

Northern Coast of California—Its Early Settlement.

Mrs. Wood's Narrative.

[Concluded.]

Immediately after the second bear had caught me by the shoulder, the other still having me by the ankle, the two pulled against each other as if to draw me in pieces; but my clothes and their grip giving away, occasionally, saved me. In this way they continued until they had stripped me of my clothes, except a part of my coat and shirt, dislocated my hip, and inflicted many flesh wounds—none of the latter, however, being very serious. They seemed unwilling to take hold of my flesh, for, after they had divested me of my clothes, they both left me—me going away entirely, and the other (the wounded bear) walking slowly up the hill, about one hundred yards from me, and there deliberately seated herself, and fastened her gaze upon me, as I lay upon the ground perfectly still. After remaining thus several minutes, I ventured to move, which, I suppose, she must have soon, for the first motion brought her full well upon me again, roaring every jump as loud as she could roar. At this moment, I must confess, presence of mind nearly forsook me. I knew that if she again attacked or took hold of me, it must be upon my naked flesh. The moment left me was one of fearful suspense. No sooner had she reached me than she placed her nose violently against my side, and then raised her head and gave vent to two of the most frightful, hideous, and unearthly yells that were ever heard by mortal man. I remained perfectly quiet, hoping that by so doing she would leave me, and in this hope I was not disappointed, for after standing over me for a short time, she again walked away. I now thought she had left for good, and determined to place myself, if possible, beyond her reach, should she, however, again return.

Up to this time I was unconscious of the extent of the injury I had received; that an accident had befallen my leg I was well aware, but not until I attempted to get up, was my true situation manifest to me. I then found that I could not use my right leg, and supposed it was broken.

Turning to look about me, to assure myself that my enemy had retired, imagine my surprise at seeing her again not more than one hundred yards distant, sitting huddled upon her haunches and her eyes glaring full at me. With my leg in the condition I have related, and every moment becoming more swollen, inflamed, and painful, I dragged myself to the buckeye bush, from which I had been pulled down by the bear, and after much difficulty succeeded in climbing up about eight feet. So soon as Wilson had discovered me up the tree, he left his tree and came to me. The bear seeing him, came bounding towards us with the greatest ferocity. Wilson remarked, "What in the name of God shall I do?" I replied that he could come up the limb of the adjoining tree, and he was barely enabled to get beyond reach, before she arrived. She had apparently scarot herself

almost entirely stripped of clothing and without shoes to protect our feet from the thorns and briars that were ever in our path. All were daily becoming aware of the fact that their strength and health were fast failing, and although we had, from the outset, been gradually trained to bear cold, hunger and pain, yet it was too evident that our powers of endurance were seriously impaired. They urged, as a further reason, that our ammunition was now nearly or quite exhausted, upon which our sole dependence rested for the scanty supply of food that we could obtain. The meaning of this was obvious to me, and in reply I said to them, that they had remained with me as long as I could expect or ask; that they were bound to save themselves if they could, and that they ought not to allow me to be in their way; but as they had seen proper to speak of the matter, I would ask of them one other favor. I suggested two ways in which they could dispose of me, either of which I would prefer to being abandoned to my fate in the condition and place in which I now was. The first was to induce the Indians, who had visited us during our stay here, to take care of me until they could go to a settlement and return; and the second was to put an end to my sufferings. They cheerfully sought the chief of these Indians, and explained to him what they desired to do, and in turn what they required of him, to all of which he apparently readily assented, and promised faithfully to attend to me and supply me with food till they could return. He agreed to come the next morning and convey me to his ranch, which was about three miles distant, and situated upon the river.

At the appointed time the old chief presented himself, together with three of his men, and expressed his readiness to fulfill his agreement. One of them gave me several varieties of herbs, he had brought with him, which I accepted gratefully, and gave him to understand were very good. Before taking me, however, they demanded some presents as a compensation for the services they were about to render. All the beads and trinkets in our possession were gathered together and given them. These, however, were not sufficient and more were required. Their demand for more was repeated, and compliance on our part yielded, until everything we had, save such things as necessity absolutely required us to retain—even blankets that had been allotted to me—were given up to them, in order, if possible, to avoid offending them. At length they seemed satisfied that they had gotten all they could, when the chief very coolly turned to his men and bade them return to their home, he following after them, leaving us to regret the folly and imbecility committed, in reposing too much confidence in a race of beings, known by all experience to be totally unworthy of it.

While these preliminaries were being arranged, I was busied in dragging myself upon a ledge that had been prepared for me. This was a difficult and painful task. I could not endure assistance, my leg was so much swollen and inflamed,

they might pack me to the river, where they had hacked out a canoe for the purpose of crossing, and I would then tell them whether I could continue with them, and in the event of my being unable to endure being packed further, all I had to ask of them was to leave me in the canoe to drift whither fate might direct.

He said "we cannot pack you, for you have never allowed us to touch you, even; how then can you bear to be placed upon a horse and packed?"

"You are not to consult my wishes in the matter," I replied; "If you have decided not to abandon me, you must do with me as you will. Much longer delay in this place, and at this season of the year, may prove fatal to all; self-preservation, therefore, must demand an immediate resumption of our journey, if it be at the risk, and even expense of the life of one."

Wilson then requested me to select whichever animal I preferred; I however chose my own. They now lifted me into the saddle, and spent much time in placing me in a position that would give me the least pain. None, however, seemed to suit, and I asked for a particular favor, to exchange saddles, for I thought his would make me more comfortable; and it was certain it could not be worse than mine. They laid me upon the ground, changed the saddles, and again placed me upon my horse. I said nothing, but the agony I suffered no language can describe. The exchange of saddles aggravated my misery, but I had determined to be satisfied with this, let it be as it would. Sobbing led my horse down the mountain, and, after a long and tedious march, we reached the river. Here we camped.

When the bear that Wilson had killed, in our late encounter, had been cut up and brought into camp, the entrails were likewise brought in, carefully cleaned and preserved; the blubber or fat was melted out and put up in these skins and laid aside. On resuming our journey these were taken along, which we were compelled to drink, as a substitute for other food, before we reached the settlements.

The next morning I was again consulted, and asked if I was able to continue on with them. I replied that as long as I lived, if it pleased them, I desired to have them pack me, and should I die, that they should cut the cords, with which I was bound to my horse, and pass on. I could not ask or expect them to bury me, for there were no tools among the company with which to dig a grave.

Again we moved upon my horse and packed until another camp was reached, enjoying only an occasional respite, to allow my benumbed and stiffened limbs to recover from the effects produced by being confined in one position for so long a time.

In this manner we continued on, with little or no change in the occurrences that happened, for a period of ten days—Following down Russian river a long distance, and then striking across towards Sonoma—at the expiration of this time, we arrived at the ranch of Mrs. Mark West, about thirty miles from the town of Sonoma. Here I remained about six

Turning to look about me, to assure myself that my enemy had retired, imagine my surprise in seeing her again not more than one hundred yards distant, sitting back upon her haunches and her eyes glaring full at me. With my leg in the condition I have related, and every moment becoming more swollen, inflamed, and painful, I dragged myself to the buckeye bush, from which I had been pulled down by the bear, and after much difficulty succeeded in climbing up about eight feet. So soon as Wilson had discovered me up the tree, he left his tree and came to me. The bear seeing him, came bounding towards us with the greatest ferocity. Wilson remarked, "What in the name of God shall I do?" I replied that he could game up the limb of the adjoining tree, and he was barely on a ~~branch~~ beyond reach, before she arrived. She ~~then~~ ~~immediately~~ ~~scared~~ ~~herself~~ ~~immediately~~ ~~beneath~~ ~~us~~, and ~~kept~~ ~~her~~ ~~eyes~~ ~~steadily~~ ~~upon~~ ~~us~~, and as either one or the other of us happened to move, she would utter an angry howl. I observed Wilson present his rifle at her, and not shooting immediately, I remarked: "Shoot her—for God's sake, shoot her—for she is the beast that did me all the injury I have received!" He watched her eyes closely for a moment, with his aim still fixed upon her, and when I again repeated my request for him to shoot, he replied—"No, sir; let her go—let her go if she will."

After having detained us in this situation for a few minutes, she went away, and disappeared altogether, much to our joy and relief—thereby giving me an opportunity to get down from the tree.

Now that all fear of further interruption from our late visitor was past, I began fully to realize my true condition. The wounds I had received became momentarily more painful. So soon as the remainder of our party came up, I was carried some distance down the mountain, to a place suitable for camping. Here we remained twelve days, subsisting entirely upon the meat afforded by the bear. Wilson shot in the late encounter.

It now became a source of much anxiety to know when and how we should leave this place, or what disposition they would make of me, as I seemed to grow worse, instead of better. It was thought that my remaining in camp, for ten or twelve days, my wounds would have so far healed as to enable us to resume our journey; but no one, not even myself, supposed that the injuries I had received were of so serious a character as they now proved to be. Finding, however, at the expiration of that time, that my condition had in no wise improved, they consulted me, in relation to the course that should be adopted. That it was necessary, absolutely so, that no more time should be lost, and that, as we were

required. Their demand for more was repeated, and compliance on our part yielded, until everything we had, save such things as necessity absolutely required us to retain—even blankets that had been allotted to me—were given up to them, in order, if possible, to avoid offending them. At length they seemed satisfied that they had gotten all they could, when the chief very coolly turned to his men and bade them return to their home, he following after them; leaving us to regret the folly and indiscretion committed, in reposing too much confidence in a race of beings, known by all experience to be totally unworthy of it.

While these preliminaries were being arranged, I was busied in dragging myself upon a litter, which had been prepared for me. This was a difficult and painful task. I could not endure assistance, my leg was so much swollen and inflamed, and so exceedingly sensitive; yet it was almost impossible for me to move without it. I however finally succeeded, and had prepared myself to bid farewell, most likely forever, to my companions, who had so patiently submitted to the great delay to which they had been subjected, through the misfortune that had overtaken me, and who had so calmly and quietly—without a single murmur—endured their own intense sufferings. When, however, I saw these treacherous villains leave us with their ill-gotten booty, my heart for a moment ceased to beat. The first thought that possessed my brain was that my fate was sealed—that death awaited me. Either I should be abandoned in these desolate solitudes, to endure the pangs of hunger, and at last to perish alone, a victim of starvation, or they would release me from those accumulated tortures by shooting me; for in this light I viewed it, and therefore preferred the latter alternative.

A solemn and profound silence now prevailed with all—a silence which no one seemed disposed to interrupt. I turned my face from my companions, that they might not be embarrassed in their consultation, or in carrying into execution any determination they might arrive at, particularly if it should be to relieve me of my sufferings by shooting me.

Their conversation was carried on in a low, indistinct, tone of voice, for some time. Occasionally detached portions of sentences would reach my ears, enough, however, to satisfy my mind that there was a difference of opinion in relation to the course they would now adopt. At length Wilson's voice rose above the rest, saying, "No!—I will not leave him!—I'll remain with him, if it is alone for I will pack him if he is able and willing to endure the pain!" This terminated the conversation, and in a few moments after Sebring came to me and inquired what should now be done. I told them

I lived, if it so pleased them, I desired to have them pack me, and should I die, that they should cut the cords, with which I was bound to my horse, and pass on. I could not ask or expect them to bury me, for there were no tools among the company with which to dig a grave. Again was I bound upon my horse and packed until another camp was reached, enjoying only an occasional respite, to allow my benumbed and stiffened limbs to recover from the effects produced by being confined in one position for so long a time.

In this manner we continued on, with little or no change in the occurrences that happened, for a period of ten days—following down Russian river a long distance, and then striking across towards Sycama—at the expiration of this time, we arrived at the ranch of Mrs. Mark West, about thirty miles from the town of Sycama. Here I remained about six weeks, until sufficiently recovered to proceed to San Francisco, and was treated with the greatest kindness by every member of the family.

I must now tell you something of the other four, Messrs. Gregg, Van Duzen, Southard, and Truesdell, whom we left on Col river, and within twenty miles of the Bay or coast.

They attempted to follow along the mountains, near the coast, but were very slow in their progress, on account of the snow on the high ridges. Finding the country along the coast very much broken, making it necessary continually to cross abrupt rocky points, and deep gulches and canons, after struggling along for several days, they concluded to abandon that route and strike easterly, towards the Sacramento Valley.

Having very little ammunition, they all came nigh perishing from starvation, and as Mr. Southard related to me, Dr. Gregg continued to grow weaker, from the time of our separation, until, one day, he fell from his horse, and died in a few hours without speaking—died from starvation—had had no meat for several days—had been living entirely upon acorns and herbs. They dug a hole with sticks and put him under ground, then carried rock and piled upon his grave to keep animals from digging him up. They got through to the Sacramento Valley, a few days later than we reached Sycama Valley. Thus ended our expedition.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,
LEWIS K. WOOD.

THE HUMBOLDT TIMES.

EUREKA, HUMBOLDT COUNTY, CALIFORNIA, SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 1863.

Business Directory.

Northern Coast of California—its Early Settlement.

A Terrible Fight. A Traveler in Java gives the following

Account of a fight which took place in the river, where they had lashed out a canoe for the purpose of getting the