two of the former, Rev. John Robinson and Reverend Wolcott, frequently came over to hold services for us, and a French Jesuit to minister to the men. The latter was cultured and very agreeable, and we always entertained him with the others. But one day a rough red-faced man came to our door instead of our gentle friend, and told us that the latter had been sent back to France. We did not entertain the new man and the work that the other had been carrying on so successfully was annulled by him.

There were many dishonest contractors working for the government and many of the supplies sent to the Indians never reached them, so army officers were detailed as inspectors to witness the issue of all their annuities and report upon their quality. Father was selected for that duty at the Pine Ridge Agency. Every ten days he would get up at four in the morning, eat a hurried breakfast and drive the twenty miles so as to reach the Agency before seven, at which hour he would receive the cattle. Formerly the cattle would frequently be let out at night and in the morning the Indians would find the corral empty. Then, to pacify them, the contractor would present them with a few head. Or a herd of scrawny steers would be delivered in which were three or four fat ones, and one of the latter would be slaughtered, weighed on steelyards and its weight

taken for the average for the whole bunch, so the Indians would fare very well if they received even two-thirds of the beef to which they were entitled. To prevent any further fraud, the first thing that father did was to see that the corrals were so constructed that the palisades could not be pulled up by the cowboys with their lariats. The cattle were kept over night without water, and in the morning weighed on platform scales; run into a chute and there branded with cross-arrows, so that if any did escape they could be readily identified. They were then run into another corral from which the head of each family received all that belonged to him. When a steer was released from the corral they would chase him about as if he were a buffalo before killing him. Sometimes in the chase an Indian was accidentally shot, but it was a long time before this "steer-baiting" could be stopped.

After the issue father would return to the Post, except when he had to receive a winter's supply of cattle, or the yearly supply of clothing and other annuities, and then he would be gone for ten days or two weeks. On one of these occasions he received their first herd of stock cows and bulls. The distribution of these cows was a very difficult and troublesome problem as the Indians were totally unprepared to care for such stock. Eventually most of these animals were killed for beef. It was, never-the-less, a worthy experiment and probably the forerunner of the fine stock now in that vicinity.

There was rarely any sickness in the Post. If there was an emergency case while father was away a courier took a short cut to the Agency to recall him.

One Christmas Eve, as father had been gone nearly two weeks, we expected him home and worked fast to have everything ready for the commemoration before he arrived. Captain Crawford and the boys strung cranberries; Louie and I made mince pie, fruit cake, crullers and other good things. The pine tree, which the Captain had brought down from the hills the day before, was brought in and pine branches hung on the walls. The weather was very cold, and as the sun sank westward, it grew bitterly so. I began to fear that father would not come—half hoping that he was not out in the cold—but shortly after sunset he arrived. Both he and the driver had run alongside of the ambulance nearly half way, to keep from freezing, the intense cold having descended suddenly after they left the Agency. After the boys had gone to bed, we decorated the tree, with Cap-

tain Crawford as much in sympathy with the occasion as if he were with his own family. Our Christmas day and dinner were all that could be desired. We had sent a wagon to the railroad, one hundred sixty-two miles, as we did about once a month, for supplies that we had ordered at Grand Isle,¹⁰ Nebraska. There, many articles were quite reasonable—eggs, ten cents a dozen—butter, fifteen cents a pound—chickens, ten cents a pound—turkeys and ducks, twelve cents. We sent to Chicago for Booth's oysters which came in flat tin cans, packed in ice, so that the dinner we sat down to was a sumptuous one. After our repast we all went over to the barracks with Captain Crawford to inspect the men's dinner. It was equally as good as ours as the Captain was a good provider. The boys liked these "inspections", as they were always treated to plum-duff, which they pronounced a delicious dish.

Mother rarely made much of the real hardships which they frequently endured, and of the fear and worry that often stalked their lives for weeks at a time.

In September 1878, three hundred Cheyenne Indians under Little Wolf, Wild Hog and Dull Knife, set out from the Cheyenne and Arapaho Reservation, in the Indian Territory near Camp Reno, to return north to their old home in Dakota. Troops were sent after them but they moved so rapidly that before they could be intercepted they were well up in Nebraska—had committed many depredations on the way and had killed forty or more men, women and children.¹¹ When they reached the Union Pacific Railroad, nearly one half of them, mostly young men headed by Little Wolf, left the others and later surrendered.¹² The others continued on their way to the old Red Cloud Agency. The Twenty-third Infantry, under Major Alexander J. Dallas, pursued them from the south up through the sand hills across the Niobrara River until they were headed off on

¹⁰ Grand Island, Nebraska.

¹¹ The official report of a commission appointed in Kansas to investigate the raid of the Cheyenne through that state, listed thirty-two whites killed. There is no dependable record of how many, if any, were killed in Nebraska.

¹² Little Wolf and his band surrendered on March 25, 1879 to Lt. W. P. Clark at the Cheyenne camp west of the Little Missouri River and were taken to Fort Keogh, Montana.

the north by troops from the Third Cavalry. They entrenched themselves on Chadron Creek about eighteen miles from Camp Sheridan. A mountain howitzer sent from that post, soon dislodged them and they were induced on October 24 to give up their arms and were taken to Fort Robinson. There the forty-nine men and one hundred women and children were confined in an old building. They however, managed to get ten rifles and ten pistols into the prison by taking them apart and having the women and children conceal the pieces and ammunition in their clothing. An attempt was made to separate Wild Hog from his people, without success. They barricaded the windows and doors, and that night, January 9, 1879, made a dash for freedom. Some of them were shot down while crossing the parade ground. Dull Knife was wounded in the leg and escaped to Pine Ridge. The others fortified themselves among the rocks (with what was left of the rifles and pistols) and did not surrender to Troops A, C, E, F, H and L, Third Cavalry, until not a man was left alive and very few women and children were not wounded. Of the one hundred and fifty-odd confined, sixty-four were killed, fifty-eight were taken to the Pine Ridge Agency, twenty-one sent back to the Indian Territory and seven others were supposed killed as they could not be otherwise accounted for. Probably one hundred soldiers, fully armed, were engaged and eleven of them were killed or died of their wounds. Captain Henry W. Wessels, Jr., Third Cavalry, and nine enlisted men were wounded. The prisoners passed through Sheridan on their way to Pine Ridge, and remained there over the night of March 15, 1879. This was my brother Frank's birthday, and on writing of the affair years later, he gave his impression of the "Cheyenne Affair."¹³

¹³ "The most pitiable sight I ever saw was nearly fifty women and children, many of them suffering from wounds, who were being taken to Pine Ridge Agency after the Cheyenne Affair of 1878-79. They stopped several days at Camp Sheridan where father was stationed. He dressed their wounds and we took them cakes and sweets and such other foods that the soldiers did not have to give them. The oldest boy could not have been over fourteen years old and he was badly wounded . . . What a glorious victory over a handful of helpless people, all in the cause of progress!"

The burden of entertaining fell upon mother but, as usual, she was equal to the occasion.

The troops that came to the Post during the Cheyenne affair were entertained by us and at every meal we sat down with five or six officers at the table. In about two weeks time we had the pleasure of having forty or more officers of different regiments. Besides Major Dallas, there were Bvt. Lt. Col. Caleb H. Carlton, Major, Third Cavalry; 1st Lts. John C. Thompson and George W. Baxter, Third Cavalry; Bvt. Lt. Col. Joseph C. Tilford, Major Seventh Cavalry; Bvt. Col. Frederick W. Benteen, Captain, Twenty-first Infantry; 1st Lt. Ezra B. Fuller, Seventh Cavalry; Capt. Myles Moylan, 1st Lts. Charles C. DeRudio, Winfield S. Edgerly, George D. Wallace, Charles A. Varnum, Luther R. Hare, Ernest A. Garlington, 2nd Lts. Herbert J. Slocum and George A. Dodd, all of the Third Cavalry; 2nd Lt. Lea Febiger, Twenty-third Infantry. 1st Lt. Victor Biart, Assistant Surgeon, was with the Infantry. The night before he arrived, having only his saddle blanket to sleep under, he crawled into the ambulance to share the blanket covering the corpse of a soldier who had been accidentally shot by a comrade.

Woman's Dress, an Oglala Sioux, was one of the scouts during this "affair" at Fort Robinson and was wounded at the rifle pits. For his services he was retained afterward on the pay roll and father examined him for reinlistment every six months. He gave father his "coups", which were pictures in colors of all the great feats of his life, beginning when he was a boy and stole a horse from another tribe, and ending with the wound he received at Fort Robinson. This record was lost with all the rest of our pictures and notes of the Sioux, in the San Francisco fire.

Once we had Lt. Gen. Philip Sheridan with us. When he took our Philip upon his knee, he looked up questioningly, so I told him I was on the other side during the Civil War, and our boy was not named after him.

With the Pine Ridge Agency so near we were not so isolated as we had been before it was established, as a daily buckboard carrying mail kept us in touch with the people over there. For a time it was driven by a man who had gone east about a year before, with his pockets full of money, got married, went on his wedding trip in a private railroad car, came back west, soon went broke and was glad to carry the mail from Robinson to the Agency. He

wore a high white hat and had streamers of gay ribbons on his whip. Characters of all descriptions soon began to appear and it was not long before the first showman drove in with his wife in a brand new buggy. He was a sleight of hand artist, very clever, but there was not yet interest enough for that sort of entertainment for him to make a living. The first drummer in the country came up out of the river bottom one day just as father started out grouse hunting. He was riding very fast and looked very pale. As he reached father he asked if his gun was loaded, saying that he was unarmed and a cowboy was chasing him to kill him. Father removed the shells from his gun, replacing them with some loaded with buckshot and dropped it over his arm, so that when the cowboy rode up he had him covered. Motioning the cowboy to go on, he informed the drummer that he was simply playing with him. But it proved far from play, for the cowboy soon returned and, jerking out his revolver, leaned over with a wicked leer to strike the tip of the frightened drummer's nose with its muzzle. With that, father called to the Sergeant of the Guard to arrest him, and then went to report to the commanding officer what he had done. The drummer went as fast as he could to the railroad station and sent up a warrant from the civil authorities. It was timely, as the cowboy was wanted both in Texas and Mississippi for killing several men, and we learned afterward that he was convicted of the crimes of murder and hung in Mississippi.

After the Indians located at Pine Ridge, some cattlemen drove in their herds and assumed control of the ranges with a pretty tough lot of men, some of whom came into the country to hide away from justice. There were frequent shooting scrapes, after which father's services were always in demand. Horse thieves were numerous and the Indians had to keep close watch over their mounts. Road agents were not uncommon, and one of them, "Lame Johnny", who had robbed a stage lone-handed and was accused of several killings, was arrested for stealing Indian horses. The sheriff and a posse were enroute with him from Sheridan to Deadwood when a crowd from the latter place took him from them and lynched him on what is now known as "Lame Johnny's Creek". We learned that his mother in the east had offered a large reward for the arrest of the men who murdered her boy, probably not knowing that he was a desperate character. Another desperado, the son of a judge, who went by the name of King, had been well brought up, but after leaving Texas had killed a man,

was shot in self defense by one of the sons of Irwin, his employer, in a bunk-house about twelve miles from Sheridan. Father had treated him for wounds several times before, but this one proved fatal.

We celebrated the Fourth of July 1879, as had never done before in that country. We invited the officers and soldiers at Fort Robinson; Dr. McGillicuddy, the Agent at Pine Ridge, and his employees; the Indians, among whom were Red Cloud (Mah-pi-ya-sha), American Horse (Wasi-chu-unka shun-ka), Young Man Afraid Of His Horse (Ta-shun-kako-pi-ya) and several minor chiefs, and the men on the cattle ranges about us. Great roasts of beef, dozens of loaves of bread, pot after pot of coffee, large kettles of soup, which was almost a stew, were prepared for the Indians. We had at our table the Agent, the Surgeon from Robinson, the Missionaries, and as many of the employees from the agency as we could accommodate. After we finished our dinner, finding the chiefs on the gallery, we had them come in for ice cream and cake. With old Red Cloud¹⁴ (whom father had treated for tape worm, which was quite common among the Indians due to eating raw beef) were American Horse, Young Man Afraid (Whom father addressed as Ta-shun-kako),¹⁵ Three Bears, Long Dog and Red Dog, all of whom thought a great deal of father. When asked if they wanted anything more they pointed to the chicken and beef. These we gave them and then they asked for soup, with which they finished their meal. They had already gorged themselves to the apparent limit, but it would not have been good form for them to leave until they had consumed everything in sight.

After dinner the programme for the day was continued. A three mile hurdle race came next, and Long Dog, who came in first, as he sank down on the grass said, "No

¹⁴ Red Cloud, in appreciation for the doctor's frequent visits and services, gave him a Navajo blanket which is still in the Corbusier family. It is very plain with alternating black, grey and red stripes which have not faded in the least, even after the usage given it for over fifty years. It is one of the few relics remaining from the Camp Sheridan period.

¹⁵ Grace Hebard, Wyoming historian, and others, have translated this name as Young Man Afraid of His Horse. Dr. Corbusier maintained that the name should be divided Tasunka Koki-pape which shows the plural form of horses. The meaning is difficult to express in exact English, but Young Man Afraid, like Dick Washakie, was a lover of spirited horses and trained them to quick movements and mean traits. Thus, the *nature* of the horses he rode is the significant part of the name. Dr. Corbusier translated the name "Young Man, Even His Horses are Feared."

run good to-day, heap eat dinner doctor's house"—or words to that effect. He came in far, far ahead of all the others, but had not understood that he must jump the hurdles. These Indians were not good jumpers and high jumps were out of the question. Besides foot and horse races, there were wheel-barrow and sack races, climbing a greased pole, catching a greased pig and a tug of war. This latter was the cowboys against the soldiers, who could not move the former after they had dug the big rowels of their spurs into the ground, and the soldiers finally gave in. We had prizes for the winners and had to make up a special purse for Long Dog. At night there were fireworks followed by minstrels given by the enlisted men. Many of our soldiers were Irish, and their rich brogue mingled with fine voices, made the old, old songs the more beautiful. The show was followed by a dance in which the squaws did the best they knew how, but the supper afterwards, was to them a grand success. After again eating all they could, they gathered and carried away in their shirts and blankets, every scrap that was left. It did not seem possible that human beings could eat so much. Some of the cowboys had ridden eighty miles to celebrate the Fourth and pronounced it the best day of their lives, as they had never seen such sports before.

The Indians frequently came to the Post and among the occasional visitors was "Three Bears", whom Captain Crawford always received very cordially and never permitted him to go away empty handed. The Indian had saved his life when he was ordered by the commanding officer of Fort Robinson to go with thirty cavalymen to the relief of the Indian Agent at Red Cloud Agency, who had declared his intention to raise a flag pole, and the Indians, saying he should not fly a flag over them, had cut into pieces the pole he had brought from the hills, and were making threatening demonstrations. On the approach of the soldiers, the Oglalas drew up in front of the gates of the palisades, probably a thousand of them fully armed. The Captain informed them that he had been ordered to go inside, and requested them to stand aside that he might obey the order. There was dead silence for a few moments and then could be heard the cocking of their guns, whereupon Three Bears called to his band and, separating from the others, they followed him as he rode through the gate, making a passage way for the troops to enter. Whenever the Captain went over to the Agency he would take jams, jellies, candies and cakes and go personally to give them

to the family of Three Bears. Mother too had occasion to remember Three Bears and recalled that once, when there was a disturbance at the Agency, he hastened to the Post to assure her that no harm would come to them.

There was one Indian, however, who was an insistent beggar. "Two Lance" would come in his spring wagon holding an umbrella over himself with one hand and a palm leaf fan, in summer, in the other hand, while his wife drove the team of ponies. Two Lance, Mrs. Two Lance and the three children would first begin a search for Captain Crawford, who, after many of their visits, tried to hide from them. He came to our quarters and sat for a long time. But when he returned, there they were still on his gallery—most of them asleep. So they received what they came after—coffee, sugar, tobacco, bakers bread and sweets. He laughed very heartily when he told us how they had trapped him.

In June 1879, about the time that the sun was farthest north, the Oglalas held their customary yearly ceremony known as the Sun-Dance, and we all went over to Pine Ridge to witness it. Efforts had been made to have the Indians discontinue it,¹⁶ but the whites had given them no better method of communing with the spirit world and the sun, the source of all life, so they continued to worship in their own fashion.

We arrived very early on the plain east of the Agency where the great tribal circle of tepees, each band in its proper place, was assembled.¹⁷ Several mounted men in their war bonnets of eagle feathers reaching nearly to the ground, seemed to be delivering messages as they passed from the south around the circle west, thence north and finally east. After watching the people preparing to leave their camps to attend the commemorations, we drove to a large circular enclosure of poles, branches of trees and canvas, having an opening only to the east. Then, seeing many moving south, we followed them to the hills and seated ourselves near the summit of one that overlooked a grove of trees not very far away. Very soon we heard the chanting of many voices as a long line of mounted warriors in their war bonnets, war shirts and blue leggings trimmed in vari-

¹⁶ In 1881 Dr. Valentine McGillycuddy, Indian Agent at Pine Ridge, ordered the torture features of the dance eliminated, and that year the Oglala held their last great Sun Dance.

¹⁷ This was the famous Sun Dance Plain at Pine Ridge where for a number of years the Oglala held these ceremonial dances.

ous colors came in view. Behind them and slightly to their right came other lines of mounted men until there were at least a thousand all told. They dismounted and after them followed their women and children, some on horse back, some in wagons and others leading ponies hauling travois which held their babes. Large drums were brought forward and placed upon the ground, each one being surrounded by five or six men and women. We were on the east and extreme left of the line and only a few feet from one of the bands. After all the men had seated themselves, the chanting was resumed, accompanied by the beating of the drums, the high pitched voices of the women mingling with the deeper tones of the men. Occasionally the singing would stop and a man would rise and count a coup, which, when ended, would be followed by the triumphant yelling of the people and quick beating of the drums. A "coup" is a deed of prowess of which a warrior boasts; it may be a horse stealing trip, or the killing of an enemy. There was one very tall, spare Indian, well known to us, named No Flesh who when he counted a coup and yelled, showed his very white teeth between his thin lips, and the expression on his withered face was as if he were relating some horrible act of barbarity.

A slender, straight tree about twenty-five feet high, was selected at the foot of a hill on the far side of the valley and women approached to lay their hands on it, a declaration that they had led irreproachable lives during the past year. But before they were permitted to do this they were caused to face the gathering and the men were challenged to come forward and declare if any of the women had led unclean lives. None had in this case but we knew of one squaw who was accused and the other women proceeded to beat her terribly. The tree was then cut down by men and women, and when it had fallen, cleared of its branches except near the top, where a few were allowed to remain. It was then taken to the enclosure, accompanied by horsemen who, when near by, dashed ahead as if elated at the success of some great undertaking. The tree was erected slightly east of the circle (oval) and a fetish wrapped in a bunch of sage, fastened high up, and under this was suspended the figure of a man, about a foot long. Several rawhide ropes dangled from the top of the pole.

When all was in readiness, father was very ceremoniously conducted to a spot near the south of the entrance in the shade of the brush and canvas, the rest of us trailing along behind him. After we were seated, a large drum was

placed in position near the entrance and surrounded by some six or eight men and women who began to chant, beating time on the drum.

Then entered the gaily dressed chiefs, and proceeding across the enclosure on the north, seated themselves at the west end, facing east. After a short ceremonial palaver, a few of the lesser chiefs arose and proceeded to the south and sat down in front of us. The eight or ten penitents, who were to undergo the ordeal, entered in single file soon afterward, the head one carrying in front of him the skull of a buffalo bull. They passed us, went to the west end and seated themselves in a row slightly north of the chiefs, placing some sticks and the buffalo skull in front of them to form a sort of altar.

Then Red Cloud (Ma-pi-ya-sha) arose in all his dignity and, facing the pole, looking up while supplicating the sun that their women might bear many boys; that the grass might be abundant; buffalo plentiful, and that they should have a great increase in their horses. This lasted probably a half hour. What a marvelous picture this would be as the great chief stretched out his powerful arms in supplication—his large hands opening and closing as he emphasized his prayer—his massive chest heaving as his deep voice belled out his plea to his gods. Tall as he was, to us seated below him he seemed like a giant whose every command should be obeyed. As his fervor rose, the chiefs back of him would now and then raise their arms and shout out in support of their particular desire.

Then suddenly, as if cut off by some supreme force, the din ceased and complete silence seemed to reign for a few moments, and hardly a movement was visible among that vast crowd. It ended just as abruptly when the medicine men arose and proceeded directly to the south and, to the resumed accompaniment of drums and chanting, stopped there for a short chat. They repeated this ceremony at the west and then proceeded by way of the north to the east, where they stopped and conversed and secured some sand and a bundle of sticks. With these they swung around southerly to the center and deposited the sticks and sand at the foot of the pole.

The dancing then began and was intended to last four days and four nights, during which time the dancers were to fast, neither eating or drinking, but they could smoke tobacco. It actually did not last more than three days, and

weakened toward the last day. As the din of the chanting again increased a candidate was led to the altar where he counted a coup and started to dance. Always facing the east and looking up at the pole and into the sun, until it had passed the meridian, each with a whistle between his lips (made from the leg bone of a turkey) to blow short blasts while keeping time with his feet, moved forward and back hour after hour, until too exhausted to stand up. When one would fall, a great yelling would take place and the drums be beaten the harder and faster. We had planned to stay a short time but were so fascinated with the weird ceremony that the day was gone and the tribal fires lighted before we realized the time had passed.

The dance proceeded. Finally, toward the end of the day, a medicine man picked one husky warrior and, taking hold of a fold of the skin of the breast, he forced through a knife, making two slits about an inch long with a half inch of flesh and skin between. Through this slit he passed a stout wooden skewer and fastened it to one of the ropes attached to the pole. This completed, the warrior sank to his knees, or more properly, sat down on his heels, straining slightly on the cord as he leaned back. His eyes were closed, with his head tilted back and both arms stretched out before him. In a few moments the eyes were suddenly opened and as suddenly closed. Then the eyes were slowly opened as his arms were raised jerkingly above his head, at the same time increasing the strain upon the rope and by its use raising the body to a standing position. His whole body begins to tremble as the wailing and drumming again increases. Quick as a flash the dance begins and continues at a furious rate for an interminable time until the dancer faints exhausted, while the blood runs down his body. With this the crowd goes wild, and as he rises to dance again the din is deafening. Each time as he sinks to the earth he throws his arms across his abdomen with a clutching motion and jerks them back as if tearing himself open. At length a medicine man approached and examined the wound, and when the brave made the next attempt to free himself, he broke loose and fell to the ground, among

the wild cheering and chanting of the multitude.¹⁸ During the whole time a fire was kept burning at the east side of the pole, and when it needed replenishing, a man would come in with wood, count a coup, and lay it on the fire.

About noon, food was brought in for the onlookers. We of course partook of some of it, and when the dog meat came around, Lieutenant Charles G. Starr, First Infantry, said he would eat some if I would, so we each ate a small piece. Father and our boys ate it without a demur, as if born to the taste—smacking their lips in approved Indian fashion. To have done otherwise would have been a grave breach of etiquette.

In the interval between dancing, horses were given away by the dancers and others. Sometimes the horse was brought in but oftener sticks were given as pledges, to be reclaimed afterward. When a poor old woman received a horse she would cry out praise for the donor and say that he was a very brave man, for a man is not considered brave by them unless he is good to the poor, no matter what feats of daring he may have performed. The dancers underwent this sort of penance for some favor or mercy they had received. At the end of the dance the men were given sips of water from a buffalo horn to break their fast.¹⁹

¹⁸ Dr. Corbusier recorded the minutest details of this dance and wrote out some dozen interpretations of it by various participants. There seemed to be no set story except the ever predominant influence of the sun as the source of life. Each narrator might have several versions according to his particular need or desire at the time of the dance. Much white man superstition was mingled with the Indian.

Chief Red Cloud related one of his versions to Dr. Corbusier. He explained it thus:—

It is night, he kneels facing the east, he opens his eyes and the glare hurts them. He opens them again and, realizing it is the sun, rises to ask it for plenty of boys, plenty of game and success in war. He has trembled in fear of the Great Spirit but begins to boast of his own strength and fearlessness and stands ready to prove it, but can not break loose from the fetters—the cord being symbolic of the restraints imposed upon him. He tugs at the rope and it hurts, but he does not flinch—he is a brave man. He tears at his body . . . The Great Spirit is satisfied only when he breaks loose or faints.

A childish narrative, short, in the writing, but long in the Indian way of telling.

¹⁹ Dr. Corbusier remained with the camp day and night making extensive notes and translating from Indian to English most of the chants and ceremonies. These notes, together with much other valuable data including several Winter Counts, were lost in a fire in San Francisco. Other Winter Counts collected by Dr. Corbusier were preserved, however, and may be seen as published in the 4th, 6th and 10th *Annual Report* of the Bureau of American Ethnology.

The pleasant though restricted life of the family at Sheridan was as usual, to be brought to an abrupt end by emergency hurry up orders. The Doctor was ordered to proceed post haste to Fort Laramie to join Troops H and K of the Third Cavalry, and accompany them to Washakie, Wyoming. Again they hurriedly packed and as they moved out, Assistant Surgeon Grimes moved in to relieve father. Early in the morning of April 27, 1880 they started so as to make the drive of forty miles to Fort Robinson. They remained over one day with Assistant Surgeon Wm. B. Brewster, while their baggage wagon continued on to make in two days the distance they would drive in one. Robinson was garrisoned by several troops of the Third Cavalry under command of Bvt. Lieut. Col. Frederick Van Vliet, Captain, Third Cavalry. Under him were Captains Peter D. Vroom and Joseph Lawson, and First Lieut. Albert D. King.

We left Robinson in a large, brand new ambulance, drawn by six fine horses. The traditional "army blue" was of a darker hue than usual, and set off by a still darker stripe around the body. It was upholstered in bright leather and had pockets in which to place small articles that one might need on a long drive. The side curtains were of very heavy leather and fastened by large snaps. Along the sides of these were a number of beackets and tie-straps, for use when the curtains were taken off for flys or ground cloths. Leather was evidently an eastern idea as it soon dried out and crumbled in the western climate and had to be replaced by canvas.

We crossed White River some eighteen or twenty times and were enjoying the rugged scenery on both sides when, on going down the cut through which the road again led to the river, our driver ran the wheels of the rear side up onto the bank and upset us into the water. He was thrown under the heavy leather curtains of the vehicle, and Frank who sat next to him, along with him. Father, who was also on the front seat, was hurled forward and the front wheel was dragging over his legs when he felt the reins in the water, grabbed them and hung on as the horses pulled him out, and he was able to stop them. He called to Louie, who was miraculously on her feet, to run to the horses' heads, and then went to rescue Frank. As he raised the top of the

ambulance the driver called out; "The boy is all right", and helped to extricate him and himself from the water by getting his shoulders between the top and a small log upon which the uprights had been broken. He had held Frank's head above the water against the leather curtain which I had tried in vain to unfasten. I climbed out as fast as I could and helped the children to the far bank. The river was narrow and not over a foot and a half deep, but was made a little deeper by the ambulance damming it back. We were of course all soaked through. I undressed the children as fast as I could and wrapped them in a buffalo robe which had escaped much wetting. There was a very cold wind blowing but fortunately the sun was shining and we were somewhat sheltered from the wind by the hills which were close by on each side. We were sixteen or eighteen miles from Robinson and our baggage wagon was nearly as far ahead of us. Our driver was badly bruised and lay in a half drunken stupor. He hadn't shown any signs of intoxication until he came to the last and worst crossing, the twenty-second, I believe.

One of father's ankles was swelling and became very painful, so Louie was the only able bodied one that could go for relief. Father mounted her bareback astride of what he thought the best horse and gave her a note to Col. Van Vliet explaining our predicament. On reaching the Post she stopped long enough at the stables to call out that Frank had been drowned and father had broken a leg. The ride was a tragic experience for her and she was sore, physically and mentally for a long time. The Colonel came to our assistance, bringing the Post Surgeon, eight enlisted men and another ambulance. By the time they reached us the driver had sobered up considerably and our clothes were dry. Father's leg was put in splints; the ambulance hauled out of the water to be taken back. We changed to the relief ambulance to continue our journey, but with only four mules for our driver to manage. It was a sad, sad sight as we drove up one bank to see our beautiful new ambulance disappear over the other. It was long after dark before we came to the camp that our wagon and escort had made in compliance with orders to wait for us, and we were glad to get into our tent and go to sleep.