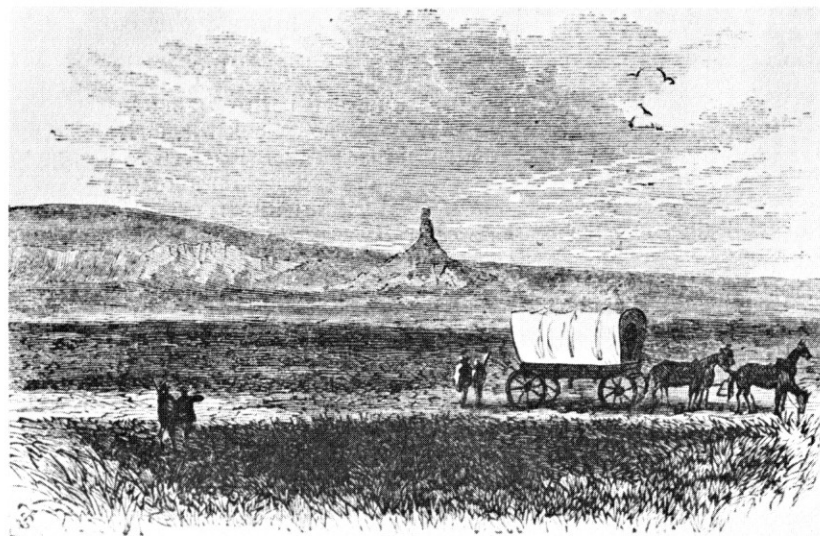


dark we could not see ten feet ahead of us. After we left the Big Horn Mountains we traveled up the Sweetwater River. One of the sights here was what is called the Devil's Gate, rising about 15 feet high on either side of the river. [Devil's Gate is 330 feet high and thirty feet across. Either Martha's memory was way off, or this is an error in handwriting.] It looked as if the water had cut the rock in two, so narrow at the top that it looked as if one might easily step across. Some of our men climbed to the top of the rock and found in a corked bottle a warning forbidding anyone to try to cross, saying that one of their party who was a good athlete had tried and had lost his life in the water below, the distance being so much greater than it looked.

Another sight on this river was the Steamboat Springs. Our father had told us of this, so as soon as we heard the roar of it we all walked ahead; as the train did not stop. If we wanted to take any side trips we did so at the risk of keeping the wagons in sight. This spring derived its name from sounding like a steam boat; as the water came from a flat rock it would whistle and boom and throw a spray for yards around. We all stood so near the rock that before we knew what had happened, we were all baptized. Further up the river, the water was so clear that we could see fish swimming around but we could not stop to catch them.

[The springs, a favorite halting place for overlanders, lie two miles west of today's town of Soda Springs, Idaho, on the Bear River. There, the Oregon and California (Salt Lake) trails separated.]

Our ox teams were getting very poor by this time and we girls walked as much as we could, especially if the pulling was hard. Once, passing around a big gulch, my sisters decided to walk a ways. They stood on a little knoll and saw other wagons about three miles ahead, and concluded they would take a short cut; we often did this and saved ourselves many miles. So they slid down the bank of this gulch, but soon saw their mistake, for sliding down and climbing out were two different things. In this gulch were the bones of all kinds of animals,



ON THE PLAINS, CHIMNEY ROCK IN THE BACKGROUND.

both large and small. [Very likely the girls had stumbled upon the site of an old Indian buffalo drive, where the beasts were driven over a cliff to their death. Meriwether Lewis was the first of many travelers to describe a similar scene.]

They were three hours in the gulch before they could find a place where they could climb up. There was no living thing in sight. The bones they saw must have been of animals that had fallen over the sides of the gulch and died for want of food and water. They were disheveled, torn and worn girls that joined the wagons at dark.

Little attention was given to us girls. We would go on ahead of the wagons sometimes for miles, just we three alone—for we made no friends among the whole train of people. We were Southern born and bred and we did not consider it good taste to speak without being introduced. We did not even speak to the man who worked for father. I know now that I was a very snobbish person for I felt myself very much superior to anyone in our party except my own family.

I remember one young man who came all the way from home with us wrote me a note asking me if I would marry him when we arrived in Oregon, and I was so angry at his audacity that I tore the note in little bits and that night when he came to supper I threw the scraps in his face. I guess he was as good as I was, and he surely showed a better disposition. Of course, we had no time to visit as we went along and at night we were too busy and tired. Each day now we neared the Rocky Mountains. We had gone over so many mountains where the road was bad that we rather dreaded the Rockies, but the ascent was so gradual that we hardly knew just when we did start up. As we neared the mountains, we came to a little stream, which we were told was the head of the Mississippi river. We could scarcely believe it to be the beginning of the large river that we had traveled in the big steamboats to St. Louis. As we went up the mountain, near the road was a gulch filled with snow, and right up on the bank near at hand little "Johnny Jump Ups" were growing.

We were about three days in reaching the top of the mountain, and then we stood on the summit and in every direction we could see hills, valleys and rivers.

As we descended the Rockies we had only one more state to pass through until we came to Oregon, where father had decided was the garden spot for our home. Often when going through some beautiful country filled with timber and lovely streams, we would plead with father to stop and build our home there.

One day when the noon hour came, we stopped near a mountain stream where a great misfortune befell me. When we had left our home in the South, my father gave me a beautiful saddle horse named Kate. In the weary days of travel how many times I whispered in her ear alone my weariness and home sickness, and some way she seemed to understand and comfort me. This day we had had a hard ride, and when we stopped for lunch, I took her saddle off; she laid down to roll in the sand, and was bitten by a scorpion. I was busy preparing our meal

when Kate came up to me and tried to tell me about it by rubbing her head on my shoulder. I thought she was thirsty, and led her to the water, but as she did not drink, I looked her over and found her neck was beginning to swell. I called father, who guessed at once the trouble, and applied indigo and brandy and gave her something internally, but without success. Soon a bullet ended her misery, but not mine, for I mourned her loss for many days. Father called to the men to drive the stock away at once, for he now remembered being warned against Scorpion Gulch.

Our stock were now suffering from the lack of green food, for it was very, very warm, and the preceding rains with their stock had either eaten or trampled down all the grass that the sun had not dried out. Father decided to cross the river, thinking he might better conditions, which he did. This was the last place we could get water for several days, so all the water barrels were filled. Water was a greater problem in crossing the plains than the Indians were. It was about the fourth day after we had left the river that father told us that our water was getting so low that we must use it only for drinking purposes, until we got a fresh supply. How the cattle suffered, those days without water, and in the heat, especially hard on the oxen drawing the wagons.

One day when lunch time came, sister Mary used some of the water from our scant supply and after she was through using the same water again and again, my other sister took it, dough and all, and saved the life of one of her pet calves.

Finally, all the water was gone, and we girls walking ahead of the wagons sighted what we thought were willows, and we knew if willows, then water. We were so tired, hot and thirsty, the thought of water lured us on until we had walked about four miles, when we came to a beautiful river, and to our horror, a band of Indians. My sisters ran down the bank, regardless of danger. They were in advance of me, and I called to them they must not go, but they called back saying they would as soon be killed by the Indians, as to die of thirst, so on

they went to the water, and lay down and drank. I looked back and saw the wagons, a mere speck in the distance. I knew that help from that quarter was impossible, so I rushed down the bank to join my sisters, not knowing what our fate would be.

The Indians were taken by surprise, and seemed undecided just what to do. They started toward where my sisters lay drinking—and I am sure water never tasted so good—then stopped, jabbered together and pointed to the hill in the direction we had come from. I think they wondered if more were coming, for they stood in awe of the white man's guns. One young buck seemed particularly anxious to advance toward us, but the others held him back. I think that the only thing that saved us that day from captivity, was the fearless way we passed them.

It may have been that we were the first white girls that they had ever seen. We took our lives in our hands that day, for no one knew where we were, and if the Indians had taken us captive, then God help us. By this time I had no fear of Indians killing us, but the fear of the whole trip across the plains to me was the possibility of being taken a captive. These Indians were drying fish. They had wooden forks driven in the ground, over which hung a long pole where hundreds of fish were hanging, being dried for the winter. I will never forget, even in my fear, just how savory those fish smelled.

As quickly as we could we passed on down the river, where we encountered great difficulties, passing over fallen trees, and climbing over big rocks, not knowing what moment we would meet another band of Indians. We walked for about three hours. The sun had gone down, and it was dusk. We sighted fires ahead of us, but not knowing whether it was Indians or white people, we approached very cautiously. To our great joy, we found it to be some of the [forward part of the] train of emigrants.

Of course we were very tired, but we never thought of sitting down to rest while waiting for the coming of our wagons, but began gathering wood for the fires for the evening meal. It

was well that we did, for it was after dark when father's wagons arrived.

We never told any of our experiences to our mother until after we arrived in Oregon, for she was a very nervous woman. She rode in the front wagon with father, never knew where we were half the time, and seemed to think we were able to take



AN ELDERLY SIOUX, AND WIGWAM INTERIOR.

care of ourselves, but I am sure the good Lord watched over us, and saved us from many dangers.

We traveled along the banks of this river for about a week; there was plenty of food for the stock, and as the country was level, we were able to travel much faster than before.

Many times we saw quantities of fish, and wished we could catch them, for we were getting very tired of ham and bacon, so father promised us when we came to a certain place on this Salmon River (so called from the beautiful fish found in it), that we could have all the fish we wanted. Father sent two men ahead to select a good camping place, and to catch fish for our evening meal.

When we arrived, the men had great quantities of fish caught, and were cleaning them and laying them aside on the grass. It seemed to me that there were enough fish for a hundred people, but the men said they were hungry, and would I please cook them all. As soon as the stove was up I began frying, and by the time the table was set, and all the other things ready, I had a large dish pan full of browned fried fish, and every one was eaten.

Our "dinner table" was big as all out doors. We had a white oil cloth about four yards long which was always cleansed after each meal and rolled on a pole. My sister Hasselton, whose duty it was to arrange the table, often had difficulty finding a level place to spread it. When it was ready, I placed the pan of fish in the center and called the men to supper. This night they did not need to be called twice but kicked up so much dust kneeling in their places around the "table" that I think the old adage about eating a peck of dirt was fulfilled right there.

After we had journeyed the entire length of what is now the state of Idaho, we arrived in the northwestern part where the Salmon River empties into the Snake. There we found a large "ranchero," of Indians drying their supply of winter fish. We camped about a quarter of a mile below the Indians, as father decided this would be the better place to cross over the Snake because the banks were so low here that it would lighten the



A PAIR OF SOLDIERS RESTING BESIDE THE TRAIL.

work of loading the boats. The next morning we heard a very strange noise coming from the Indian camp, and one of our men went up to investigate. He soon came back and told us girls to come quickly and see the burial of a squaw that had just died. We needed no urging, for so many of our days went

colorlessly by. We hurried along, only stopping a moment as our mother called out a warning not to stand too close, for the Indian might have died with some contagious disease. The squaw was lying on the ground in her wigwam, with her friends all gathered around making the most gruesome noise I ever heard. We learned afterward that they called it singing. It was the tradition of this tribe for each one of the dead squaw's family to throw themselves upon her dead body, then run and jump in the river, swim around for a while and then show themselves on the bank, presumably free from the evil spirits. After all the older members of the family had gone through this performance, they brought the dead squaw's little babe and laid it on its mother's breast; then a man, I suppose it was its father, took it in his arms and went under the water several times. As the babe was very young we felt sure it would soon join its mother in the "Happy hunting ground."

When we returned to camp, all was confusion getting things in shape to cross the river. My brother Cicero now had



SNAKE INDIANS, UTAH TERRITORY.

charge of the stock. In crossing, great care must be taken in the selection of a place, and if possible to cross where there were shoals, for there the river would be wider, but not so deep. Our stock were so poor now that they would often drift up against a rock, and men on horseback would have to use ropes to pull them back into the water. It was a very long tedious task, and when finished, men and stock would both be almost exhausted.

When we came to a river too deep to ford we used a boat that father had had made in St. Louis, which served both as a wagon bed and a boat. This boat was both caulked and pitched on the bottom, making it water tight.

To get our things across, every wagon had to be taken apart, and all the things unpacked and repacked, but through it all I heard no word of grumbling. My mother and youngest sister went over on the first boat so they could guard the things on that side, for the Indians would steal them if left unprotected. Sister Mary and I were left on the other side to protect our things there; of course there were other people there, but all looked after their own things.

Sister Mary had not been well since she had had the cholera, and this day she had a return attack. I waited on her all day giving her medicine as often as I dared, but the cholera medicine had laudanum in it, and it was dangerous to give it too often. As the afternoon wore on we found ourselves the only ones of our party left on that side of the river. As we were waiting there by the running gears of the last wagon to be taken over, a couple of men came up and one of them said, "This is a good wagon I will sell it to you," and as sick as my sister was, she jumped to her feet and said, "This is my father's wagon and he is now coming for it."

The man just smiled and said, "Well I guess this isn't mine either."

We heard afterward that he claimed all the wagons left on that side of the river and sold them as his own. Wagons would often be left behind as oxen would either die or become too poor to haul them, and as we were getting nearer to our desti-