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FROM MOSCOW TO COLFAX—RAPID STAGING TO ESCAPE A HEAVY STORM—A RICKETY BUCKBOARD—THE TRIAL OF MRS. THOMAS.

TO THE READERS OF THE NEW NORTHWEST:

The journey of eighteen miles from Moscow to Palouse was accomplished on the 2d instant in about three hours of steady staging. The road ran through the beautiful, broad and undulating upland of Paradise Valley, with small houses on almost every quarter section, and small farms and good fences here and there. The soil resembles that of Camas Prairie. Much of the land is claimed by Scandinavians and other foreign Northmen, who have brought the frugal habits of the Old World to their new home, and know how to work everything they own to the best possible advantage, women included—for these sturdy yeomen have no more idea of the liberty and individuality of womanhood than the American Southron has of the same attributes in colored men; yet, unlike the latter, they are themselves toilers, as their farms testify.

There seems to be little vacant land in this part of Idaho, but we are told that many homestead rights among American settlers can be bought for a mere song, the well-known restlessness of the claimants inducing their regular migration biennially.

The scenery is enchanting in loveliness. Yonder, to our right, the mountains of the Cour d'Alene rise, dark and tree-clad; nearer by are lower spurs, over which the road runs by and by; belts of timber mark distant water courses, and verdant fields of wheat and flax smile at us from the roadsides.

Within six miles of Palouse City is a solitary log cabin where there is a post office called Four Mile. While we were awaiting the distribution of the mail at this point, our attention was directed to a singular conformation of the clouds overhead, which looked like thousands of fleeces of water-soaked wool, each fleece well defined and detached from all the others, all afloat in the air and tending sou'easterly, their heavier sides uppermost. The air grew warm and oppressive, and the ominous roar of distant winds saluted our ears like a menace of danger.

"If them clouds burst, we'll be fairly drowned," said the driver, donning an oil-cloth coat, and carefully adjusting the lap robes. "Got an umbrella?"

We produced a silken apparition (one of Fleischer & Mayer's best), and exhibited the same in triumph.

"As well have a rattan," was the next remark. "But, never mind; the mail's all right, and we'll be apt to outride the storm now. Get up there, Babes!"

Away went the well-trained four-in-hand like ostriches, beneath their feet the flying road, and over their heads the majestic, sunlit oriflamme of flying clouds. The lightning came upon us in sheets. It played at hide and seek in the white wool nubia in which your correspondent had wrapped her head, and, receding, left us blinded by its brilliancy. Heaven's artillery followed with prolonged salutes. The horses bent to their work and shot forward on the double-quick. Now and then a single drop of water struck our faces, cutting like electric needles. We gained upon the storm. We outrode it. It was a race between clouds and horses, neck and neck, with horses after a while ahead. But the clouds had suddenly changed direction, or a different version would be in order. The horses traveled over the six miles—Cayuse miles at that—in a trifle over twenty-three minutes, landing us safely at Palouse, where we took refuge in the Pioneer Hotel, that, during our former visit here, three and a half years ago, had made itself famous by caving in upon our audience and letting everybody down into the cellar. It is braced and stanch now, and we sleep in a little room close to the roof and listen to the wailing wind, thinking of the loved ones at home, with the feeling of mingled pain and pleasure of one whose mind and body are in different places.

The storm rode on toward Moscow, where it dropped some of its heavier fleeces of wetted wool in the form of a sudden deluge. But the fleeces that reached Lewiston were ground into hall stones as large as little boulders by the time they were ready to fall; and we were indeed thankful, when the news of the hall-storm in that city came to hand, that the wild winds had borne it over our heads and left us high and dry during the journey, though we sympathized with the unfortunate people of Lewiston.

The next morning found us aboard a rickety mail cart, appropriately styled a buckboard, which bobs in tri-weekly trips between Palouse and Colfax, and which nearly destroyed us before the ride was over. The seat was narrow and slant, and it was impossible to sit upon it, ex-

cept with the greatest difficulty, because of its propensity to pitch the passenger over upon the driver. To add to the discomfort, a high wind was blowing, and the rain fell in torrents, and a more abject-looking spectacle was never witnessed than we are confident we presented when, wet, chilled, wretched and rheumatic, we alighted at the Baldwin House in Colfax and crept up stairs to bless the proprietor of the stage line. In emphatic English because of his conscientious disregard of the plainest terms of a mail contract. His name is Jacob Miller, and he lives at Walla Walla, and we learn is under bonds to provide reasonably comfortable transportation for travelers on his route. May the twisted seat of that rickety buckboard haunt him in purgatory, and may the young upstart at the stage office in Colfax, who called himself his "agent" and impudently refused to get a half-dollar job of repairs put on it, be compelled to ride on a slanting board just like it for the coming century! Amen!

Rest and dinner at the Baldwin House (Mr. and Mrs. Ed. Beach, formerly of Albany, proprietors), and then we accept the standing invitation of our well-known Wolfard friends, where the rheumatism consequences of that rickety ride pursue us with twinges as acute as indescribable. It is impossible to recover sufficiently to do our work here and return to Palouse on the 8th, as advertised, but we brace up from sheer necessity to keep busy, and lecture twice to large audiences in the Baptist Church of Colfax, after which more rest becomes as imperative as work, and more blessings on that buckboard are again in order.

The trial of Nannie Thomas for the murder of Lizzie Shanks was in prospect, and was the talk of the town. In the company of a large number of other sight-seers, we visited the jail where the prisoner was in durance, and found her in the front apartment directly opposite two grated cells, in one of which an Indian and a Chinaman were confined, and in the other three white men. We were told that the woman was locked up at first in the cell with the Chinaman! but we hope the report is untrue. She was certainly situated badly enough when we saw her, with no furniture but a straw bed on the floor, and no privacy of any kind—no chance, even for a minute, to obscure herself from the gaze of five imprisoned men. She was more self-possessed than any of us when the bolt shot back and we were admitted to her presence. She was neatly attired in mourning, and was easy in her manner and evidently pleased to see the faces of women. She has been confined in damp and dreary cells for fourteen months in Walla Walla, awaiting the tardy progress of that lumbering imperfection of masculine mismanagement inappropriately styled the law. She has grown thin and anxious, and has suffered much from cold and filth and dampness. There was strong talk of postponing the trial for six months longer, but it was finally decided by Judge Wingard that it was best to begin on the 8th, and get it over and off their hands as soon as possible. Among the well-known lawyers present were Hons. N. T. Caton and P. C. Sullivan, who appeared for the defendant; District Attorney Allen, District Clerk Ayers, U. S. Marshal Hopkins, and also Messrs. Ellsworth, Hoover, Doolittle, Wolfard and Kincaid. The court-room was crowded during the trial—women and lawyers around the bar, and men standing everywhere else. We could only attend for a little while on the 9th, as we had begun to recover from that twisting ride, and had renewed an engagement to lecture at Palouse, but we improved the time we had, and must say that the eagerness of some of the witnesses to convict the defendant was plain enough to be strong presumptive evidence in her favor. One of these "willing witnesses" was a Mrs. Bartholomew, chambermaid at a third-rate hotel in Walla Walla. She was subjected to a severe cross-examination by Mr. Caton, but to no purpose. She told her story plainly and stuck to it well, but it had no weight with the jury, as it proved nothing except that she desired that the defendant be hung. A Mr. Sheffer was another "willing witness." Yet they failed to establish a single point that would convict the woman of complicity in the double murder for which her husband had already been hanged. Brumfield had eloped from Kansas with Lizzie Shanks, and in the company of Thomas and his wife had come westward. They had swapped names at Walla Walla to quiet the fears of the old Lothario, who feared that his step-son would follow him. This exchange of names enabled the real Thomas to draw Brumfield's money from the Walla Walla banks.

As an inexorable business engagement calls us to Palouse, we are compelled to let this matter rest right here till our return, when we will resume the subject. Inclination must be held in steady abeyance to the duty that spurs us onward. We can't risk that buckboard again till it is mended, so we engage a heavy turnout from the stable of the Liddle brothers, and bowl away toward Palouse behind a pair of spanking trotters that would attract horse fanciers in Portland.

Some eight or nine miles out from Colfax, and just as we were mounting to the brow of a hill, a frightened horse came bounding toward our team, trailing a long rope, to which was attached a heavy log of wood about ten feet long, that came within a very few inches of the horses' feet. The danger was over in an instant, but the chances for a frightful smash-up were never better, and it was a good while before the nerves of the team could be quieted and their confidence restored. A crowd of excited boys were met a mile further on, who were rejoiced at our tidings of their runaway, which, for aught we know to the contrary, is running still.

Palouse City has not improved as rapidly as its former progress led us to hope. Other towns are taking the lead. Yet a good saw-mill (Powers & Co's), a planing mill (Johnson & Ettinger's), two hotels, and several stores do a good business, the one trouble in getting along being their distance from market. Women offer butter and eggs for the NEW NORTHWEST till we are half tempted to buy a sutler's wagon and go into the provision trade, and haul their goods to Penawawa for shipment. There is good pay for somebody in such a venture, and we drop this hint for the benefit of anyone seeking employment who can own and manage a team.

The Woman Suffrage movement has become very popular here, the men being as much in favor of it as the women. All are in favor of organization, and we hope soon to hear good news from them in that direction.

Spent Sunday at a Methodist camp-meeting about two miles from town on the banks of the winding Palouse, where a goodly number of country denizens were assembled under the leadership of Elder Strong, whom we had formerly met in Boise. In the evening we accepted the escort of our relatives, Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, and repaired to their beautiful home in Mountain Cove, about five miles from Palouse, where we spent Monday in their genial company, and returned in the evening for a third lecture.

On Tuesday we came back to Colfax in our cousins' wagon, in front of a load of furniture from the Palouse Manufacturing Company's works of Johnson & Ettinger. The load was top-heavy, but the journey was accomplished without accident.

The murder trial was over, and Mrs. Thomas was acquitted. Everybody was speaking in praise of the argument of John Allen, the gentlemanly Prosecuting Attorney. But, if they praised the argument of Mr. Allen, they were enthusiastic over that of Mr. Sullivan, which is described as logical, eloquent, exhaustive and unanswerable. Mr. Sullivan is considered the leading advocate in this part of the country, and in this instance he sustained his previous honors and won many new ones. The jury had been burdened with an interminable array of irrelevant testimony, not one word of which went to prove that Mrs. Thomas had committed the murder, or had even witnessed it. Yet the excited populace demanded blood, and the prisoner's fate hung upon a thread. With the decision of the jury, however, came a reaction. Only here and there a man or woman could be found who indulged in bitter denunciation of the accused and her jury.

The Palouse folks say that Colfax (of which, in truth, they are naturally jealous) is disappointed because there was no hanging in prospect to bring new business to the town on execution day. Of course this is idle banter, but it is certain that there is at least one bloodthirsty man in Colfax. His name is George J. Buys, and he is editor of an apology for journalism which he calls the *Washington Democrat*. His rantings because the jury cheated him out of a first-class hanging report are so fearful that he pronounces himself almost ready to be a woman's rights man, because he thinks women would help him on in his blood-thirstiness since men have failed to meet his lamb-like and gentle demand. Poor Buys! He reminds us of a certain farmer's old white horse, that was much given to balking. A veterinary surgeon offered once to cure the horse of his bad habit, and by way of fulfilling his contract he changed the color of the animal to a bright bay. The horse worked pretty well for a while; but by and by he got used to the change and balked again. The farmer surveyed him calmly for a while, and said, shaking his head, "I'm afraid there's a good deal of the old white horse in him yet." After Buys had blown himself out in Eugene, we hoped his radical change of location would cure him of his chronic tyranny, suspicion and stupidity. But alas! we're afraid there's a good deal of the old Eugene character in him yet.

Charley Hopkins is making a lively paper of the *Gazette*. He ran it as a daily during the murder trial, and it gained a wide patronage. Immediately after the trial, Charley called upon Mrs. Thomas and obtained the following explanation,

which, unfortunately for the acquitted woman, was published with some inaccuracies that do her great injustice. The interpolations authorized by herself and acquiesced in by the editor are in italics, and all friends of justice are asked to judge of the matter upon its merits.

Old Mr. Brumfield was not married to Lizzie. She was his second wife's daughter. He eloped with her. My husband told me at Sheffer's [in the Palouse country] that he and she had entered into a conspiracy to decoy the old man out to California and kill him for his money. When we got there, no suitable place was found for the purpose, and we then started for the Palouse country. On the steamer the old gentleman became alarmed lest Lizzie's husband should follow and kill him, and he suggested a change of names, which was agreed to, but we did not change them until we left Walla Walla. The night we encamped on the Touchet, Bud, my husband, said that was a good place to do the deed, but Lizzie objected, and Bud decoyed him out of camp, killed him, took his money, undressed him, and threw his body in the creek. We then proceeded to Sheffer's, as indicated in the testimony. One day, while there, my husband told me the whole story about killing Brumfield, and said Lizzie must be killed or she might betray them. I remonstrated with him, and thought I had persuaded him not to do it. Soon after our experience with the last witness before the killing, we encamped at the place indicated in the evidence, and while I was at the wagon getting some articles for supper, and Lizzie was bending over the fire preparing the evening meal, my husband approached her from behind and shot her through the head. When I heard the report, I knew what had happened, and rushed to the scene in frantic despair, crying, "Bud, for God's sake, what have you done?" He answered, "Shut your mouth!" and picked up the body, which he carried some feet and then dropped. He again picked it up and carried it up the hill some forty feet, when he again dropped it, and called to me, saying, "Nannie, G—d—n you! come and help me carry this." I assisted him to the top of the hill, and he dragged it the remainder of the way. You ask me why I kept the secret, but if you are a married man you can realize my position. I loved my husband, and would have died rather than betray him.

Thus one of the most horrible mysteries that has ever hung upon the hearts of a people has been partially solved. The suspicion that Thomas had intended to murder his wife instead of Lizzie Shanks is forced upon us. That Mrs. Thomas was fearfully jealous of the two, is apparent. That they were enamored of each other, was generally believed. If he killed the dead man's paramour on purpose, it must have been because of a recent misunderstanding between them. His confession to his wife would indicate this. But it is more probable that he mistook the one for the other in the gathering darkness, and, like Laura Fair, made a mistake in the killing. The women were dressed very nearly alike, and the villain shot at the victim in the dusk of the evening through a sun-bonnet that concealed her features. Of the truth of this we shall never know; but one cannot but admire the heroism of the child-wife (she was but seventeen when the deed was done), who held her peace even to the risk of encountering the fatal halter rather than betray the brute of a husband who had committed the blackest crime in the catalogue. She is now in the motherly care of Mrs. Potter at the Colfax Restaurant, where she will remain until remittances from her own mother will enable her to return to Kansas. What a bitter experience for such a mere child! No wonder a jury would not convict her. Messrs. Caton and Sullivan are justly proud of her acquittal, and the verdict, though a surprise at first, is commended now by the best citizens here.

This letter is too lengthy to admit of the description of Colfax, for which the reader may look in the next issue. A. S. D.

Colfax, June 15, 1881.

Miss Rachel L. Biddle, of the Faculty of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, reports that twenty-four of the graduates of that school are receiving as much as one thousand dollars a year, and less than two thousand; twenty as much as two thousand, and less than three thousand; ten as much as three thousand, and less than four thousand; five as much as four thousand, and less than five thousand; three as much as five thousand, and less than fifteen thousand; four between fifteen and twenty thousand; while three of the alumni have accumulated enough to allow them to retire from practice.

The women of Portland, Me., several years ago petitioned the city government to appoint a woman to take charge of women arrested by the police. After great effort, they were allowed to have the woman, provided they paid for her services out of their own pockets. Since then, the city pays one-half of her salary and the women the other half. If Portland women had a vote in the municipal election, the city would have paid the woman as it does its policemen.

Mrs. Sarah Little is the Superintendent of the Wisconsin Blind Asylum, which was burned and rebuilt a few years since. Her husband, who was then at its head, died soon after, leaving a family of little children. As his successor Mrs. Little has managed everything so satisfactorily and economically—superintending, in the meantime, the construction of the new building—that the asylum is pointed out as the best conducted public institution of the State.