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A  
**NARRATIVE**

OF THE

**CAPTIVITY OF MRS. HORN,**

AND HER TWO CHILDREN,

WITH

**MRS. HARRIS,**

BY THE

**CAMANCHE INDIANS,**

AFTER THEY HAD MURDERED THEIR HUSBANDS AND TRAVELLING COMPANIONS;

WITH A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE

**Manners and Customs of that Nation of Savages,**

OF WHOM SO LITTLE IS GENERALLY KNOWN.

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Time and distance might efface,  
To some extent, the ill that's past;  
But while she weeps her *captive* boy,  
Her bitterest cup of woe shall last.

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**ST. LOUIS:**

C. KEEMLE, PRINTER, 22 OLIVE ST.

1839.

WARRANT

PROPERTY OF MRS. HORN

AND OTHERS

1850

MRS. HARRIS

1850

CAMBRIDGE THE INDIAN

THEY HAVE BEEN FOUND IN THE HOUSE OF MRS. HARRIS

AND OTHERS

PROPERTY OF MRS. HARRIS

AND OTHERS

THEY HAVE BEEN FOUND IN THE HOUSE OF MRS. HARRIS

PROPERTY OF MRS. HARRIS



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## PREFACE.

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IF the sympathies of human nature need an incentive to commiserate the woes of suffering humanity it may be found in the following narrative, as the reader follows the young and interesting wife and mother, through a variety of the most painful vicissitudes, from the great metropolis of the world to the city of New York, and from thence to the Rio Grande, and through a trackless wilderness to the scene of her slaughtered husband and companions, in the solitary wilds of Texas; and then, as she weeps over her orphan babes, herself a lonely exile, as through the tedious hours of many a wearisome night, bound in every limb with cruel cords, and laid upon the naked ground, she listens to the heart-rending cries of the babes of a murdered father for water to cool their parched tongues, and for a morsel of bread to sustain their feeble frames;—while she is rigidly held a captive slave by merciless savages, who exult in the agonized feelings of a widowed mother's heart, as they tear from her the dear objects of her tenderest and undying solicitude, and shut them up forever in the deep and horrible recesses of Pagan darkness, and doom her (for ought that appears,) to spend the remainder of a miserable existence in recounting scenes, which, though impossible in the nature of things, she would be glad to forget.

With the wreck of her beloved family she was stripped of her earthly *all*, which was embarked with them in the exploring and intended settlement of a new country. She now wishes to return to her friends in England; and one object to be secured in this publication, is thereby to obtain the means to enable her to return to the land of her nativity, and, also, to reinstate her, in some measure, in the possession of means for a comfortable support; and the public have hereby respectfully presented to them, the opportunity of contributing, in the purchase of this book, to the relief of the widowed stranger, who seeks their aid in this way, in preference to any other.

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E. HOUSE.

From several considerations, the subject of the following narrative could not be induced to write it herself for publication; and, therefore, as to the *facts* of the same, the writer had to serve as her amanuensis. Accordingly, the simple narrative of events is her own, and it is hoped, that the reader will find no more of dress than the nature of the subject seemed to call for. As to the *matter* and *manner* of the language employed, the reader must form his own estimate. The writer claims no meed, but that of having faithfully recorded the truth, as he has obtained it, and that from a source in which he reposes the most entire confidence. In confirmation of this, Mrs. HORN permits her own proper name to be appended.

SARAH ANN HORN.





## NARRATIVE, &c.

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I WAS born in the town of Huntingdon, about sixty miles north of the city of London, England, of poor, but pious parents, of the name of Newton. My father died when I was three years of age, leaving my mother a widow with ten children, of whom I was the youngest. We were all of us children brought up strictly to habits of industry, under the fostering care of our mother, under whose guidance and protection, by a superintending providence, in connection with the kind efforts of my eldest brother, we were respectably raised to a state of maturity. Our dear mother taught us, at an early period in life, the principles and practice of our holy Religion; and to her precepts and examples, in connection with the operations of the Holy Spirit upon my heart, I attribute the sustaining grace which alone could have supported me through the painful vicissitudes of the eventful history I am about to record.

My early life furnishes little, in addition to the above, out of the ordinary course; though in my isolated condition, a comparison between my early and later history wrings my heart with indescribable sensations.

At the age of eighteen, I was united in the bands of holy wedlock to Mr. John Horn, on the 14th day of October, 1827, at St. James' Church, Clerkenwell, London. My lamented husband proved to be all that my fond heart had anticipated, and under God in him centred my fondest hopes. We settled in Islington, No. 2, Moon, St. Gilsom Square, London. My husband was well established in the mercantile business in a small way; and here I spent the first and happiest part of my wedded life in the society of my dear mother, who lived with me 'till her death, which took place about three years after my marriage. She died in great peace of mind, on her birth-day, aged sixty-six years. On the afternoon of

the day of her death, and about an hour before that event, she called me to her bedside, and expressed the most triumphant anticipations as to her future state, and manifested the most tender solicitude for the well-being of my two little sons, the youngest of whom (sixteen months old) I held in my arms at the time;—my eldest was fifteen months older—John and Joseph. The public mind at that time was a good deal agitated with the idea of emigrating to America to better their condition in life, and among the rest my husband made up his mind to emigrate. He was at first desirous of leaving me and our little ones behind, till he should cross the water and seek a home for our future residence; but, as I had the liberty of a choice, I could not, without a painful sacrifice of feeling, consent to be left behind; and the state of my health was such, that it was thought, that to cross the water might be of service to me. We concluded, therefore, to bid farewell to our friends, and seek a home in the new world.

Having settled our affairs, on the 20th of July, 1833, we set sail in the ship Samuel Robinson, Capt. Chriswold, bound for New York. We had a pleasant passage and arrived at our port of destination on the 27th of August, all well, and my health much improved. We took a residence in the city, I think, at 237 Madison Street. My husband concluded to spend some time in this place, that he might be enabled to look about, and make up his mind as to his future movements with reference to a permanent home. He soon obtained a clerkship in a respectable house kept by Mr. John McKibin, and here we remained till November, 1834.

About this time, there was much said in the public prints, and otherwise, concerning the new Republic of Texas, and great inducements were held out to obtain settlers in that country. A Dr. Beales, of New York, was much interested in raising a colony to settle on the Rio Grande, in order to secure a title to a large tract of land, which, it appeared, if not settled by such a time, was to revert back to the government; and, as an inducement to settlers, they were offered 137 acres of land, and a town lot to build on. Let it be observed, the colony was to be planted on the Rio Grande, (Big

River;) and, also, that this, in that direction, was the extreme point of safety from the Indians.

Whatever may be the views of many with regard to a superintending Providence, I think it proper in this place to state something of my feelings, with regard to our going to Texas, in connection with circumstances which occurred on the eve of our starting for that place. From the first time the subject was talked of, and notwithstanding all the fortitude I could command, my mind was a constant prey to the most distressing apprehensions. An undefinable sense of affliction seemed constantly to haunt my imagination, and, in order to quiet my feelings, my kind husband offered to procure me a passage back to England, to remain with my friends until he should fix upon a permanent home, and then come and take me to it; but to this kind proposal I was reluctant to consent. I felt that he was my greatest earthly treasure, and that if there were dangers in his path, it accorded with the feelings of the heart I had given him with my hand, to share them with him, and, with his consent, I made up my mind accordingly. Previous to leaving New York, I dreamed, three nights out of four, that I was greatly distressed with the care of two infant children, which, by some means unknown to me, were confided to my protection. I could not recognize them as my own. I thought them very beautiful. They gave me a great deal of painful anxiety, but I could get no one to assist me in my charge. At length, I thought I saw two of my sisters, Mary and Eliza, and I called on the latter to assist me to take care of the babes; but, without seeming to notice me, she turned away from me, saying, they were mine, and that I must take care of them myself. I then called on my sister Mary, and she gave me the same answer. On looking round, I discovered a small bed in a corner, upon which I laid one of my children, and, while doing so, I thought it the most beautiful creature I had ever beheld. I then took up the other, and nursed it from my right breast, and while it was still at the breast, I went to the bed to look after the one which I had laid down, and its beauty had departed; it appeared naked and extremely filthy, as though it had

been dead for some time. The other was still nursing upon my right breast, and the milk was flowing in such abundance from my left as to cause a dreadful chill throughout my whole frame, with which I awoke. Such a dream, and repeated three nights out of four so circumstantially, to say the least, was very singular!

There were a number of circumstances at the time of our leaving the city, which, if not indeed ominous, but too well accorded with the feelings of my heart, whenever I contemplated a settlement in Texas. The first load of furniture we sent to the Battery to be shipped on board the vessel, the horse took fright, ran furiously, and did much injury to the goods and himself—an occurrence that was unaccounted for by his owner, and quite singular to those acquainted with the animal. The next day we sent another load, when a tremendous fall of rain came on with terrible thunder and lightning, and the poor horse broke through the dock, (the first occurrence of the kind,) and it was with much difficulty that he was saved, being badly injured. I had, also, a favorite article of furniture destroyed.

Our arrangements being completed, we set sail for the land of promise on the 11th of November, 1834, in the schooner Amos Wright, Capt. Munroe, and instead of arriving at Texas, as we had been told we should, in twenty or thirty days, we were about five weeks in getting to Copano, and then we were about two months and a half travel from the place of our destination. Before we could proceed farther, we had to procure ox-teams from a distance of fifty miles. This, with other preparations, consumed the time from the 16th of December to the 1st of Jan., during which interval a large company of us spent our time in tents, and fared very well upon game and fish, with which the land and water abounded. On the 1st of January we had got all things in readiness, and started for the Rio Grande. We had a large company destined for the same place, who were from different parts of the world. We had proceeded but a short distance, when the wagon in which I was placed, with my children, broke down. I was then placed in another, and, at a few yards from the first, the se-

cond broke under me, when I was removed to a pleasure carriage, which in a short distance also broke, so that it could be got no further—and all this occurred within the distance of one mile! From the disasters above related, they called me the unlucky woman.

We travelled about two miles the first day; one-half the distance I rode on horseback, and two gentlemen carried my children, as my husband had to remain with the wagons. We had to go this distance to obtain wood and water. It took the next and a part of the following day to repair the wagons. In the after part of the day we travelled about three miles, crossed the river Luna, and encamped for the night. The next day we made six miles, which brought us to a settlement, called "Austin's Colony;" here we encamped two days. This was a very unhealthy place, settled mostly with Irish, numbers of whom died with the ague and fever. They endeavored to persuade us to go no farther, and to settle with them; alleging, that if we went farther, the Indians would kill and eat us. On the afternoon of the day of our arrival at this place, four of the men of our company went out to hunt, and their not returning at dark alarmed us very much. We had fires burning, and a large bell hung upon a tree and rung all night. The next morning, however, they came in, all safe, having lost their way. From this place we travelled slowly, until we came to a settlement, about forty miles distant, called La Piedad, composed solely of Spanish people, who had never seen an English woman. Our appearance among them excited great curiosity, and crowds of them flocked to gaze at our persons. These people also warned us not to venture farther into the interior, for fear of the Indians. They gave us to understand, that various parties of them were constantly on the watch to surprise and take the unwary traveller.

From La Piedad we proceeded to Bahia, where we remained about two weeks; our teams were worn down, and we were obliged to procure others. To this people, also, we were a new thing under the sun, they never having seen any English females before. They were permitted to indulge their curiosity from six in the morning till six in the evening, and then were made to retire, for

fear they might be disposed to indulge their propensity to plunder, for which it seems they have a great inclination. We had to keep strict watch every night for fear of Indians, and the Spaniards we regarded as very little better.

We crossed the river from this place into San Antonio, about five miles from which place we came to the spot where the unfortunate Mr. Smith, a gentleman from the United States, had been attacked by a party of Indians, and lay by the road-side weltering in his blood. One of his Spanish guides had been killed in the struggle, and two more were so badly wounded that they were barely able to crawl to San Antonio and inform the people of the melancholy affair. Dr. Beales, to whose colony we were going, and who travelled with us, gave him every assistance in his power, both as a physician and friend. Poor Mr. Smith, though much exhausted by the dreadful struggle and the loss of blood, was still able to converse, and gave us an account of the whole affair. He and his three Spanish guides had fought for their lives, against vastly superior numbers of Indians, for about three hours; one of his guides was killed on the ground, and the two others were, perhaps, mortally wounded. The Doctor extracted a number of balls and slugs from the body of the sufferer, and, having dressed his wounds, sent him to San Antonio, where, I afterwards learned, he died.

The horrible scene just related but too well accorded with the forebodings of my heart. I felt, indeed, as though I was hastening onward, if not to death itself, to some indefinite scene of misery, the anticipation of which is only second to the reality. I looked upon my dear husband and our sweet little babes, with feelings which none but an *anxious* mother's heart can fully realize. At the distance of about thirty miles we came to Presidio, at which place we staid several days. The Spaniards here were very kind to us. They were much employed in fishing in the Rio Grande; upon the margin of which some of our young men discovered and killed a large bear. It was very fat, though it had three young ones, which the men caught and tamed. I preserved some of the

oil in small empty bottles I had with me, but I little knew to whose use it would be applied.

We were now near the spot where the colony expected to settle, but by some means the place of our location was changed, and we had to go thirty miles farther into a wilderness, infested with savages. The Spaniards whom we had employed to conduct us thus far were so fearful of the Indians, that they would not cross the river; nor could they be induced to permit their teams to do so. By this means we were under the necessity of sending a part of our goods at a time, and a part of the company had to go with the teams, and a part to stay behind, till the others should go and return. But in a divided situation we were too much exposed to the Indians, and we had to send a number of our company back with the returning Spaniards, to San Fernando; and not being able to procure government troops, they raised a company of volunteers. These, some fifty or sixty in all, were divided—a part went to guard the teams, and the rest staid with us who were left, until they returned. Our men caught an abundance of excellent fish from the river, but in this employment my husband came near losing his life, and was only saved from a watery grave by the timely aid of one of our soldiers, and but for which he might have been spared the cruel death which awaited him.

Our teams returned in about two weeks. The rest of us set out and arrived on the sixteenth of March, at the place of our destination, about four o'clock in the afternoon.

Our men selected a spot for safety from the Indians, in the midst of a thicket, and having cut out the brush, commenced erecting our tents. The day had been pleasant, with a little brisk wind; but at this time it had become cloudy, and before our tents were completed, it began to rain moderately, which soon increased to a torrent. Before the sun was set, it was so dark that we could scarcely see to do anything; the thunder and lightning, with the dreadful wind and rain, was altogether awful indeed. My husband had as much as he could do to keep our frail habitation erect. Indeed it was blown down once or twice, and it was all we could do to re-estab-

lish it. I stood nearly the whole of that fearful night ankle deep in water, and held bedcloaths over our babes to screen them as much as possible from the raging elements. But he who maketh a way for the lightning of the thunder preserved us in safety, and by his inscrutable, but just providence, reserved my dear family for a more dreadful fate.

Near this spot our cabins were built in the following manner: our men, about forty in number, cut away the brush in the centre of a large thicket, and piled it up so as to form an almost impassible hedge around a space sufficiently large to contain all our dwellings. This precaution was to guard against the Indians. In these rude habitations we remained during our stay in the colony, and near to which each man selected a piece of ground on which to plant his crop. But we could obtain little or nothing from the soil without irrigating it; and after the most unwearied toil, our incessant labor was repaid with a meager harvest. The ground in many places was literally covered with salt. We dug a number of wells, but the water for domestic use had to be brought about half a mile. The soldiers continued to be our guard by night and by day, during our stay at this place. Our corn bread cost us from three and a half to four dollars for a Spanish measure of about a bushel and a half; our coffee a dollar per pound; sugar could be had at San Fernando by the barrel for 6 1-4 cents. We remained in this place from the 16th of March to the 8th of March following. From April to September, the heat was so intense that we were obliged to keep within doors every day from twelve to three o'clock, and the flies and mosquitoes were continually distressing us as soon as the evening shades came on.

The whole colony were at one time greatly alarmed for the fate of a little boy, about seven years old, who had the care of some goats, while his elder brother came in to breakfast;—on his return the little one could not be found, and for two days and nights in succession, the soldiers and all who could be spared were on the search. Our great bell was taken out and hung on a tree, and rung night and day; but one fearful apprehension chiefly pre-



vailed, and that was, that he had fallen into the hands of the savages;—the poor mother was frantic with grief. All our searching, however, was fruitless. and after having been out, and lost, for two days and nights, the little creature struck the path which brought him home. The joy was general, but that of his almost distracted parents, and especially that of his mother, cannot be written.—Truly! “The mother’s heart, doubled in wedlock, multiplied in children, stands but the broader mark for all the mischiefs that rove promiscuously abroad, and widens and dilates to wide dimensions its sad capacity of pain.”

We learned from gentlemen, that the cruel disappointment we had sustained in not obtaining our location according to promise, and in being taken into the wilderness thirty miles, where we were increasingly exposed to the arms of a savage foe, was thereby to induce a more speedy settlement and increase the price of the land. We had been told, that the soil would repay the husbandman with two rich crops in the year; but after all our toil we could not get even one that deserved the name. We had also been told, that the Rio Grande was navigable, so as to answer the ends of commerce; but this was equally unfounded in fact, and it was ascertained satisfactorily that art could not make it so.

These things, in connection with the danger of our being murdered by savages without a moment’s warning, induced some of our friends to leave the colony. Among those who left, were four families and a number of young men; myself and my eldest child were sick at this time with the ague and fever, or we should have left with them. About this time a circumstance occurred, which, though somewhat ludicrous in its origin, was in the issue of serious moment. A young man of our colony had manifested great courage with regard to the Indians, and boasted much of what he would do in case of an assault. He kept two guns loaded by him almost wherever he went. A number of men, with the wife of one of them, entered secretly into a plot to test his courage. They had taken the precaution to load his guns with powder only, and in the morning he took them as usual, and went to a creek some

distance off to fish. The five men then disguised themselves, and soon discovered themselves to him in the bushes as though they were endeavoring to keep out of his sight; upon which he was so much alarmed, that, instead of discharging his guns, he set out to jump across the creek, and nearly ruined one of them, falling in about the midst of the stream. The noise soon reached the camp, and as none of us, except the woman above mentioned, knew anything of the cause of the alarm, we were all dreadfully frightened. Strange as it may appear, the woman who knew all about it was loudest in her exclamations, expressing her great fears that the Indians had killed him. We were however soon let into the secret; but from that hour the poor young man was ruined! He never afterwards seemed to be himself while we remained together; and I afterwards learned, that he went wholly beside himself, and deeply did I deplore his misfortune. On our way to this place, we had been under the necessity of leaving some of our provisions in the Mission house belonging to the Catholics at Austin's colony, and when we sent for them, we were informed that they had been stolen, and we never got them.

Little else but a series of misfortunes and disappointments had attended us from the moment we set out for this strange land.—The soil was so indifferent, and there were so many embarrassments in the way, that my husband did not think the hundred and thirty-seven acres of bounty land worth the cost of survey, and he never located it.

About this time a scene of savage barbarity occurred about forty miles from us, which tended greatly to enhance the darkness of the gloom that pervaded my troubled mind. There was at the place a farm improved by a company of men; there were seven in number, two of whom had left for the settlement in the afternoon, when a party of the Camanche Indians came to the house, and asked for a sheep for their supper, which was granted them. In the morning they returned and asked for another, which was refused them. They then commenced the work of death, and in a few moments the five men and a boy lay dead, as they supposed, upon the

ground. They took off the scalps of the six from the head as low down as the ears, and having collected what plunder they could, they departed. The next day the two men returned, and having seen what was done, they set out immediately in quest of assistance with which to pursue the foe. On the same evening they returned with a company of soldiers, when it was discovered that one of the men was still alive, though shockingly mangled. His sufferings must have been indescribable, having remained upon his face, his bare skull exposed by day to the heat of a burning sun, and otherwise dreadfully wounded. They took him to San Fernando, 20 miles, where, with the loss of an arm, which was amputated, he recovered. He said, that the savage who took his scalp, after he had made the incision round his head, stood upon his shoulders and tore it from him as he would the skin from a slaughtered sheep.

This intelligence served to hasten us in our deliberations, and we made up our minds to get to Matamoros, and sail for England as soon as possible; but the route from where we were to any harbor was fraught with danger from the savage foe;—no one thought of undertaking the hazardous enterprize alone. We therefore made up a company of eleven men, only two of whom had families—a Mr. Harris, and my dear husband. At this time the bloody Santa Anna was ravaging the country with fire and sword, and was no less a terror to us than the Indians. He was carrying on a war of extermination against the Americans; and in order to keep out of his way, (he being now quite near us,) we took a circuitous route and went to San Patricio. For several days we travelled without any road. The first day we proceeded about eight miles, and encamped for the night, where the cries of the wild animals but too well accorded with the awful sensations which crowded my anxious mind. Thousands of miles from the land of my birth; thwarted at every step in our endeavors to find a home for ourselves and little ones; in a strange land, the theatre of blood and carnage, my poor heart almost sunk within me. But hitherto the good Being had protected me, and I tried to com-

mend myself and family still to his fatherly protection. The next day we progressed in safety, but quite slowly, procuring plenty of game for our subsistence. On the third day, a wheel of one of our wagons gave way, and we were detained some time in repairing it. We then proceeded on till we came to the Rio Nueces; here we stopped several days to recruit our oxen. By the side of this river we came into the road leading to San Patricio. Both before and after we came into this road, we could distinctly hear the guns of Santa Anna's men in pursuit of their game for meat, and the voices of the men as they were driving their teams. On the margin of this river we saw plenty of buffalo and wild horses; the latter were the most beautiful creatures I ever beheld. As they approached the river to drink, the dams with their little sprightly colts were an interesting sight. We left the river the 2nd day of April, and made some ten or twelve miles, and then encamped for the night. The next day we travelled as usual, and on the 4th started quite early, in order to reach a large lake which was said to contain an abundance of excellent fish, and where it was stated some Americans had recently killed an alligator. We arrived at the fatal spot about one o'clock in the afternoon.

It should have been stated before, that Mrs. Harris, the only female companion I had with me, was of feeble health, with a babe about three months old, and very much afflicted with broken breasts; in consequence of which, her babe, a sweet little girl, was almost constantly in my arms. We had turned out the teams to feed—some of the men were cooking dinner (from a fine deer)—some were fishing, and others fixing their guns, and reading. Mrs. Harris was a short distance off, gathering some wild fruit, and my husband was sitting on the ground near me, with our little sons. He had got some of the teeth of the alligator, and was making holes through them with a gimblet, in order to suspend them about the necks of the children to please them. I had just washed Mrs. Harris' babe, and as I was stepping up on the fore part of the wagon to get a clean dress to put on it, I saw a large company of strange-looking men mounted on mules, armed, and nearly na-

ked. I was terribly frightened, and running back to my husband as soon as possible, told him what I had seen, and expressed my fears that they were Indians. He looked up in my face, and, smiling, said he thought there could be no danger, and wished me to dress the babe that I held naked in my arms; but while he was speaking the Indians came in sight, and the work of death had commenced. The first thing I perceived, an arrow had found its way into the breast of one of our men standing by my side. He drew it out with his own hands, when the blood flowed in a stream, and he fell on his face and expired. By this time our little company was falling in every direction. I flew to my husband, who was standing a short distance from me with our children, one on each side, holding them by the hand. I still had Mrs. Harris' babe in my arms; she being a short distance off, and dreadfully frightened, had hid herself in the bushes. As I approached my husband, I caught hold of my little Joseph by the hand, and by this time the Indians were in the midst of us. They instantly tore me and my children from my dear husband, when one of the savages struck him on the back of his head with a double barrel gun, and he fell to the ground upon his face. I saw him draw his arms up under him, and raise his head once from the ground, when he uttered a deep sigh, and the mortal agony was past with him forever. My children were much frightened, as may well be supposed; but neither they nor their wretched mother were permitted to linger near the scene of their murdered father, as the Indians immediately conducted us to the wagon. By this time they had found Mrs. Harris, and led her also to the same spot, where I gave her her babe. My dear little children were frantic with grief and fear, while I was endeavoring in my distracted condition to do all I could to console them; but the savages took every precaution to prevent me from doing so. They immediately tore the little trembling creatures from me, and producing their instruments of death, showed them, by signs the most appalling, that they would kill them if they went near me. There were between forty and fifty of the Indians, but these were but a small part of the whole

band, as will shortly appear. Having thrown everything out of the wagon, they selected such things as they were disposed to take away at this time. They then placed myself and Mrs. Harris behind two of the party on horseback, she having her babe in her arms, and two of the men took charge of my children.

Thus arranged we left the spot, where, in one short moment, we had buried our fondest earthly hopes; and what was to be my fate, or that of my dear children, I was utterly at a loss even to conjecture; and but for my orphan babes, my heart had been almost insensible to life or death. As we could not understand a word of the language of our captors, so we were unable to learn where they were going, or what disposition was to be made of us. We soon learned, however, that their camp was only about two miles from the place where they found us, and when we had got within about a quarter of a mile of the spot, a scene presented itself that defies all description. We were met by several hundred of their companions, in files of six or eight abreast, who, with the most horrid yells, and varied contortion of body and limbs, expressed their barbarous joy. We were soon conducted to the camp, which was formed in the midst of an almost impenetrable thicket, for the purpose of concealment. Having reached this dreadful place, we were almost suffocated with the stench arising from the stale horse-meat which lay in and about the camp. Here we were seated on the ground, under a guard, when they commenced stripping us of our bonnets, handkerchiefs, combs and rings. They took everything from my children, leaving them as naked as they were born. Mrs. Harris' babe, the reader will recollect, was naked in my arms at the time we were taken, and so it remained, although I begged them to let me put a blanket on it before we left the scene of conflict, which they would not permit. By this time night was coming on, when the Indians partook of the offensive meat of which I have spoken; but they offered neither us nor our children a morsel of anything, though they had plenty of the provisions of which they had plundered us, nor did they ever after permit us or our children to taste of it. Before they laid down for the night, Mrs.

Harris and myself were bound by passing a cord about our ankles and arms, so as to bring the latter close to our sides. In this condition we were placed upon the naked ground, with a blanket thrown over us, and the whole of that dreadful night, my agonized heart seemed ready to burst, as I listened to the cries of my orphan babes, as they called for their murdered father, and for water to quench their thirst; and as though my cup of anguish was not otherwise complete, the mosquitoes, of enormous size, were annoying me at every point, without the use of a single limb with which to defend myself. It is infinitely beyond the power of language to express the horrors of this painfully memorable night. The babe lay quiet till near day-light, when it began to cry with cold and hunger, as its mother's breasts were in such a condition that she had not been able to give it suck, and it had been brought thus far upon food by hand. I had bestowed a mother's care upon it, but had no chance to prepare it any food since the day previous. As soon as we were permitted to rise, I asked the Indians for some flour with which to make the babe something to eat. They said, "yes, it shall have something to eat;" a smile accompanied the reply, and a tall, muscular Indian came to me and taking hold of it, swung it by its arms, and threw it up as high as he could, and let it fall upon the ground at his feet. This barbarous act having been repeated three times, its sufferings were at an end.

The reader will observe, that, as yet, we had eaten nothing since an early breakfast the day before we were taken. As to myself, I felt that I could contain little more of any kind. My heart appeared swollen to an unnatural size within me, and it did not appear to me as though I should ever want food again. The moanings of my dear children for bread and water, would have induced me, had it been possible, to have torn my flesh from my bones to appease their hunger; and freely could I have spared the fountain of my heart, which served to protract a miserable existence, to quench their thirst.

The mules were now saddled, and a string having been tied round the neck of the babe it was hung to the horn of a saddle.—

They then told me to get on it, supposing me to be the mother of the child; but this I refused to do. Its mother was then ordered to get on, but she also refused. They then showed their lances, and threatened to kill us if we did not comply, but still we refused.— One of them, who spoke Spanish, approaching the mule, threw the child from the saddle and told us to get on, when we complied.— My little Joseph (the youngest) cried so incessantly, that, with all their savage cruelty, it seemed impossible to keep him from me, and they placed him behind me, while John (the eldest,) rode behind one of the Indians. We knew not whither we were going, nor the object of our captors.

We had supposed that all of our friends had been killed the day before. Judge of our surprise then, when, after some three or four hundred yards travel, we saw Mr. Harris, and a young German standing before us! Both of them had been wounded the day previous, and as was supposed left dead upon the ground. They were surrounded by a party of Indians who had brought them in, and who had deferred killing them, till, with true savage cruelty, they could torture us with the sight. Mr. H. had a handkerchief bound about his head. As we rode up, he cast an agonizing look at his dear wife and myself, but he uttered not a word. As soon as the company came to a halt, they were very particular that we should look on while they shot them both dead upon the spot.

After this dreadful scene had been completed we commenced our march. We had proceeded but a short distance, before the mule I was mounted on took flight and ran away, throwing me and my child upon the ground, and continued to run till it had disengaged itself from the saddle. A merciful providence preserved me from harm, but my little Joseph was badly bruised on one of his shoulders. They commanded me to pick up the saddle, and to catch the mule and re-place it upon its back. I carried the burthen for some time and made fruitless efforts to catch the animal, but in vain. At length, when I was near fainting beneath my load, one of the Indians came with a rope, and caught him for me, and as I knew not how to put the saddle on, he did it for me.



We travelled the rest of the day in the open prairie;—the men being engaged in catching wild horses to eat. We stopped before night, and encamped in a thicket. A short time after we had got settled for the night, a number of the Indians came in and brought the rest of the things from our encampment. Among them was the meat, and other provisions, we were cooking for our dinner at the time they came upon us, which they devoured before our eyes, without permitting us or my children to take a morsel. When the men came in, I asked them what they had done with the body of the child? One of them replied with a laugh, that he had hung it on a tree. The other said, no, they had tied a stone to it and sunk it in the water.

My dear babes were constantly crying for bread and drink, and not a morsel could I get permission to give them; nor could the inhuman wretches be prevailed on to give them either themselves. Late in the evening they brought me a little water, but the quantity was so small that I gave the whole of it to my famishing babes, and they drank it in a moment, though I was nearly dying with thirst. But what will not a mother sacrifice for the pledges of her love? Having bound us, as on the previous night, the savages retired to rest. Poor Mrs. H. suffered extremely with her breasts. Before our captivity, her husband and myself were able to bestow much attention upon her, but he was now no more, and it was equally out of my power to assist her.

Strange as it may appear, throughout the whole of the dreadful tragedy up to the moment of which I write, I had not been able to shed a tear! It seemed that my heart only beat within me to sustain a sensation of anguish too great for utterance by groans or tears; and that, but for the special interposition of an invisible Almighty power, the very agony of my soul would have proved to be the angel of my deliverance. But this night, as I pondered upon the fate of my dear husband and children, and my own hopeless condition, and felt the iron hand of disappointment with its withering grasp upon my blasted hopes,—at the moment I seemed sinking, if possible, still deeper in despair—the floods

seemed to break, and a torrent of tears came to my relief. Yes! though bound hand and foot, so that I could not wipe the scalding drops from my face, the discharge drew upon the swelling fountain at my heart, and I poured it upon the ground.

And still the ebbing tide of thought flows back,  
And marks how vain are sublunary things.

Oft do I call to mind the dear delights that fluttered round my youthful heart,  
And promised to fill my cup of life with joys perennial;  
But soon the flowers that shed enchanted fragrance in the rays  
Of a perhelion sun, fell on the ground of disappointment;  
Nor could the floods of sorrow which I shed  
Recall to life the withered leaves.

I should have stated before, that the Indians, on their return from our camp, had taken the clothing from the bodies of our friends, and also their scalps, which they had painted and set in hoops. The next morning they visited us early and untied our limbs, so as to permit us to rise, which, after some difficulty, we did. We had heard the noise of the fife and drum for some time before we arose, but could not imagine the cause; we soon, however, learned it. In the midst of the encampment stood a large tree, the bark of which they had stripped off for some distance up, and upon the body of it had painted, in a rude manner, the figure of myself, with Mrs. Harris' babe in my arms; they had also painted her with a hand of each of my children in hers, they standing one on each side of her. It seems they thought her babe was mine, and that my children were hers. They had designated our bonnets and dresses, with the figures on them, very strikingly! The men then formed a circle around the tree, each man holding a stick in his hand, with a string tied to the end of it in the form of a whip, to the end of which was fastened one of the scalps; next to this man stood another holding only a stick, and such was the order of the whole circle. We were then placed in order along with them, and sticks put into our hands. Thus formed, they commenced their music and dancing. This exercise having continued for some time, at a signal given by the chief, they ceased, when those who held the scalps would lower them, and those who held the sticks

would beat them. In this we were compelled to join them—but with what kind of feelings the reader may judge, if he can! This scene continued at short intervals for about two hours.

We remained in this place during the day, while a number of the men went in search of our oxen;—they brought in two out of six. Mrs. Harris and myself were employed, by the command of our captors, in cutting and making our clothes to suit the convenience of the savages. Our dresses were opened so that they could wear them; and among them were some that had belonged to my dear mother, which I had preserved as precious mementos.

This evening we tasted meat for the first time since our captivity. All we had obtained of food kind hitherto, since the morning of the third day past, was a small black-berry, a few of which we could gather now and then from the bushes; but at this time keen hunger had subjected us to a willingness to partake of the horse-meat which they had killed the day before; but by no means could my dear children be induced to taste it, till they saw me do so. The same evening I begged and obtained leave to pay some attention to Mrs. Harris' breasts. I found they had broken and were in a wretched condition. I dressed them as well as I could with the leaves of the prickly pear, and they soon began to mend.

At night we were tied as usual, and laid upon the ground. My dear little children were continually distressing me with their artless cries for their father, and for bread; and to quiet them, I would tell them I hoped we should come to some house to-morrow, where I could get them some bread; but at length they became discouraged, and said, "You keep telling us about to-morrow, and to-morrow never comes *here!*" No pen can adequately describe the keen anguish of which a mother's heart is capable. "But hitherto the Lord hath helped me;" He alone hath seen my affliction, and He alone thus far hath sustained me.

The next day we travelled in the same order as before, only they took my little Joseph from me, and placed him behind one of their boys by the name of Soto. The dear little creature suffered much from the bruise on his shoulder, caused by his fall from the mule

the morning after we were taken, and I was not permitted to do anything for him, nor even to speak to him a consoling word.— In addition to his hurt, he was entirely naked; and frequently, while his skin was burned to a blister, and the boy behind whom he rode so cross that he would not permit him to hold on by him, the little sufferer would watch an opportunity to steal a glance at his almost distracted mother, and tell her of his woes. Every night and morning the little creatures would watch for an opportunity to make their complaints; and their artless entreaties for a morsel of bread, were enough to melt any heart but that of a savage. We stopped early in the afternoon, and the Indians killed our oxen. They then set myself and poor Mrs. Harris to prepare a place in which to cook the meat, the manner of which is as follows: They dig a hole in the ground sufficiently large to contain the fire, and then they put sticks in the ground, on the margin of the hole, so as to bring the tops of them together, and fasten them; the meat is placed on the sticks above, and the fire from the hole beneath cooks it quite well.

Poor Mrs. Harris had much trouble to labor with the affliction of her broken breasts, and her difficulties were not a little increased from the circumstance of her being left-handed. The savages would by no means suffer a poor broken-hearted captive to work with her left hand in the place of the right, and she could do but little with the right; and when in her painful exertions she would use her left hand, they would fall upon and beat her most unmercifully. There was one Indian woman among them, who belonged to the party that claimed Mrs. H. for their prisoner;—she was very small in her person, and I should think not more than twenty years of age; but of all the depraved beings I have seen, (and they are not few,) I think she excelled. She was the unceasing tormentor of Mrs. H. by night and day. I have often seen her take her by the throat and choke her, until the poor unresisting creature would turn black in the face, and fall as if dead at her feet; and then, to finish the tragedy, her cruel master would jump on her with his feet and stamp her, until I have thought her suffer-

ings were at an end. I could speak Spanish, and there were two of the Indians who had been prisoners among the Spaniards in their youth, and they could speak the language; this was a great assistance to me. But my poor fellow-prisoner could speak but few words of Spanish, and which to her was a fruitful source of affliction. They had not the patience to talk to her through interpreters, and blows instead of words were plentifully dealt out to her, as the organ of their communications. But for the affliction I endured on the account of my children, Mrs. Harris' sufferings were greater than mine. We finally succeeded in accomplishing our task, and were suffered to partake of some of our own beef; this was the second time either of us or my children had tasted meat since we were taken, and as yet we had no salt with it.

Until the afternoon of the second day after this, nothing out of the ordinary course occurred, at which time we came to a stream of water and encamped. We were now, as near as I could learn, about the distance of twenty-five or thirty miles from Matamoros, a sea-port town on the Spanish coast. As we approached the stream, some of the Indians in front had crossed it, and as I rode up, I saw some Americans on the other side. As the Indians approached them, I saw one of the Americans stretch out his hand, and heard him say, "stand back! stand back! it is best for you to stand back!" The trees stood so thick together that I could not see what followed; but the report of guns told me, in language which I too well understood, that the work of death was commenced. I could not learn that the Americans had their arms at command at the time. They appeared to have been encamped there for some time, and from what I could learn, they made great exertions to avert the impending storm. But, ill-fated men! their doom was fixed, and in a few short minutes all their hopes and fears were hushed in the silence of death. Some of our men returned from the other side of the stream, and brought with them an arm of a man, which from appearance must have been dead a considerable time, as it was black, and much diminished in size. The Indians said, "it was Tino," (*American*), and quite likely they knew the secret of his

death. About this time some more of the Indians returned, and brought with them a Spanish gentleman, a prisoner, into the camp. He was a very small, delicate-looking man. He was brought in upon his own horse, and divested of all his clothing, but just enough to screen his nakedness. They ordered him to be seated on the ground, which command, with an imploring look, he tremblingly obeyed; upon which his cruel captors began with satanic hypocrisy to profess the utmost friendship for him, telling him he should not be hurt. Their object was thereby to extort from him a knowledge of his place of abode, the number of his family, and the condition of the surrounding country. The captain of the band into whose hands he had fallen, then ordered his clothes to be given him, and asked him if he knew us, Mrs. H. and myself. He said he did not, but said we were "Americans." He told him we were, and that they were friends to the Spaniards, but not to the Americans; that they had killed our men, but did not intend to kill us until they should see Santa Anna. They wished him to tell them all the news of the country, and which I think he did as far as he could. They then asked him if he had a room in his house to lock us up in, as they wished him to keep us a while until they should go and look for more Americans. He told them he had not; that his house was small. They then asked if he could supply them with some bread. He told them he could not. They then broke up the encampment and started for his house; but it seemed that the distance was farther than they had supposed, and they halted a little short of it, and encamped for the night. The poor little Spaniard entreated them to let him go home to his wife and children; but no! his fate was sealed. He had seen the dear objects of his deep and keenest solicitude for the last time.— That night, as he lay down, they shot him with an arrow, which sent his anxious soul to another world. At the moment when I heard the Indians enquire of the Spaniard for a room to lock us in, a gleam of hope flashed across my mind, that possibly such a measure might prove the means of our deliverance; but how soon did the illusion vanish!

The Indians had taken the clothes, horses, and equipage, of the Americans killed at the stream. From what I could learn, I judged that these ill-fated men were a fragment of some army that had fled before the merciless Santa Anna. The number of them I think was five or more, but could not learn exactly. We started early in the morning, and soon reached the pleasant little dwelling of the poor Spaniard. The house was so situated that I am apprehensive that the poor little mother with her babes knew nothing of our approach until the ministers of death had surrounded it; upon which, the savages rushed into the house—and I saw the fatal arrow as it received its commission to take her life. I saw her fall, and they dragged the beautiful form out at the door reeking in blood. They then returned, and stilled the cries of her sweet little babes in the silence of death. The eldest appeared between two and three years old, and the other at the breast. These people appeared to have been above the ordinary class; the man was genteelly dressed, and his wife the same. She appeared to have been making her husband some shirts of very fine linen. She had made two and was at work on the third. There was a large quantity of the same kind of goods found in the house. After plundering the premises of everything they could turn to their advantage, and destroying what they could not, they left the place; immediately upon which they made a desperate rush along the margin of the creek. At first I was at a loss to conjecture what could be their object, but I soon learned the dreadful secret. It appeared that the Spaniard had told them of three more of the supposed refugees, and the Indians were striving who should get to the place first, to secure the plunder. There were two Spaniards and an American. One of them was asleep in a rudely constructed cabin on their arrival; the other two were fishing in the creek. The one asleep, on the approach of the savages, awoke in a great fright, and jumped up and started to run; but his race and his fears were soon ended together by a ball directed by the deadly aim of the foe, and he fell to rise no more. The other two were shot down as they stood upon the bank. As soon as they had finished

their work of blood, they turned out the mules; and here they spent the greatest part of the day. Mrs. H. and myself were employed in making up the linen, taken from the Spaniard's house, into sheets for these wretches to wrap themselves in, and in altering the murdered lady's dresses for them to wear. While thus mournfully engaged, the savages amused themselves by shooting their arrows into the dead bodies of the men they had just slain, and compelled us to look on while they did so, filling the surrounding forest with their horrid yells of fiendish triumph, and cursing the Americans.

I have told the reader that our bonnets and handkerchiefs were taken from us as soon as we were made prisoners; the scorching sun had now burned our necks and shoulders to a blister, and my dear little children, naked as they came into the world, were still worse off. My little suffering Joseph was dreadfully distressed with the bruise on his shoulder, and the hard-hearted savages would not permit me to do the least thing for him, nor would they do anything for him themselves. By this time the flies had blown it, and the maggots were crawling about in the sore, and I had not the privilege of speaking a consoling word, even if I had had one for him. Surely none but my Maker knows what I have suffered on account of that dear child. As though these savages would prove by actual experiment how much a mother's heart could endure, and not die within her, they would let this little piece of suffering humanity lie all the night, after a hard day's travel, with his body burned to a blister and his shoulder being devoured by worms, pleading as for life for a drop of water, as unmoved as the earth on which they reposed! Indeed, revolting as the thought may be to the mother who may read these pages, I can say, in truth, that the love I felt for my dear children, and the scorching anguish of my soul on their account, would have rendered it a matter of heartfelt joy could I have seen them share the fate of their murdered father. At this place they took the child to the creek, washed the sore, and covered it with mud, and he said it felt better. They also put some black paint upon both of them, and I think it was of



some benefit to their sun-burnt frames, as the sun did not burn them quite so severely after it. They put some of the same unction upon me; but the idea of it was so horrible, that I got it off as soon as possible. We left this place late in the afternoon, went a short distance, and encamped for the night in the woods. Here they buried their plunder in order to conceal it until they should return.

During this time we knew not where we were going, or what was to be our fate. In the morning we started on our march, travelling very fast, and crossed a large road—I think it must have been the one leading to Matamoros. Having crossed the road, a number of the men concealed themselves behind some trees, and soon after a gentleman made his appearance. He was tall and stout built, mounted on a fine horse, armed with a gun, and a servant riding a short distance behind him. But, poor man! his days were numbered. Concealed from his watchful eye were his wiley foes, and as he came within range of their deadly aim, they brought him to the ground; upon which, the servant suddenly changed his course and rode for his life. But, vain effort!—in a moment the keen eye of the savage again rested upon his unerring rifle, and the servant slept with his master.

After they had collected their booty from the two murdered men, they continued on the road, and at about a quarter of a mile came to a farm-house, near which was a large pond, and a great many cattle. We stopped a short distance from the place, and a party of the men proceeded to the house, where a fight continued for a long time. I heard the guns in different directions, but was so situated as to be spared the sight. After the fight was over, they returned with two of their men severely wounded. It appeared that they had been worsted, and were evidently afraid of being pursued. They left the road and travelled rapidly until after night; it seemed to me we almost flew. My little John was tied upon a mule behind a man in a company apart from me, and I did not see him until the next morning. For fear of being discovered, they kindled no fires, and it rained all night, incessantly. There was a melancholy coincidence of place and circumstance in everything

about me, which mournfully accorded with the throbbings of my troubled bosom. We had taken nothing to eat since the day before, and it may well be supposed that exhausted nature needed some refreshment—but there was little for poor prisoners in any way. We were still tied closely every night, in order to prevent the possibility of changing our position, to relieve our pained limbs, or defend ourselves from the swarms of musquetoos which were gorging themselves with our blood. At length another wearisome night passed, and with it that portion of affliction with which it constantly returned to me. In the morning my little son John stole an opportunity to get near me, and to tell me, in his artless manner, the tale of his woes. I had the privilege for a few moments of pouring upon the dear object of my keen solicitude a flood of tears, which gave some relief to my swelling heart. We were ordered to get ready to commence our daily toils. Still fasting, we started early and travelled as though life was at stake.—From what I could discover, the Indians were still afraid of vengeance, and felt that it was time for them to make their escape from the borders of the settlements, to their gloomy haunts at the distance of some thousand miles, through a trackless wilderness, and to which we were fated to accompany them. But of this we *knew* nothing. Travelling this day with nothing upon our heads and necks, beneath the rays of a burning sun, and almost famished for water, it seemed, at times, that our sufferings would soon be past endurance. Mrs. H's. breasts were somewhat better, but still her agonies were indescribable. In the afternoon we came to water, and the mules were suffered to drink, but not a drop could I get for myself and children. After watering the mules we continued our route till dark. Here we were allowed to break our fast of two days and nights, upon meat and water, when we were tied and left to our reflections till another day, but the millions of musquetoos rendered rest absolutely impossible.

Early in the morning we again set out, and had proceeded on about two hours, when, (let the reader judge of our surprise, if he can,) we came to the spot where the dreadful tragedy commenced!

Here, in the silence of death, lay the bodies of our murdered friends, alike insensible of the naked condition in which the cupidity of the savages had left them, and of the nameless agony of the bleeding hearts of the bereaved ones that were gazing upon them. It was now about two weeks since the mournful occurrence, and the position in which they had met their fate had only been changed by the savages as they divested them of their clothing; and as though kind heaven would spare us the sight, their bodies had not been in the least mutilated by beasts or birds of prey. The greatest change in the appearance of the slain was their color, which was black, and the parched state of the skin produced by the heat of the sun. Although they had been denied a christian interment, they slept quietly, and were at rest. The different emotions with which the scene was contemplated by the savages, and the tortured bosoms of bereaved friends, can never be described. My dear orphans recognized the body of their father, and the eldest poured upon the spot where he fell a flood of tears. Here stood the wagon stripped of every vestige of iron, and our trunks and boxes lay scattered in broken fragments in every direction. The Indians picked up several things, among which was my cap, which in my fright on their first appearance had been torn from my head by catching in the limb of a tree, and to which it was still hanging. We remained but a short time, and then left the place, to return no more.

At a short distance we came to the spot where Mr. Harris and the young German lay. I had seen them when they fell, the latter falling upon his face and knees—and, strange as it may seem, he still remained in the same position. They had taken the clothes from the body of Mr. H., and why they had not taken those of the young man I could not tell. From here we went to the place where we spent the first night of our captivity, and encamped for the remainder of the day and night; during which time, the reader may well suppose, I had before me a sufficiently fruitful field of painful meditation. In the morning we pursued a different course from the one we had taken on leaving this place the first time.—

We now travelled at a rapid rate for three days, when we reached the place where the Indians had concealed their plunder, near the residence of the murdered Spaniard. This must have been about the 18th of April, 1836. Here the Indians, between three and four hundred, separated into three companies of about equal numbers; and though the day was exceedingly hot, they lost no time in collecting their baggage, and started off as though greatly apprehensive of danger. Mrs. H. was now separated from me.

From this camp we travelled with all possible speed until the middle of June. During the whole of this long and painful journey my cup of affliction was not in the least diminished, but as far as possible augmented. Much of our way was over rough, stony ground, frequently cut up by steep and nearly impassable ravines, with deep and dangerous fords. At one of these last, with high and rugged banks, my little Joseph slipped off the mule into the water, as the creature was struggling to ascend the uneven bank. The boy behind whom he rode was very cross, and would not suffer him to hold on by him. I had just gained the shore, and turning round saw the child in his endeavors to extricate himself from his perilous situation. He had nearly succeeded, when one of the savages, enraged at the accident, stabbed the little creature in the face with his lance, and sent him back into the midst of the foaming stream. The wound was inflicted just below the eye, and was a very severe one. None of them offered the least assistance, but seemed to exult in the scene before them;—but the poor suffering little creature made another effort, and, with the blood streaming down his naked body from his wounded face, gained the shore. On this occasion the feelings of the mother triumphed over every other consideration, and I upbraided the wretch for his cruelty. But bitterly did he make me pay for my temerity, when with true savage dignity he made the child go on foot all the rest of the day and drive a lame mule, with the blood streaming from every part of his naked and lacerated body. When we halted for the night, the savage, seated on his mule, called me to him. As I approached him in obedience to his lordly command, he held his

whip in one hand, and drew his knife with the other. But the deadly steel had no terrors for a miserable wretch like me; I felt that the bitterness of death was past. With his whip he gave me many cruel stripes; but so much keener was the anguish of my soul, than any that even a savage could inflict upon my almost naked body, that his strokes seemed to me of no more weight than a feather. Indeed, I felt recreant to mortal existence, and my soul, desperate with the tantalized affections of a wife and mother, would fain have preferred the most cruel death to life such as mine. But in all my afflictions I have tried to cast myself at His feet whom I have ever been taught to trust and adore, and it is to Him I owe it that I was sustained in the fiery trial. When the savage monster had done whipping me, he took his knife and literally sawed my hair from my head. It was quite long, and when he had completed the operation, he tied it to his own as an ornament, and I suppose wears it yet. At this time we had no provisions, nor had we tasted any for the two past days; and within hearing of the moans of my starving children, bound with cords, I laid down, and mothers may judge, if they can, what was the measure of my repose. The next day the men killed a wild horse, of which we were all glad to partake. The following day we came to a deep, rapid stream. The mules had to swim, and the banks were so steep that we had to get off into the water to enable them to ascend to the shore. We soon came to the foot of a mountain, which, from their being no road through it, was difficult to pass.— When we had reached the summit, we made a halt. A number of the Indians then took my children and returned with them to the stream we had just passed. They were absent about an hour, when I saw them at a distance returning, holding the children up by their hands; and I observed that when they let go of them, which they did several times, they fell as though they were dead. On their arrival at the camp, they were a sight to behold! Their emaciated bodies were enormously distended, and Joseph's face, from the wound he had received, was dreadfully swollen. They were quite insensible for some time, and the water was discharging

continually from their mouth, nose, and ears. The Indians, it appeared, had been amusing themselves by throwing them into the stream, and when nearly drowned would take them out. John was a little more than five, and Joseph less than four years old.

In about an hour we started on our way. The children were so feeble they could hardly sit upon the mules, and Joseph fell off several times, at which the savages were so enraged that they choked him until the blood ran out at his mouth and nose; still I dared not speak to him! When we encamped for the night, and for the first since my captivity, I was permitted the use of my arms when I lay down; but my ancles were still bound together. From this time but little of moment occurred out of the ordinary course, until we arrived within a short distance of the lodges of the Indians, where, all at once, the three companies came together. Poor Mrs. Harris appeared barely to exist. We had indeed a mournful meeting! she said they had not taken any more lives that she knew of, and from this circumstance she had not suffered as much in her feelings as before our separation. Her breasts, though somewhat better, were far from being well, and her health of course was bad; from which cause, and the want of food and water, she must have suffered extremely. The Indians now all travelled together for several days. One day as we were proceeding on as usual, and without the least intimation of anything of the kind, I being placed in the foremost company, happened to look back, when I saw them dropping off in small parties in different directions. With one of these bands were my dear little children, for whom I had already suffered so much, and I never saw them together again. In a short time we reached the lodges of the party that I was with. Here I remained three days, and was then taken to the family of the Indian who claimed me for his captive.

Before I arrived in the neighborhood of the families of the Camanches, they frequently gave me to understand that their women would kill me and burn me up; but I paid little attention to what they said, which I afterwards learned was the best way.—When I reached the residence of my master, I was somewhat

agreeably disappointed. I had supposed, from what I had been told, that I might probably be going to the stake; but, miserable as was my existence, I still chose to endure it for the sake of my dear children. I felt that for them I was willing to live or to die.—The savage female who had become my mistress was an utter stranger to the feelings of humanity. She spoke broken Spanish, and when it was not possible for me to understand her commands, she would fly into a passion, and throw anything at my head that she could lay her hands on. Perhaps the reader will smile at the idea of my becoming a soldier in my deep degradation, but such was the fact. I found, after all I had witnessed of savage courage in contact with unresisting and inferior numbers, that they were the most dastardly cowards, unless they had infinitely the advantage. And when my mistress threw anything at me, I threw it back again, and I found that I fared much better for it. It should have been previously stated, that before I had measured half the distance of the painful journey which brought me to this savage haunt, my clothes were nearly all torn off me, and they gave me one of the Spanish lady's dresses, which I was glad to put on, though it was deeply crimsoned with her own blood. At this time, my clothing was literally in pieces—my shoes and stockings were long since worn out, and the little that was wanting to change me into a Camanche Indian, as to the outward form, was, to strip me of my rags, and clothe me in a single garment of deer-skin—and this was soon done. Here, then, was the once happy English girl—the wife of an affectionate and loving husband! but now, the bereaved and disconsolate widow of the murdered father of her orphan and captive babes!! Truly may I claim myself to be the woman against whom “the floods have lifted themselves up.” But He, in whose hand they are measured; hath been my support.

At every turn my weeping eyes survey'd  
 The deep recesses of the dreadful shade,  
 Where darkness tangible, and unconfi'd,  
 Reigns uncontrolled o'er cruel savage mind;—  
 Where *nature*, sunk in deepest moral night,  
 Makes deeds of fiendish cruelty delight,

And at whose guilty shrine, through circling years,  
 Are pour'd, as offerings meet, the captive's tears:—  
 Where groans are music in the savage ear,  
 And wrecks of fearful homes his daily cheer;—  
 Where sad mementos of my own were found,  
 And still my bleeding heart retains the wound.

I was now set to work to dress buffalo hides. The hair was first to be taken off clean. This was done by placing the skin to be dressed upon a number of others, so smoothly, that no wrinkle should be left in it. The hair was then to be shaved off with a kind of knife, fixed in a bone, and curiously adapted to the purpose. When this was done, I had to dig a hole in the ground sufficiently large to admit the skin, into which water was put in order to soak it. In this hole I had to stand, and tramp the skin with my feet from one to two hours, according to its toughness or tenderness, which depended much upon the age of the animal. This was to soften it until it should become perfectly pliable. It was then carefully stretched and rubbed with the hands, alternately, until it was perfectly dry. The whole process gave me much trouble at first, but I soon became quite an adept in the art. There were three branches of the family in which I lived, residing in separate tents.— One branch consisted of an old widow woman and her two daughters, one of whom was also a widow. The next was a son of the old woman, who claimed me as his property; and the third was a son-in-law of the old woman. In the family to which I belonged, there were five sons, no daughters. It was my task to dress the buffalo skins, to make them up into garments and moccasins; to cut up and dry the buffalo meat, and then pound it for use, and to do all the cooking for the family. I spent a considerable part of my time with the old woman. She was a merciful exception to the general character of these merciless beings, and greatly did she contribute, by her acts of kindness and soothing manners, to reconcile me to my fate. But she had a daughter, who was the very reverse of everything that is amiable, and it was not her



fault that I enjoyed a moment's repose; indeed, she never appeared at ease unless actively employed in inventing some means to indulge her ill humor on me; but, (as though by the interposition of heaven,) it was not long before I had gained the mother's confidence to such an extent, that, in all matters of controversy between myself and this imp of darkness, my testimony was admitted, and the verdict rendered accordingly. Unfortunately for Mrs. Harris, she was far from being as well situated as I was; and, with the exception of what I endured on account of my children, her sufferings were greater than mine. It was with much difficulty that the dear woman could bring herself to the place of a servant to these wretched beings; and possibly, the rigid discipline under which she was held was proportionably severe. She was situated near me a great part of the time during our captivity, and the family in which she lived I knew to be savages in the true sense of the word;—not a single ray appeared to shine upon the dark mass of depravity of which it was composed. Often, as opportunity presented, have we mingled our tears as she exhibited to me the marks of savage brutality, which she will bear in her person to the grave. Indeed, no pen can adequately describe the variegated sufferings through which she passed. She was nearly starved to death; and often has she stole an opportunity to come to me for a morsel of meat, which she devoured raw, with an eagerness that indicated that a little longer abstinence would have relieved her from her woes.

I had been in cruel suspense as to the residence and fate of my dear children about two months, when two little Spanish boys, who were also prisoners, came to the lodge and told me, that a little white boy had just arrived at a place a short distance off, and that he told them he had a mother somewhere in the country, but he did not know where. They asked me if it was not my child?—I told them I thought it was. I soon obtained permission to go and see him—it was Joseph! The little creature was painted black and red; his hair was cut off close to his head, except a small tuft upon the top, and he had wampum on his neck and wrists in the

true Indian style. He saw and knew me at a distance, before I discovered him, and running to me with all his might, clasped his little arms about me, and poured forth a flood of tears. I was allowed to remain with him about half an hour. He appeared well, and said the people treated him kindly. O how swiftly the moments flew! We were, however, soon torn asunder—but I must be excused a description of the parting scene. It was soon past, and his artless cries died in the distance as I returned to my prison, to bewail my miserable lot that I had ever been a mother. It was not the least part of my affliction, that for the most of the time I knew not where my children were; for if I knew one hour, I might not know the next. These Indians are constantly on the move; and it was not until about four months after our separation that I could learn anything of the fate of my little son John, and then it was as I saw him passing at a distance, but could not get an opportunity to speak to him. Soon after this, the Indians were collecting a large company together to hunt buffalo. At this time all the bands were encamped near together, and I was told that my son John was with a party not far from me. I immediately sought and obtained permission to visit him. I found him well; but he met me with a shower of tears, which again wrung my agonized heart. He remembered and recounted the incidents of our past adventures with a precision which astonished me, and gave afflicting demonstration of the excellence of the gem I had lost, the lustre of which was to be obscured in the gloom of pagan darkness! I was indulged in this luxuriant grief about three hours, when I was summoned to return to my camp, to weep over scenes the remembrance of which, contrasted with my present condition, seemed, if possible, to enhance the bitterness of my cup of woe.

I have told the reader that these savages remained but a short time in one spot, and I will here add, they generally live by roving from place to place, and killing and murdering every man and beast that comes in their way, when by so doing they can gain the least advantage. Sometimes we travelled for days together, and at a rapid rate, unless prevented by rain; and then, if they had

them, we were employed in dressing buffalo skins. The women do all the work, and, consequently, I had my full share.

Mrs. Harris was near me at this time, the same suffering creature as usual. It was at this period, a company of our men went out from us on an excursion, and in about two weeks fell in with us again. They brought with them a number of horses and mules; and, as mournful evidence of the manner in which they obtained them, produced five scalps! I judged, from the appearance of the hair, that they were those of the Spaniards. On this occasion they went through with the same ridiculous ceremony of dancing, and whipping the scalps, as before. A short time after this we were visited by some of Capt. Coffee's men, who came to trade with the Indians: these men were Americans. They made every effort to purchase me from the Indians, but they would not consent to sell me. When they departed, they said they would report to Capt. Coffee that we were prisoners; and that if any man could assist us, they thought he could. In a short time after this the captain came to see us, and made every exertion in his power. He spent several days of fruitless toil to rescue us from the hands of the savages. He offered them any amount in goods or money, but all his benevolent efforts were unavailing. He expressed the deepest concern at his disappointment, and wept over me as he gave me clothing, and divided his scanty supply of flour between me and my children, which he took the pains to carry to them himself. It is, if possible, with a deeper interest that I record the above as a tribute of gratitude to Capt. Coffee, from the fact, that, since my strange deliverance, I have been pained to learn that he has been charged with supineness and indifference in reference to the subject; but I can assure the reader that nothing can be more unjust. Mrs. Harris was equally the object of his solicitude. The meeting with this friend in the deep recesses of savage wilds was indeed like water to a thirsty soul; and to part under so gloomy a prospect, seemed to open a new fountain of grief to my agonized heart. It was to me as the icy seal of death fixed upon the only glimmering ray of hope—and my heart seemed to die

within me as the form of him, whom I had fondly anticipated to have been my delivering angel, disappeared in the distance. But infinite wisdom decided that the time for my deliverance had not yet arrived; and when it came, it was under circumstances, which strongly indicate the prerogatives and exercise of a superintending providence.

There was after this a great scarcity of meat in the lodges, and many were nearly starved. My son John contrived to send me a piece of his allowance for fear I was suffering in want, which was the case; and I leave my readers to judge of my feelings, if they can, as I devoured the precious morsel, to protract a miserable existence. Some time after this he came near me with a party of the Indians, and I had the opportunity of seeing him once more. He asked me if I had received the piece of meat which he had sent me, and was much pleased that I had. He said he had been sick, and much afflicted with a sore throat. He staid with me a short time, when, notwithstanding his cries, they tore him from me, and I saw him no more. A few days after, (as I afterwards learned,) an Indian girl, to please herself, had told my little Joseph that his mother was dead, which grieved him much; but soon after I learned that he was encamped near me, and I obtained leave to visit him. I found him broken-hearted from the report of my death, and he was much surprised to see me. He flew to me, and, as far as he was capable, folded me in his little naked arms. The meeting to any but cold-hearted savages must have been truly affecting. Thanks to my Maker! I was permitted to remain with him the greater part of the day. He told me he had changed masters, and that the people with whom he lived were kind to him, and gave him plenty to eat. I learned that his mistress was a Spanish woman, who, with her brother, had been captured by these Indians in childhood, and she had remained with them ever since, having married (as they would call it) among them; and it was no small consolation to me that she appeared of an amiable disposition, and seemed much interested in the care of my dear child. Indeed, it is impossible for me to say how much the above circumstance has seemed to abate

the scorching fever at my heart. My child had been acquainted with her brother (who, as above related, had been in captivity with her,) when he served as a soldier with others to guard the colony, in Texas, where we had resided; and to convince her that he knew him, he showed her how he walked, being lame in his knee: this little circumstance, though trifling in its nature, seemed to introduce him to her favorable notice. I staid until the approaching shades admonished me that I must return to my wretched abode; but the dear object which had brought me to the place, aware that the parting hour had arrived, became absolutely inconsolable, and my agitated bosom once more had to test by woful experience, how much a MOTHER *could endure, and live*. But here the dreadful curtain fell, and I had seen both of the dear objects of my keenest solicitude for the last time;—so much of the painful tragedy had closed, and the scene forever passed.

Some time in the latter part of June, some Spanish traders came among us, and bought Mrs. Harris. They tried to purchase me, but could not; and though I strove hard to see and converse with her before she left, I could not obtain the opportunity, though she was near me at the time. I could not but feel glad on her account that she was released from her sufferings; but I now felt, and that keenly, the truth of the saying, that “misery loves company;” for though our meetings had been “short,” and frequently “far between,” still they had been seasons in which we could exchange sympathies, and mingle our tears, as we unbosomed our sorrows to each other. But now, a lonely exile, in the bonds of savage slavery, haunted by night and day with the image of my slaughtered husband, and tortured continually with an undying solicitude for my dear little ones, my life was little else than a scene of unmitigated misery; and the God of heaven only knows why, and how it is, that I am still alive!

From the time Mrs. H. left us, we were travelling the most of the time for about three months, and during which nothing out of the ordinary course occurred. At the end of this time, (though I knew it not then,) we were within two day’s travel of St. Michael,

in New Mexico, in the Spanish dominions. At this place I was told by an Indian girl, that I was to be sold to the people that lived in houses, meaning the Spaniards. I told her, that I did not believe it, and moreover, that I did not wish to be sold. Indeed, I felt that the only remaining tie (my dear children) which bound me to this wretched planet, was among them, and while this was the case, I infinitely preferred remaining with or near them, to any other condition. But even in this I could not act according to my own wishes; I had still hoped against hope, that I should yet see my children again, and in some way be serviceable to them. But, vain illusion! the line of separation had already been drawn, and the cruel savage was about to consummate the decree that it should never be passed. At this time and place, a great many of the Indians had collected together. The next morning after I had been told that I was to be sold, and at an early hour, the whole company seemed uncommonly engaged in making preparations for their departure. The old lady told me to get my saddle, and see if it wanted any repairs. I requested her to ask my mistress if I were to be sold, and to tell her that I did not wish to be. She said she would do so to please me, but that she knew it was so.—My mistress confirmed it, and the old woman shed tears at the thought of parting with me. She painted my face, neck and arms, with a sort of red paint, which they thus use upon the persons of their friends, as one of the highest tokens of friendship. We got ready, and started early in the morning, and rode hard all day until dark. We encamped near a pond, and where the place was remarkable for the abundance of rocks. There was no wood to be obtained, and faint as I was I could get but a cold bit for my supper, and but a scanty portion of that. We started before daylight, and soon came to a river which we forded, and in a short distance came to a small town on its margin; here we encamped the rest of the day. The people came in crowds to look at us; among them was a gentleman who spoke broken English, and who enquired of the Indians who I was, and whether they would sell me. They told him they intended to sell me. He then said to me, that if he

bought me, he should expect me to remain with him; but as I had no mind to exchange my present state of bondage for a *less* enviable one, I told him I did not wish to make such an engagement. He however brought a couple of horses, as the price of my ransom, but they declined the offer. My mistress asked me which I would prefer to go among, the Spaniards or the Americans? I told her the Americans, and in this she seemed disposed that I should have my choice. The man above named, finding he could not purchase me, told me that the Indians were going to St. Michael, and that there was a gentleman living there by the name of Benjamin Hill; that he was an American, and very rich, and who, he thought, certainly would purchase me. I had now become convinced, that I was to be sold, and my hope was, that I might fall into the hands of the Americans; and the reader may well suppose, that the subject to me, was one of deep solicitude. Accordingly, when we came to St. Michael, which was on the same day, I anxiously enquired of the first person I could speak to (which was an old lady,) if she knew a gentleman by the name of Benjamin Hill. She told me she did. I told her I wanted to see him very much, and would be extremely obliged to her if she would assist me to do so; upon which she kindly set off in search of him, and found him directly, and brought him to me. He asked me if I knew the lady who was recently brought in from the Camanches; I told him I did—it was Mrs. Harris. He then asked me how long I had been with the Camanches. I told him about a year and five months.—He then enquired if I had children with them. I told him I had two. Then said he, “you are the woman that I have heard of,” and added, “I suppose you would be happy to get away from these people.” I answered in the affirmative, when he wished the wretched captive a “good morning,” and deliberately walked off without uttering another word! and my throbbing bosom swelled with unutterable sensations as he disappeared in the distance, and left behind him so painful a demonstration of the withering effect of sordid avarice upon the soul of man. But, thanks to kind heaven the icy heart that beats in the body of Mr. Benjamin Hill, is

among the few, but painful exceptions to the philanthropy of Americans, and which would seem only permitted to exist, thereby to demonstrate the depth of depravity to which some men are capable of descending. Should the reader think the above sentence too severe let him read on, and he may see cause to change his judgment. For two days longer I was kept in painful suspense as to what was to be my fate, during which time Mr. Hill never so much as sent me a morsel of bread, though he well knew that it was not in my power to procure any for myself; but the Spaniards, of whom I was so much afraid, were kind, indeed; and while I was not suffered to stir from my camp, they brought me enough of food and drink; and, to my great mortification, were incessant in their enquiries if I had seen Mr. Hill, and if he was not going to purchase me.

We had continued here until the morning of the third day, when the Indians were preparing to return. Three-quarters of the mules were saddled, and a number of the company had started off, and I had bid (as I thought,) an everlasting adieu to the remembrance of civilization, and to the spot where I had been so cruelly disappointed; and the thought of returning to where I might possibly see my dear children, rendered it by far the happiest moment I had seen since the hour in which I had been made a widow. But in the midst of our hurried preparation to start, a Spaniard came up, and enquired if I was for sale; and on his being answered in the affirmative, he asked who of the company had the disposal of me, and being shown, he told them he wanted to purchase me; but the Indian told him it was too late now, that there was no time to trade, as some of the company had gone. But he showed them four very fine bridles, which he held in his hand, and said his house was near at hand, when they concluded to go with him; but to go to the Spaniard's house, we had to pass Mr. Hill's. My mistress again asked me if I had not rather be sold to an American, and I told her I had. We then went into the store of Mr. Hill, the Spaniard being with us. After some minutes, Mr. Hill sent and had a poor old horse brought up, and which he of-



ferred for my ransom. The Indians looked at the creature, but they were not aware of being under any obligation to Mr. Hill, to *relieve* him of his aged rack of bones; upon which they asked him if he would let them have some of the blue and red cloth which he had in his store; but he was not disposed to trade in their way, and we left for the Spaniard's house. He gave them a horse, the four bridles, two blankets, two looking-glasses, two knives, some tobacco, and some powder and balls—all of which has been estimated at something less than eighty dollars. I subsequently learned, that for my ransom I was indebted to the benevolent hearts of American gentlemen traders, who had authorized this Spaniard to purchase us prisoners at any amount, and had made themselves responsible for the same, and had I the names of my benefactors, I could most freely record them in letters of gold, and preserve them as precious mementos of their truly christian philanthropy; but may they be found in characters of living light, inscribed in the "*Book of life*," in that day when the judge shall say, "I was a stranger and ye took me in, hungry and ye fed me, naked and ye clothed me;"—all this they fulfilled upon me to the letter. The Indians received their pay, and taking from me the buffalo robe which had served me for a cloak, they left me. When I came to St. Michael I expected to meet with Mrs. Harris, but she had left for the States in company with the traders, who had started earlier in the season than usual, in consequence of the war which was raging in Santa Fé between the Spaniards and Indians. They had killed the governor, and the American traders were in constant alarm. Many of them kept their gold belted round them, and their mules saddled day and night, not knowing what moment they might have to fly for their lives. I had been in the country about three months when the war broke out again with renewed horrors, and there were many killed on both sides. I was ready to conclude that I was henceforth destined to live in the midst of scenes of war and bloodshed; but the contest at this time, though sanguine, was of short duration, and I began to hope for some repose from its alarms.

On the evening of the second day of my residence with the Spaniard, Mr. Hill sent a servant with a message to me, to come to his house. The Spaniard being out, I asked his lady what I should do: she intimated that I could do as I pleased; but as her husband was gone, she would rather I would wait until he returned. This was said in hearing of the servant, and he told his master that they would not let me come; upon which Mr. Hill sent him immediately back with word, "that if they would not let me come, he would bring me by force!" I could not comprehend the meaning of this strange affair, and as I knew not where I was in the hands of the Spaniard—that is, whether it was a place of safety or not,—and as the very name of an American, notwithstanding the conduct of Mr. Hill towards me, was associated in my mind with that of safety, I went to his house. He questioned me as to the family of the Spaniard, and of their conduct towards me; I told him I had no complaint to make. The woman had kindly lent me a suit of clothes to put on in place of my deerskin, and for which I felt truly thankful. He then asked me if I understood the laws of the land; I told him I did not. He then said the man I lived with intended to make a slave of me, but that I could live where I pleased. The Spaniard then came in, and a severe quarrel took place between them, with reference to the subject, which resulted in a law-suit the next day, and it was decided that I might go to Mr. Hill's. I remained in his family not far from six weeks, from the 21st of September. From the great interest which Mr. Hill had so suddenly and so unexpectedly manifested on my account, any person less skilled in the art of money-making than himself, would have concluded that the wretched wanderer had at length been conducted to a hospitable retreat, where the Genius of friendship presided, and where the sympathies of a generous soul would have flown out spontaneously in acts of Christian philanthropy;—but no! the withering spirit of sordid avarice was the god, at whose shrine he devoutly humbled himself—and a bill of human rights, drawn in the chancery of heaven, bearing the seal of the angel of mercy, and presented by the hand of suffering humanity, was by

him protested!! And as proof in support of the above awful charge, the reader may be told again, that Mr. Hill was rich in the true sense of the word, and he literally fared sumptuously every day. It had been one of the severest items in my bodily sufferings, that I could get no coffee, nor anything of the kind, that was warm, to take in the morning, during my captivity; and without something of the kind, it can hardly be supposed that I could toil very comfortably for Mr. Hill, late and early, from morning till night; but I did so, and he deigned to give me mush and milk, which I received in the capacity of a menial servant, not being permitted the honor of his table. I labored for him faithfully during the time I staid at his house, and, besides the domestic concerns to which I attended, I made him six fine linen shirts, with full pleted bosoms. I took a very few articles out of his store, for which I more than paid him at his own price, and a very important part of them proved to be damaged goods, and came to pieces in my hands the first time I washed them. At this time I knew not that there were any Americans near me, with the single exception of Mr. Hill. He knew that there were many of them, whose hearts and hands, houses and purses, were all at the command of the suffering captives, even to the loosing of their cruel bonds, and, as far as possible, to the binding up of their wounds; but upon all this Mr. Hill preserved a dead silence. It accorded not with his interest to pour into my soul a drop of the consolation, which a knowledge of the above facts would have imparted. But Divine providence came to my aid, and I accidently learned by a teamster that there were American traders in different directions about me. This information to me was like water to a thirsty soul. I began to hope that I should find some one, who would admit the long-banished daughter of sorrow to a share of the blessings of civilization, and of christian hospitality.

It was not long after I had received the above information that a Mr. Smith, an American gentleman, at the gold mines, sent for me to come to his house, some sixty miles, and provided the means for my conveyance, and protection. I left Mr. Hill and his mis-

tress, though he was extremely unwilling to spare me. I arrived in safety at Mr. Smith's on the third of November, and continued with him till the fourth of March. The contrast between this and the house I had left, exhibited the difference between a servant and a guest; between the cold-hearted policy, that would coin the very tears of helpless misery into gold, to swell a miser's store, and the generous effusions of a heavenly friendship, which, in its eagerness to relieve the woes of suffering humanity, gives sacred indication that its origin can only be found in the bosom of him, "who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich." But notwithstanding all I had done for Mr. Hill, and the very little I had received, (barely enough to enable me to appear with common decency, and that in the cheapest way,) he sent more linen to me to make up for him, at Mr. Smith's, and which I did, and sent it to him, and for which I never received a farthing. Those who are acquainted with the whole circumstances, will see the propriety of being thus explicit.

During my stay at Mr. Smith's, a Mr. Daily, an American merchant, was cruelly murdered one evening, about eight o'clock. His store was robbed of considerable amount, and a reward of one hundred dollars offered for the discovery of the perpetrators. They were soon found, (two Spaniards,) and after a circumstantial confession of the crime, they made their escape. While at the house of this kind friend, I fixed upon a determination to return to the United States, under the protection of the American traders. Bold as the enterprise may appear to my readers, such was the only alternative. I might remain where I was, or cross the territory between Santa Fé and Independence, on the Missouri river, a distance of a thousand miles, without a house! and such was the anxiety of my heart to get to the States, when once I had made up my mind to do so, that I was willing to make every possible

exertion to accomplish the object. But it should be observed in this place, that I had found myself under the painful necessity of abandoning forever the idea of recovering my dear children, unless it should be by some mysterious providence. It would be impossible for me to state to the understanding of my readers, the amount of fruitless toil and suffering endured by men in their noble, but vain, efforts to recover captives from the grasp of these savages. Many lives have been lost in the benevolent enterprise. I am the more particular, because I know it will be said after all, "Why did she not stay with, or near, her children?" To those who have read this book thus far, an answer has been given to the first part of this interrogative, namely: While I was with the savages, and after my children were separated from me, I saw them but twice, and then only one at a time; I never saw them together after they first left me; and secondly, the Indians sold me from them sorely against my will. Over this act of theirs I had no more control, than I had of the savage cruelty that deprived my children of a father. But it may be said, that I might have staid in the Spanish dominions, and where I should have been nearer my children. True, I might have remained there, and a just comparison between Spanish and American or English society, would have given the sum of the sacrifice it would have cost me, (though there are honorable exceptions,) and then I might be just as likely to be within a thousand miles of my children there, as here. Add to the above, that in all that land there is little short of a famine of the "bread of life;" gross moral darkness reigns; Ignorance holds his leaden sceptre over the immortal mind, and priests riot upon the deathless interests of immortal souls! Truly can I record it, "My soul longed for the courts of my God."

In the month of February, I received a present of two dresses, presented by Messrs. Workman and Rowland, of Taos, with a note, bearing their kind respects, and a request, that I should delay my intended journey to the States, until after they should make another effort to recover my children; and further, if I should think it best to go the ensuing spring, that I should by all means

come to Taos in season to spend as much time as I could before I should leave the country; and, at the same time, they gave me to understand, that all they possessed was at my command, as far as my wants should require;—all of which, (with an inexpressible sense of gratitude do I record it,) they performed to the letter. All this was pledged before they had seen the face of the houseless and bereaved stranger! They commended me to the care of a gentleman by the name of Kinkindall, whom they instructed to provide the means, and see that I had a safe conveyance. But friends were multiplying around me, who seemed to vie with each other in their endeavors to anticipate and meet my wants; and other means presented, and I was favored with the company of a lady, and a Doctor Waldo, as my travelling companions. On this journey, the snow had drifted into the way, and much of it was quite rocky. But what a change! we had a road to travel in—houses to stop at, where we could get refreshment—and, when thirsty, I was not afraid to ask for a drink of water;—and all this, added to the society of congenial hearts, which beat in unison with each other's happiness, and on my way to make the acquaintance of more of the same generous mould! On this little journey, there was one, and but one only, living check to my happiness, and that the reader can well anticipate—my children! Sometimes, a moment's suspension of thought might begin to calm the disquietude of my soul, when, alas! the scorching recollection of my captive babes would as soon recall to painful emotion the floods of grief, with which my tortured bosom was daily oppressed.

I arrived at Taos on the 10th of March, and stopped at Mr. Rowland's, and I found him and his amiable lady all I could wish. I spent my time about equally in this excellent family, and that of Mr. Workman, until the 22d of August. Here I learned, that this same Mr. Rowland had sent out a company of men, some time before Mrs. Harris or myself were brought in, to rescue us, if possible; that on their way they were met by another tribe of Indians, when a number of them were killed, and the rest, after suffering severely, returned to the settlement. Mr. Smith, also, and a large

number of young men, obtained a Spanish guide, and set out upon the same benevolent design; but their faithless guide faltered at a great distance from home, and a number of them suffered even unto death for want of food and water. It was said, that some of them killed their mules, and drank the blood, to save their lives.

While I was here, Messrs. Workman and Rowland sent by two trading companies, and at a great deal of trouble and expense, authorizing them to obtain my children at any price. On their return, they informed me that my little son John was no more! and that Joseph could not be obtained by any means but that of force. I was informed, that the little naked creature was set to hold a horse through the night, and the weather turning cold, as was often the case, he was found in the morning, in a sitting posture, chilled to death. My readers, I trust, will not think it strange, when I tell them, that had it been both instead of one, (as I could not get them,) my greatest earthly bliss would have been consummated.

I had been at Taos about a month, when one of the Camanches came into the house of Mr. Rowland. As soon as he came in I knew him, and endeavored not to be recognized by him; but he was not to be put off so easily. He asked me if I did not know him. I told him, I might have seen him. He told me, he had recently seen my children, and that they were well; but he was a base wretch, and I knew him too well to repose any confidence in anything he could say; and, much against his wishes, I declined having further conversation with him.

The government of the United States was addressed on the subject, and in behalf of the numerous captives held by the Camanche nation; but, in answer, we were informed, that they were without the jurisdiction of that government, and that it was impossible for them to act with reference to the subject, however they might be otherwise disposed to assist us, and we were referred to Texas;—but she had enough to do within her own borders. Thus cut off from every present source of hope, with regard to the emancipation of my children, (if indeed they were both alive,) and having every assurance of the best possible efforts of the American traders to

assist me in their intercourse with the savages, I became still more reconciled to the idea of returning to the States; but I must here add, that if anything short of heaven itself could have been to my wounded soul a substitute for the loss of my dear family, it would have been the heavenly sympathies, united with the most untiring exertions of friends, who gathered about me in this strange land. Time shall roll on, and soon my hopes and fears shall be hushed in the silence of death; but as memory shall survive the wreck of this frail tenement, so shall I never forget, that when the angry billows of life's stormy sea, lashed into fury by misfortune's awful frown, had thrown me a trembling victim upon their coast, the American traders took me up—they bound up my wounds—they spake comfortably to me, while their countenances reflected the mild and heavenly beams of the angel of mercy. But such is the impotence of human language, that it can never frame to pronounce the potency of my gratitude. These are the friends, and such the friendship I have sought:

Kind in the sunshine, deathless in the storm;  
 In spite of all, she wears a steady form;  
 Nor changing with the passions' ebbing tides,  
 Sweetly, a fair, pellucid stream she glides.

Mrs. Harris had left for the States before my emancipation, and I was the only female in a large caravan, united for mutual defence, in travelling across the wilderness a thousand miles, to the western boundary of the United States. The most of this tedious way is infested with hordes of merciless savages, who, as opportunity presents, sacrifice the life of the defenceless or unwary traveller; and many have fallen victims to their wretched cupidity. But I felt that now I had but one more life to lose, and should I be deprived of that, it would prove a specific to a wounded spirit, which naught beside could supply.

On the 22d of August, 1838, I bid adieu to the ever dear and kind friends I was leaving behind, and started for the States. I left Santa Fé under the protection of my sympathizing and honored friends, Messrs. Workman and Rowland; and throughout the



whole of our toilsome journey, it accords no less with my happiness, than with my duty, to acknowledge the kindest and most respectful attentions of the whole company.

But Friendship's mildest angel form  
 Can only weep the woes that press,  
 She can't extract the cruel thorn  
 Which goads a widowed MOTHER'S breast,  
 From which the partner of her heart  
 By savage cruelty is torn;  
 And still the keen, afflictive smart  
 She, day and nightly, lives to mourn.  
 But time and distance might efface,  
 To *some* extent, the ill that's past;  
 But while she weeps her captive boy,  
 Her bitterest cup of woe shall last.

The company, as is usual in this inhospitable region, kept a strict watch, by night and day; and, through the interposition of a kind protecting Providence, we arrived safely at Independence, on the last of September; and in six days after, I arrived at the house of Mr. David Workman, (a brother of my kind friend William Workman,) New Franklin, Howard County, Missouri, and beneath whose hospitable roof I have since continued to share the kind attentions of him and his amiable lady. May the blessings of that good Being, who giveth water to him that is ready to perish, continue to rest upon them and theirs.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT  
OF THE  
**Manners and Customs**  
OF THE  
CAMANCHE INDIANS.

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THE Camanches are a wandering nation of Indians of whom there appears to be but little generally known. They consist of, as near as I could learn, two tribes, that speak the same language, and who, with several other tribes, with whom I did not become acquainted, inhabit the extensive territory stretching from the northern boundary of Texas to the Rocky Mountains, and in the extent of which Nature seems generally to have adapted her supplies to the comparatively few wants of the children of the forest, who exist upon her bounty. Indeed, one would suppose, that a tenth part of the toil they endure, in the long and fatiguing marches they are almost continually making, rationally applied, with the facilities of the country they inhabit, would afford them four times the amount of the good things of this life that they now enjoy; but with such kind of estimates, they seem to have no concern. They are a hardy race, and endure the toil and privations, which their unsettled and wandering life exposes them to, with a kind of stoic indifference. But they are not slow to profit by the labor of others beside themselves, whenever an opportunity offers; and it is truly astonishing to witness the pains and labor they will go through to obtain one; and when they have marked their victim, it would seem that nothing short of an interposing miracle of mercy could save him. They literally live by slaying and murdering all of man and beast that come in their way. There are

exceptions in the case of the traders who go among them, and who have learned to anticipate their wants, and to supply them; but woe to the unwary trader that offends them! He seldom, if ever, fails to pay the forfeit with his life. They are trained, from infancy to age, to deeds of cruelty and bloodshed, and are as wholly wreckless of human rights, out of their own circle, as though they held in their own hands the destinies of the universe; and they appear to be alike insensible of obligation to any being in heaven or on earth. I could not, from all the observation of which I was capable, discover that they had any idea of a Supreme Being; nor could I learn that they paid their devotions to any kind of being, unless something of the kind might be obscurely inferred from the following circumstance: In a storm, with thunder and lightning, I have frequently seen them go out and throw dirt into the air, and utter unintelligible sounds; but whether it was designed to express their resentment to, or conciliate the favor of, the Author of the war of elements, I could not determine. Another circumstance induced me to think they might have some notions of a future state. There was a young woman among them, who certainly possessed some traits of character more amiable by far than the most of her race with whom I was acquainted; she sickened and died, when their grief, as usual, was unbounded. I observed to one of the females, that I hoped she was better off than when here;—she smiled, and pointed upwards. The strength of their attachment to each other, and the demonstration they give of the same, even to the dividing of the last morsel with each other upon the point of starvation, might put many professed christians to the blush! But they are just the reverse of all this to all the world beside. They think themselves the cleverest race of men on earth, and treat all others as infinitely inferior to themselves. They have no formal marriages among them. They generally take wives at an early age. Each man is allowed to take five women; but, in making his selection, the ties of consanguinity oppose no barrier; hence they are truly a consanguineous race of so motly a mixture, that it would be impossible to identify the connexions. The distinction, however,

might be less obscure, but for the fact, that with them matrimonial alliances oppose no restraint to promiscuous intercourse. The relation of the women to the men differs little from a state of the most abject slavery. It is impossible to conceive of a more absolute despotism, than that under which the wife is held by her husband in these savage wilds. When they hunt the buffalo, she must carry his gun, and whatever else is to be carried; when he shoots the buffalo, it would be infinitely beneath his dignity to put his hand to it afterwards; she has it to skin, to cut up the meat, and, whatever be the distance, or the difficulties in the way, the poor creature must carry the hide, meat, and all, to the camp, and if it cannot be done at once, she must go and return until it is done. At the camp, she has to do all; to provide the fuel, to fetch the water, to dress the buffalo skins, to dig the grave, and bury the dead. Her lordly master will seldom so much as turn himself, to get a drink of water, or to get his moccasins, or indeed anything he might please to want. In all the above, he speaks, and is instantly obeyed. Never, until I was shut up in the horrible shades of pagan darkness, where the long night of Nature holds her iron reign, did I see and feel the indebtedness particularly of my sex to the precepts of the gospel of Christ! (Would not the publication of it to these poor heathen do them some good? Would not its peaceful and equalizing precepts, help to raise these poor oppressed females, could they be brought to bear upon their cruel husbands?)

In their apparel, they differ little (as I should suppose) from other tribes, unless it be in the mournful fact, that much of it is obtained from those unfortunate individuals, who fall victims to their cupidity. They cut off the hair from the back part of their heads, leaving it in front, the longer the better, and which they divide so as to bring it down from each temple, and to this they fasten any other that they can get, until it nearly reaches the feet. The savage who cut off mine, wore it in this way, and took frequent opportunity exultingly to remind me of it. But their cues with them are indispensable, and if they cannot obtain them in one way, they will in another, and horse-hair answers in the room of better. They do

them up usually in strips of red and blue cloth, carefully winding it closely from the top to the extremity, with the red on one side, and the blue on the other. To a small tuft of hair which they leave behind, is appended trinkets of the most trifling kind, such as old buttons, or any thing that will jingle, and on their arms and fingers they have a profusion of rings of different kinds. Their ornaments are laid aside when they go out to war.

Their treatment of the sick is truly singular. When any of them, whether male or female, is considered to be seriously indisposed, they (the women) take all the grass and every other obstruction from a spot of ground sufficiently large to admit of the construction of two tents together: these are for the accommodation of friends. In the centre of the circle formed by the tent, they dig a hole for the fire, the smoke from which passes through an opening in the top; on the margin of the hole for the fire, they dig a trench in a circular form, and fill it with water. In a direct line from the door across the centre of the fire-place, and between it and the fire, they spread a buffalo skin for the sick person's bed. At the head and feet, and on each side opposite the shoulders, they place small heaps of dirt moulded in the form of a sugar loaf; they then place a larger heap, of nearly the same form, exactly between the one at the head and the side of the tent, and another between the fire and the one at the feet; in these two last they plant willow trees. They then cut a trench, with square sides, and about three feet deep, in a direct line from the door of the tent, and from ten to fifteen feet in length. The dirt taken from this trench is taken to the end opposite or farthest from the door, and thrown into a sort of mound, and a willow tree set in it, and smaller ones of the same kind are placed on each side of the trench, quite up to the door. The friends are then formally invited, when a scene commences which defies an adequate description. The musicians come forward, with fife and drum, and play with all their might; the whole company passes in single file through the trench into the tent, and the music and dancing continues through the night, with short intervals of rest. When thirsty, they drink of the wa-

ter in the trench about the fire, and frequently approach the patient and spirt the water from their mouths in his face, and affectionately enquire if he is better. Should the poor creature answer in the affirmative, (which is not often the case, as might well be supposed,) they attest their joy in the most ludicrous manner; but if the patient dies at this, or at a subsequent period of his illness, he is interred in the grave already dug at his door. The treatment is the same in the case of either sex, and they do not administer any kind of medicine. When a man is buried, they put his gun, powder and ball, bow and arrows, into the grave with him; and when a woman dies, they bury her as above stated, and then burn her tent and all she had; after which, they join together and build the family a new one. When a young child dies, they bury it lashed to the board on which they carry it.

But no pen can describe the extent of their wailings for the dead. When they return after a long absence, they alight from their beasts, and their women immediately turn them out, and then come and sit down at a respectful distance. Not a word of any kind is spoken by any one; the whole company is seated with the utmost silence. At length, without uttering a word, they begin to cry, and continue in this kind of exercise until it rises to a high pitch; when one of them suddenly stops, rises from his seat, and addresses the company, who at once give him their attention, while he tells them, in substance, that they have met together once more in safety; that there is no cause for crying, and exhorts them to refrain; when, by mutual consent, they cease crying as easily as they commenced it, and go about their business. But if any of their friends have died in the fight, or otherwise, their grief appears deep and lasting. In this case, they immediately commence cutting and disfiguring themselves in a shocking manner, and with varied and unseemly gestures, accompanied with loud and tremendous yells, they seem to try to excel each other. They will ascend the loftiest peaks of the tallest mountains they can reach, and through the whole of the gloomiest night, send abroad through the surrounding forest their dismal wailings, in howls of horrid

accent. Nor are their signs of grief much less pungent when they lose their friends at home; but they hold all others enemies, and treat them accordingly, dead or alive. The reader has seen plenty of this in the preceding narrative; but I will here add, they fastened the scalps of our murdered friends to the bridles of their mules, so as to suspend them under the chin of the animals, and this was their constant practice while I was with them. When they encamped, they would fix them upon the top of long poles, and set them up by their tents, as I have seen flags upon garrisons, and elsewhere.

When a woman was to be confined, they removed the grass and everything else from the surface of the ground, and in a convenient place in the tent for her to lie down upon. They would be so particular as to sift the earth through the fingers, and detect and take out everything but the soft pulverized earth. Upon this spot she would pass her hour, when she would rise, take up her child, throw a blanket about her, and go to the nearest stream, bathe herself and child, and return to her business the same day, as though nothing had happened!—and it was the same thing whether she was at home, or pursuing a journey. Some of my readers may think the above too great a tax upon their credulity; but I can assure them, upon the veracity of one who has been a witness in several instances, that such is the fact.

In the case of catamenia the woman instantly leaves her tent, and, as far as possible, seeks a place of concealment from her husband and family; she declines all company, especially of men, nor will she speak to one if she can avoid it. Should there be any article of her neighbor's within her tent at the time of her leaving it, it is thrown out upon the ground, and there it remains until they leave that place for some other, when the owner picks it up; but on no occasion will her family bring anything from abroad into her tent while she is absent. If the family with whom she stays are under the necessity of borrowing any article while she is with them, it is washed with the utmost care, when it is brought in, and when it is to be sent home. She remains in her

retreat four days, during which time she takes no food, except a little broth and some kind of vegetables; but on no account will she taste meat of any kind until her four days are expired; after that, she bathes herself and returns to her husband.

As to cleanliness in their persons, I think them the most particular people I ever saw. They bathe at all seasons of the year. I have frequently seen them, both men and women, break the ice for this purpose; and they are punctilious not to eat without washing. I never knew one of them to rise and go abroad without washing. They are very particular in the above respect with regard to their children; they are also far from being as indifferent to the kind and preparation of their food, as one might suppose. The men eat horse-flesh when they can get nothing else; but their women, as a general thing, will not taste of it, nor will they permit it to come near their dwellings. They subsist mostly upon buffalo meat, with some other game, which they cook, in a cleanly manner, with various kinds of vegetables, some of which possess somewhat of the quality, and they have the faculty of preparing it as a good substitute for bread.

In conclusion, perhaps I ought to say, that with reference to a point, of all others of the most sacred importance to a captive female, (with gratitude to my Maker I record it,) my fears were in no part realized.

*Query.*—Is it not strange, indeed, that a nation so grossly sunk in the darkness of heathenism, as is the one of which the account is here closed, should be so exact in the observation of customs so strikingly analogous to the letter of the Mosaic ritual? Are these strange people some of the posterity of fathers who once worshipped at the Jewish altar? and when shall the light of the Gospel illuminate the pathway of their return? Saviour of the human race, hasten the blessed day!

*Hermitage, Greene County, Ill. }  
June, 1839. }*







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