

RECOLLECTIONS OF A PIONEER.

A Memorable Journey to the Golden Gate in Early Days.

Incidents on the Trip Across the Isthmus—Cholera and Fever Ravages—Sad Scenes.

The 1st of December, 1852 (just forty years ago), found me, accompanied by my wife, in New York ready to start for California. The steamship Uncle Sam was advertised to sail for Aspinwall in a day or two. She was a new vessel, and this was to be her first voyage. I went early to the office and secured tickets for my wife and myself, with a good state-room above decks, for \$44, which included our passage from Panama to San Francisco, but did not include our passage nor hotel bills across the isthmus. These, along with our bills for extras on shipboard, would now almost purchase first-class tickets from New York to San Francisco, through in five or six days without stopping.

When I reached the steamship company's office I met a gentleman named Wambold, who was on his return to California and whose acquaintance I had made the winter preceding, during the session of our Legislature, of which body he was then a member. It was a most fortunate circumstance, as he could speak Spanish as well as English. I lost no time in inviting him to join our little party while crossing the isthmus, which invitation he accepted.

We were on board early on the morning of the 1st of December. The ship was crowded and confusion reigned, as is usual on such occasions. We reached Aspinwall (now Colon) after a pleasant voyage of eight or nine days, arriving in port just before night, and the captain invited us to the cabin of the ship, while the balance of the passengers sought quarters in the village.

The next morning, after breakfast, we went ashore, and when we all had secured our baggage we took the cars for the Chagres River, a distance of twenty miles, which was then the end of the road. The track was constructed thus far mostly through swamp and upon piles driven in the mud.

NATIVE CUSTOMS. We reached the river in about two hours, and as there was no depot of any kind, the only place to stand in the breezing sun for an hour to receive our baggage. Through the exertions of Mr. Wambold, we soon had arrangements made with some natives to carry our party of twelve or fifteen and baggage up the river to Gorgona, a distance of about twenty-four miles, on a bungalow—which is the name of the native rafts—towed boat with a phetion-like top and a runway around the outer side of the gunwale, where the boatmen walk back and forth, from the interior to each side.

With a long, iron-pointed pole, which is made for the purpose, set firmly upon the river's bottom, and with a tight grip on the pole, the boatmen propel the rafts down the river from stem to stern. When there were ladies on board, the boatmen wore breech-cloths, but when there were no ladies they wore trousers only in nature's garb. The boats, the while, were constantly passing and re-passing each other. I believe I have read somewhere that the true lady sees nothing not intended for her eyes, and hears nothing not intended for her ears.

We arrived at Cruses, a small Spanish town, eleven miles distant, just before dark and spent the night in the village. When we returned to the river the next morning we found many other bungaloes had arrived during the night and were moored alongside of ours for some distance above and below.

ALMOST A MASSACRE. When we were being seated in our bungalow, prepared to start, a gentleman named Sanford from San Francisco, who was one of our party and who, in order to reach our boat, and meaning no harm, stepped upon the adjoining bungalow. One of the boatmen, a half-breed Spaniard and negro, and a most wicked-looking fellow, gave him a violent shove, intending to throw him into the river, but failed. Sanford drew his revolver and the negro ran and jumped down the open hatchway in the stern of his bungalow. Sanford sprang after him, pistol in hand and at full cock.

I ran, and on looking down the hatchway saw the negro lying upon his back, with Sanford's pistol thrust in his face, who was "as white as a sheet." I begged Sanford not to shoot, and upon looking up saw him standing by the side of the bungalow, with his long, iron-pointed pole ready drawn to run Sanford through the back, and behind him stood the other passengers, with pistol in hand, ready to fire.

The boatmen came running with their poles from every quarter, and in less time than it takes to write it, a line of this sort formed from where the two men were extending up the river bank, and to the streets of the village, where every second man had his long drawn ready to strike, and behind him stood passenger ready to shoot. At this most critical moment Mr. Wambold appeared on the scene, and speaking earnestly in Spanish, and then in English—exhorted the excited men, in their native tongue, to desist and put aside their weapons. He at length succeeded in attracting their attention, while thus they stood in long lines, while no man in this long line stirred.

It was a most exciting scene. Their weapons were finally slowly lowered. Better counsels had prevailed, and peace was restored. Had there been a blow struck, or a shot fired, the Chagres River would have run crimson with human blood. We reached Gorgona without further difficulty or delay, and met at the landing by scores of natives, some with saddle animals, some with pack animals, and others with no animals, and all clamoring for the privilege of carrying us and our baggage to Panama. We patronized those having animals, and through the efforts of our interpreter, Mr. Wambold, we soon had arrangements made for both saddle and pack animals. But, unfortunately, there were no sidesaddles.

To be had for the ladies. Consequently they were obliged to ride man-fashion, for which emergency most of them had come prepared. When we had eaten our dinners we found our animals awaiting us at the door of our hotel, but the ladies were too modest to mount in the little town and were obliged to lead their animals some distance out of the road to a more secluded place, where they were seated in their saddles, amid much merriment. But when we had reached Panama, the next day, and the ladies were dismounted and bespattered with mud, they could ride through the streets of the old Spanish city with as much assurance as if they had ridden astride all the way.

We rode out about eight miles to a log cabin, where we spent the night. Before dark many more passengers arrived. The parties of whom we had hired our animals sent men and boys along to take care of them during the night, so they said. The passengers expressed themselves as being delighted with the arrangement, and allowed them to drive their animals to an alleged pasture in the hills.

THE GAME DID NOT WORK. Mr. Wambold and I had crossed the isthmus before, and refused to allow them to take a mule belonging to any of our party, although they insisted a number of times. We finally were obliged to threaten to shoot if they gave us any more trouble. We stood guard all night, and in the morning were the only parties who had animals to ride. The others had been taken back to Gorgona to care to other passengers the next day. How the stranded passengers got along I don't know. When we left they were about

THE BRIDGE OF SIGHTS.

Fears that Alexander B. Syme Has Met a Violent Death.

His Hat and Coat Found on the Yolo Bridge, Where He was Last Seen Sunday Morning.

It is feared that Alex. B. Syme, a young man employed in the railroad shops, has met with a violent death. He has not been seen since about 3 o'clock on Sunday morning, and about an hour later his hat and coat were found on the Yolo bridge by the Washington mail-carrier.

About 3 o'clock Syme was seen sitting with a stranger by the bridge-watchman's cabin at the Sacramento end of the bridge, at which time the two men were quarreling.

The stranger is described as a heavy-set man with a very heavy dark mustache. A man who was passing heard him address Syme in insulting language, to which the latter responded in like terms and increased the volume of his voice.

The hat and coat found have been identified beyond question as belonging to the missing man, but further than this the affair is a mystery, and no one could be found last night who could throw any light upon it.

No one seems to have seen the stranger with Syme, or to recognize him, and his friend who has been investigating have failed to find any clue to his identity.

Syme has been employed as a piper in the shops for several years, and was a very popular young man, with many friends in this city.

A sea-faring man in this city suggested that the person who fastened the rope by which Franz was hanged in San Jose a few nights ago must have been a sailor. He says that when a sailor is in a hurry, and has not time to make a knot, he slips the loop end of the rope under that part on which the tension comes, thus preventing it from slipping.

He thinks that some one gave the officers a clue to the perpetrators of the crime.

Last Evening's Fire. A alarm of fire was turned in last evening about 6:30 o'clock from box 14. A frame building on L street, between Eighth and Ninth, owned by S. Zeimer, and occupied by A. P. Coombes, caught fire in some unknown manner while the tenants were absent, and was considerably damaged. The fire department was on hand early and prevented the spread of flames which the strong north wind threatened.

Admitted to Practice. The Supreme Court yesterday admitted to practice Thomas Johnson, S. McKinley, Jr., Arthur Seymour, Edward J. Robinson, Charles Hemphill, W. W. Deemer and Thomas McKelvy.

Mr. Seymour is a resident of this city, and has pursued his studies in the law office of C. H. Outman.

He is Improving. Richard Shay, the painter who fell thirty-five feet from the church at Tenth and P streets, a few days ago, and struck upon a solid cement sidewalk, is rapidly recovering at the County Hospital, and will be able to leave there in a few days. His escape from instant death was truly remarkable.

Ginsberg's Sentences. Judge Morrow of the United States Circuit Court in San Francisco yesterday sentenced Samuel Ginsberg of this city to pay a fine of \$100 and to spend thirty days in the County Jail here for sending lottery tickets through the mail.

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