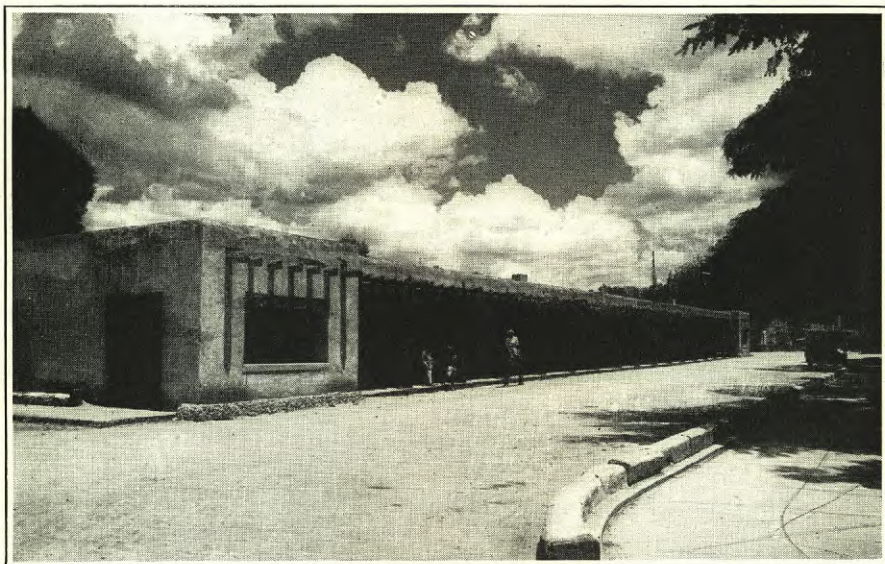
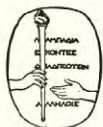


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Photograph by the School of American Research

THE PALACE OF THE GOVERNORS, SANTA FE

THE JOURNAL OF A MUD HOUSE

PART I

BY ELIZABETH SHEPLEY SERGEANT

ON THE CHICAGO TRAIN.

TILL the last moment I doubted Gertrude's coming, and at North Philadelphia she gave me, as usual, a scare. Passengers get off, passengers get on, platform empties, conductor signals—then, suddenly, whirl of blue serge, zestful laugh, sparkling eyeglasses, bewildered porter, shower of smart black

bags. She always does do it (or almost always), but it keeps her *thin*.

"I'll tell you some news. The Democratic Committee has asked me to run for . . ." No wonder she is still more full of East than West and casts a rather disapproving eye on my war-battered luggage, piled high on the opposite seat. Her own immaculate collection is quite

worthy of congressional halls or country-house week ends—of a stateroom rather than our crowded section. How will it look in those Mexican rooms in Santa Fe, where we are to live while we rebuild our mud-roofed adobe?

"Do you think it will take a week to do the work on the house?" Her voice is casual.

"Perhaps all summer," I answer, instinctively putting on the brakes. *A week!* How utterly themselves one's friends are. This delightful creature is always trying to cheat an unsatisfied desire to lead twenty lives by spurring Time beyond his fastest gallop. But whatever our temperamental differences, we are equally determined to make the repairs ourselves, with no contractor and—in spite of our lack of Spanish—with "Mexican labor." That is the whole point of our adventure—to plunge in up to the eyes and learn to swim while we flounder.

Meanwhile we revive our spirits by studying the deed which I signed for us both in the Capital Pharmacy on the Santa Fe Plaza, some fourteen months ago:

. . . the following lands and premises [it reads], situate in the Tesuque Valley in the County of Santa Fe, State of New Mexico, as follows—to wit: A piece or parcel of land containing approximately two acres, commonly known as part of the Dominguez property, including a house of three rooms, bounded on the north by the lands of Salomé Martinez, on the west by public road leading past the Tesuque schoolhouse, on the south by a line commencing at the southwest corner and running thence in a southeasterly direction to the ditch, thence circling a hill or knoll lying south of the house, to a point where a line running north will intersect the Martinez property about fifteen feet below the acequia.

I doubt whether the study of this strange legal document would enlighten the editor, who begged me to tell him why a woman who might live in France "should go and bury herself in the desert." Perhaps he would wonder still more if he could see, as I do, our very near neighbor, Salomé, with his quizzical canny face and his pointed Mexican hat and his dark-skinned progeny. . . . And the Acequia Madre encircling our house like a moat. . . . And the wild array of pink foothills the Creator has slung to



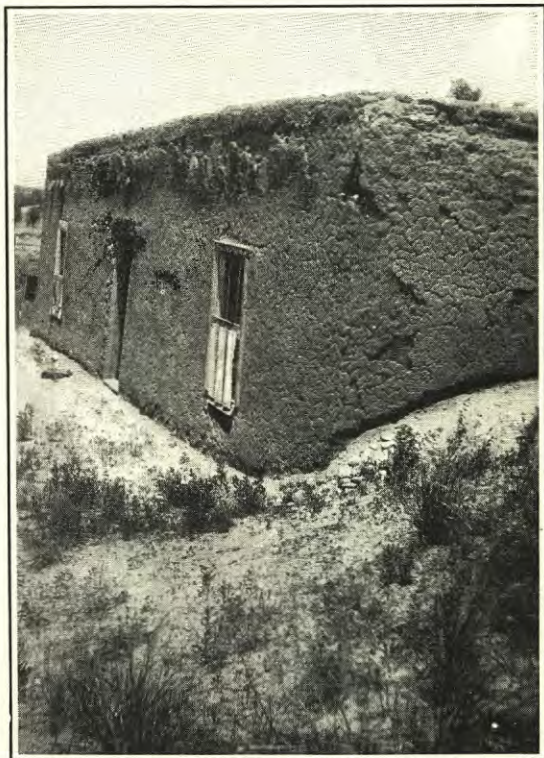
CHARACTERISTIC HILLS AND ADOBES AT THE EDGE OF SANTA FE

the east of us. . . . A taste for the Southwest is as hard to analyze as a taste for drink. Yet I know very well why I bought my half share of our "ranch" in New Mexico.

Illinois, Kansas. Stale dust, aching heat, ugly frame villages. The only thing, to-day, that tells me why I am on this train is the memory of the Chicago Lake front on Saturday afternoon. A gorgeous, a joyous, a triumphantly "Western" sight. The swift motor that met us made one leap for that blue-gold shore, and all the miles it devoured on the way to Winnetka seemed lined with shining bathers—bathers who came pouring half naked out of the black city streets. Chicago, I know, does not consider itself "West" at all, and in Santa Fe every other man says he comes from a still more western "East," say from Minnesota or Michigan. But imagine a Boston street car full of women in bathing suits! Imagine battalions of bath-toweled males swarming through the Fifties and Sixties to New York's East River!

June 14th.

The Southwest at last! Our train should normally be skirting Colorado, but the Pueblo washouts have driven it far out of its course. We awoke in the red hills of Oklahoma. Now we are wandering through flat Texas country—and already the air has the tang of sheer space, and the light that bathes the land is something with color, luminosity, substance almost, instead of the thin, vapid stuff we call light in New York. Already the railroad has become, not just a minor part of a populous mechanical world, but the one vital shining thread that binds man to his fellows across lonely distance.



OUR HOUSE AS WE FOUND IT

"Yes, *ma'am*," says the friendly-faced young brakeman—we are standing on the rear platform of the last car, the better to view these wide plains with their great herds of cattle, long purple shadows, and recurrent windmills—"yes, *ma'am*, the wind blows three hundred and sixty-five days in the year in Texas. . . . No, I was born in Arkansas, but it don't do to say so *here*."

At this point our friend waves to a solitary feminine figure standing at the door of one of the match-box stations that swirl out of the empty plain.

"Telegraph operator. . . . Nice girl. . . . Hope" (with a deprecating blush) "you folks don't think I was *flirting* with her."

The strictly unlimited trains that accept passengers for Santa Fe carry no dining cars west of Kansas City, and to-night in the Harvey Dining Room,

where we get out for supper, we find ourselves eating our fried chicken next to the conductor.

"What's your kick, girls?" inquires this aggressive gray person, severely. "You're only twelve hours late. Guess you don't know what a job it is to keep you passengers—*safe*."

June 15th.

New Mexico is proud of its largest city, just because it is bustling and four-square. But Easterners are advised to look upon Albuquerque in the silence of 5 A.M. when the bird songs are not drowned by whistlings, when the platform is not littered with inferior Indian pottery, when the sun is golden but not burning, and Sandia, the Watermelon Mountain, hangs Chinese blue in the sky.

"The air is the best of New Mexico," we said, filling our lungs with this glorious element. Then suddenly we saw an old Indian asleep on the Harvey House green-sward. A bronze statue of primeval times, akin to rocks and trees and mountains.

As we now steam slowly upgrade to Lamy, the junction for Santa Fe, New Mexico *revista* is almost familiar. Gertrude sighs that one can't have the same emotion twice, but I won't admit a diminution in the thrill of these gray-green reaches of mesa, these tawny hills that climb to the dark purple of the Sangre de Cristo. Everything in New

Mexico has extraordinary style—so I tell myself anew, taking in with eyes ever eager for form the flat roofs of the adobes, the draped black shawls of the women at the stations, the Rio Grande wearing its eternal way through gray rock.

"What is that village spread out like a game of dominoes?"

"I believe it's San Felipe Pueblo," I answer, recognizing the twisted white church tower, and beginning to listen for the muffled rhythm of a drum. Here I came on May 1st a year ago, in apple-blossom season, to see a very extraordinary corn dance.

Beyond the pueblo, two lone Indian figures on horseback, red handkerchiefs bound about their heads, ride with slow dignity across the fields.

"Wouldn't you think," says Gertrude, absorbing them into her consciousness, "that any American would be moved by the very fact of their being?"



RAMON BREAKING THE DINING-ROOM WINDOW

SANTA FE, *Evening*.

Letters of introduction from Commissioner Burke to Indian officials and fervent plans for studying pueblo conditions will serve us little at present—we have entered New Mexico this time by the Camino Mexicano. Last year, of the three civilizations of this state, American, Spanish, Indian—as separate in color and psychological substance as those rock strata one sees exposed on the Pajarito Plateau—it was the one named

"native" by the ruling class—the Spanish, that is to say—which we touched least. One brief look into its blackest heart in the *penitente* season, a salute from a brown-skinned person sheltered under the white top of a wagon descending directly from a prairie schooner, a tortilla offered by a gaunt, Goya-esque woman at some ranch in a mountain cañon—that was about what our Mexican contacts amounted to at Bishop's Lodge. But now. . .

Well, I am sitting in a high room with white walls washed with gypsum, under a ceiling of which the beams are draped in billows of white cheesecloth. And I hear Gertrude—engaged in hanging our butter down the well—conversing with Señora Alarid, who has been out to the orchard to bring in her washing. The señora wears a white towel over her head like a woman of Palestine, but it is Sicily rather than the Orient that her long dark face recalls—the Sicily with a dash of Arab in its blood. The well may or may not be salubrious, but very pretty the sort of courtyard formed by the angle of our two-roomed wing with the main adobe. And very lovely the ways of the señora with her husband, her old father, and her children. Seven children

(though their mother is probably several years younger than either of us). Their names? asks Gertrude.

"Josephine, Amalia, Pablo, Umberto . . ."

Here I lost count. But I already know Umberto; the shiny, yet unsmiling substance of his round brown eyes has drawn up my secrets as the sun draws vapors. Dressed in a pair of blue jeans that display plump four-year-old contours before and behind, he seats himself grimly on the doorstep of our kitchen, attended by a sprawling baby, sex unknown, to watch my amateurish efforts to get supper. Other spectators: Fido, an enormous black-and-white Newfoundland, of the Landseer type, and Queenie (Mexicans seem to have a Victorian taste in animal names), a minute shoot of the same family tree. There was nothing, the fixed solemnity of all four observers intimated, the matter with the *stove*. True enough. By the application of a little adobe mud, scooped up on the edge of the acequia (yes, here too we have an irrigation ditch running across the orchard), the misfit "joints" of stovepipe we bought en route were quite perfectly adjusted by the same artist and friend who has



SHOVELING DIRT OFF THE ROOF

added Japanese prints and gold-lacquer screens to the collection of picturesque relics of the Dudley sisters with which our rooms are furnished.

Furnished, yes, with vermilion bureaux, tin candelabra, and mirrors draped in black lace. It was a more prosaic collection of objects we stopped to buy on the Plaza—a bucket for the butter and milk, Poland water, meat, and groceries. Nothing could better mark our advance from the stage of tourists to that of insiders than this sudden leap from a sleeping car into household economics. Last year, hot baths, breakfasts in bed, comforts of a ranch *de luxe* awaited us at a group of buildings in the American-Spanish style where local color was supplied only externally—through horseback rides, or burrowing in Smithsonian Reports. Now we are met by the real Fanciulla del Oest, who, though by no means dressed in khaki, is able to initiate us into all the mysteries. A beautiful young creature, who looks sixteen and feels at least twenty-one. A creature who hugs us and then, with a truly terrifying competence, marshals our train-dazed spirits, directs our purchases, lunches us at the Parrot Shop, finally embarks us in a taxi for the Camino del Monte Sol. . . .

Here the Fanciulla—who won't be called "little Alice" much longer, though she be Alice Corbin's child—dropped in

again, her arms full of gay Mexican blankets for our cots. She has been having trouble with her hunchback maid, who perhaps resents being directed by a girl of fourteen. Not fourteen by Eastern time. Alice says:

"She can go. What do I care? I can cook better than she does. Father thinks so. Wait till you taste my shortcake. . . . Nella is so funny. She doesn't mind being a hunchback. She is just as sure of getting married. When her sister went up to the Pecos to work, Nella said: 'My papa had to talk to her seriously first. That stable boy, you couldn't trust him. My papa he would never let *me* go, of course. I am not strong enough to fight with a man.'"

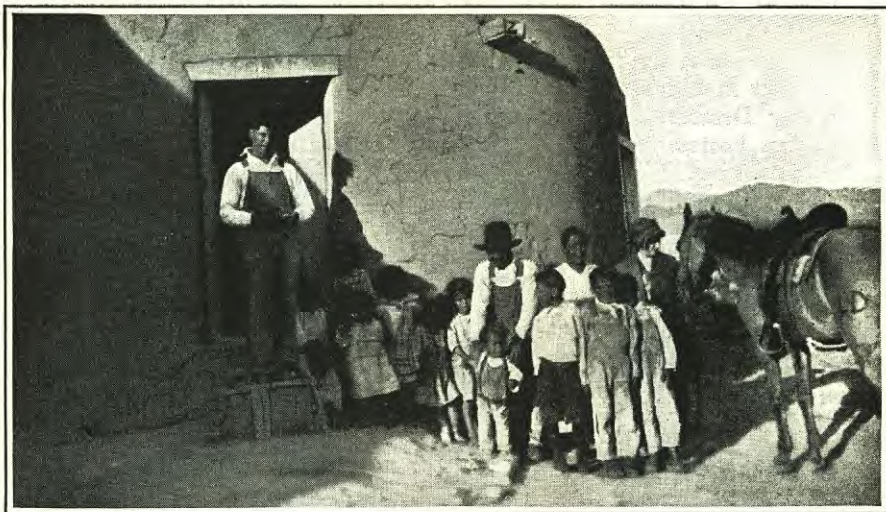
Last year Alice's ambition was to translate these stories of Mexican life into terms of the popular magazines (though, to be sure, the one she read me concerned a wounded French captain who fell in love with a Girl of the Golden West).

This year her ambitions are histrionic, and clothes her passion. She makes her own—good ones, too—and had to try on all of Gertrude's hats before we could go for a walk.

Finally we started up the road in the dark, or rather in a lucent moonlight that turned the hillsides silver. Air like the Adirondacks in September. Two horses tied at a gate. Three absorbed artists' faces under lamp. The porch of a studio. . . .



JOSÉ AT WORK ON OUR ROOF



THE HOUSE OF THE ROUND TOWER, LIKE SOME MOORISH STRONGHOLD

And here at last, spread out below us, is New Mexico, the New Mexico we came back for, a land untouched, interminable, terrible, and grand, still sleeping the sleep of the ages. How little the hand of man has stirred it from that sleep. The few lights of Santa Fe flicker like fireflies in a hollow. Beyond, on *lomas* mottled like some jungle beast, on cañons gouged black in the mountains, on pale desert outlines, only the cool inhuman light that falls from the bowl of the sky.

It was reassuring, as we came down, to catch the faint tinkle of a guitar, and to smell, like a whiff of pungent incense, the smoke of a few humble Mexican hearths.

June 16th.

The sun crept and crept toward the open door until I could stand it no longer. Gertrude screwed a reproachful eye—but here I sit in my dressing gown at 6 A.M. against the already warm face of the house, bathed in sun, soaked in sun, ready to sit here forever, watching the virgin light on the mountains, and the early smoke rising from flat roofs.

Grandfather Lobato comes around the corner, bent double, holding a bundle of hay. His salute is remote, taking cognizance of my undress, but passing it by.

There is something sweet and clear in the face of this old man; I think he asks nothing of life but to be a little useful still. He used to be a "freighter," he tells me in his mumbled English; made the trip from Kansas City on an ox-drawn prairie wagon. Three months each way! "My daughter *he* . . ." he keeps saying.

"My daughter he got any fruit this year. Frost he died his apples." And he hobbles on toward the corral at the foot of the delicious little orchard, where branches grow right out of the ground, ignoring the necessity of trunks.

Corrals and jagged fences of cedar posts weathered gray, patches of green alfalfa, scraps of bright flower garden, old-rose houses set at flat dicelike angles on the naked curves of old-rose hills—what a mercy not to have a bungalow in sight! In spite of its distinctive Palace of the Governors, the town has many modern Americanisms to blemish its vaunted Spanish antiquity. But this Mexican quarter which straggles out toward the forest-grown slopes of Santa Fe Cañon has real color and character still. How could the country seem so full of danger and mystery last night? This morning it is merely friendly, and *dolce far niente* in the Alarid orchard.

TESUQUE, *Evening.*

Far niente is not the right expression. I write now in bed at Mrs. O'Bryan's ranch, my Democratic friend and my Republican hostess being too deep in battle to miss me. We met the latter in the Plaza this afternoon, and were thrilled by every inch of the drive out in the Ford—a new acquisition this, bought to electioneer for Harding—over the familiar Bishop's Lodge road—the lower one which twists under the hills like a snake in the sand. When we came to the turn at the Lodge gate and saw stretching north *our* valley—narrow here between those desert slopes where the piñons make such dark, regular spots of green; when we splashed through the river at the point where the gray-green clumps of rabbit bush are so thick; when we saw ahead our friend's little ranch set so exactly right for the eye

against the distant blue of the Jemez—at last we felt *at home*.

"Do you remember the first time you came to this ranch?"

Indeed I do! It was one of our early days at the Lodge. We had walked down the road to a very inviting rustic gate, through which we espied a man in a sombrero, working in a field. But when we hailed him, the "man," leaving his plow, revealed himself as a woman dressed in khaki shirt and breeches. A very vivacious and unmasculine-looking little lady, who affirmed that; after twelve years in Paris, she had come back to her native New Mexico and bought a ranch, which she was working herself.

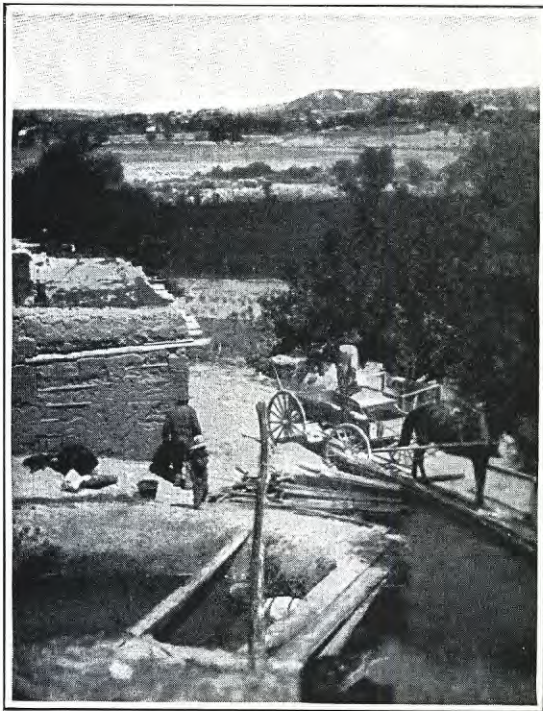
She realized our eagerness to see our own acres, and we drove quickly on. The stretch of road beyond her farm has always had for me a peculiar attraction. I don't know whether it is the "little Tesuque," rushing so fast behind its screen of cottonwoods, or the green contrast of the bottomland with the stark, sunny wall of the cañon. Or that adobe with the round tower at its end, clinging right under the mountain, like some Moorish stronghold.

A green dip through the river and we pass another adobe, a spreading one with blue window frames.

"Don Hipolito's," says Mrs. O'Bryan. "He's the real thing, a Spanish patriarch of the old school. You can trust him up to the hilt."

A sandy crossing, this time, and the Tesuque dodges to the left, while the road slips into the middle of the widening valley between tended apple orchards.

"Harsh's farm on the left," continues Mrs. O'Bryan. "That is Williams's orchard, terraced down the hill on the right—the one you bought the corner of. . . ."



A VIEW FROM OUR ROOF DURING ROOFING
PROCESS

Yes, we are almost there. Up a little rise and the district schoolhouse sits on its sharp hill ahead like a lump of sugar. And here, below a line of steep terraces, partly orchard, partly rough grass, a broken wire gate through which many a burro has obviously nudged his way.

"But where is the *house*?" exclaims Gertrude, making a dash for the hill. "What a hill! We'll turn into mountain goats."

Had it melted away in the winter? Deserted adobes sometimes do. No, it was only hidden by a group of apple trees and cottonwoods, and an enormous rose of Castille, in full yellow bloom—hidden by the green and protected like some enchanted house by the acequia.

"The first thing you need is a bridge, my friends," says Mrs. O'Bryan, as we tumble across, wet to the knees.

Well, it's the sort of house a child draws: door in the middle, window on the right, window on the left—and everything a little crooked. The door gapes, the windows sag, the flat roof is grown with flowering weeds. Mud has fallen in cakes from the walls. Yet the house, too, seems under the spell of utter charm that rules the place. Charm in the acequia describing a wide curve between us and the adobe just below, and then wandering back across our rear through lush beds of mint and Bouncing bet. Charm in the dilapidated residence of our Mexican neighbor (which so obligingly does not obstruct our view), with its beehive oven built right into the wall. Charm in our little storehouse and our own tumble-down oven, sitting on the thin high neck of the ridge that runs up from the south end of the house toward the knoll. Charm in the inquisitive brown faces that peer as we scramble through barbed wire. . . .

"Watch Salomé, will you?" remarks Mrs. O'Bryan. "My, but he hates you to-night! He has always considered this his own private 'lookout.'"

A "lookout" indeed, our "hill or knoll" with a long, wondrous, northern view that seems to blend the softness of

Italy with the hard ascetic glow of Egypt. First, our flat red-brown roof and Salomé's; then green fields of corn and alfalfa; then (for the Egyptian eye) Mexican Tesuque, grouping its gray adobes below a bare hill with a cross on the top. The Indian village is hidden somewhere in that immense waste of green beyond. . . .

"That yellow ridge at the end of the valley looks near enough to touch, doesn't it? It's twenty-five miles away—the Arroyo Seco just this side of the Rio Grande and Española."

"It's like the Grand Cañon," breathes Gertrude.

"It's like the Parthenon. . . ."

"And see the Black Mesa. . . ."

"And the mesas of the Pajarito."

These latter stand out like "tables" indeed, to-night. High, flat, purple tables, separated by the deeper purple triangles of the cañons that lie between. And above, the blue ethereal Jemez against a yellow sunset.

But my bedroom is here invaded by New Mexican politics.

"If I knew that the Republican candidate was the devil himself I would vote for him! That's what party means to me."

Our hostess is the descendant of Spanish territorial governors, and her family still helps to run the state. How should she be worsted by a righteous Democrat? Doesn't believe in women in politics, maybe because she is too good a Catholic. Still, she does *love* campaigning. . . .

June 17th.

My head is reeling from the effort to acquire in one gulp—as I once tried to acquire the rudiments of the military art at Chaumont—some knowledge of building. A decisive conference was held this morning on our hill, Mrs. O'Bryan representing the practical and executive, Mr. Henderson (sacrificing a day's painting to ride out with the Fanciulla) the arts, Brigham representing the roofers, Martinez (our neighbor who has

asked to do the plastering) the masons, while Gertrude and I—what do we represent but colossal ignorance? She may know the difference between a 1x10 and a 2x4—I hope so. But even her keen look goes distracted when three-ply roofing and No. 9 nails are in question. And for adobe building—there she is right in my class.

It is agreed that a flat expanse of what the builder calls "ashfelt" roofing, guaranteed to preserve the native character of the house and to keep out any amount of rain ("You should worry for fifteen years") shall be put on first of all—at great expense. But at least, the experts say, we need not tear out the *vigas*, the old round beams that traverse our rooms at an interval of a foot or so and emerge, knoblike, in the outside plaster just below the roof. We have decided to preserve, too, the hand-hewn boards that form the ceiling above them, browned like the beams to a beautiful old Mexican age. The artists will envy us, though the American farmers despise us. Our middle room is to have glass tops to the doors and an adobe fireplace. Our bedroom (on the right) a threefold casement window to the mountains. Our dining room (on the left) a big window toward the Rio Grande. The Mexicans build their houses with almost no windows—only two in this one!—but each of our end rooms, by good luck, already possesses one of the quaint three-cornered native fireplaces, set on a raised hearth and calcimined the color of the walls. After considerable parley, a tiny kitchen is outlined on the hill, in front of the dining room. We want to preserve the back of the house for a terrace and a *portal*.

Though Salomé kept a jealous eye on the proceedings and obligingly offered his ladder to inspect our roof, when it came to a bargain about the adobe work there was no making one. Mrs. O'Bryan gestured, he pulled his black impertinent mustache, and she returned saying we must get some one else—he was "the crankiest Mexican in the valley." Some

trouble about a horse, too. Well, it seems unfortunate; we want to be on neighborly terms. A carpenter to lay floors is even more difficult to find. The roofer *thinks* he knows "kind of a simple fellow from Nebraska" who might do it—"got kind of a queer car he could come out in, too." This matter of "coming out" is going to be a large item. When I consider that every board and nail has to be hauled six miles from Santa Fe, and that we—who, contractor less, must do the selecting of every board and nail—must also be hauled not six but seven miles from our Camino. Well I shall buy a horse. But how arrive on horseback at 8 A.M.? Our experts tell us no Mexican works except when he is watched and advised.

Gertrude repudiates this view, partly because she is too good a Wilsonian Democrat to admit doubts of anything called Mexico, but also, I hazard, because she hates acutely to get up early. I repudiate an *a priori* mistrust because—*a priori*—all Latin peoples are sympathetic. But listen to farmer Thompson in his slow Iowa drawl:

"Well, you'll find out pretty quick that the better you treat 'em, the worse they act. I decla' they just keep on *mad*. Some days, if they had fur on, I'd shoot 'em."

June 20th.

First moment for writing for several days. I am sitting in our house, out of the burning sun (it gets up its tempo at midday, we note, though the nights of this high plateau are still cold), back against the wall, as José and his little brother sat to eat their lunch just now. Their sheepskin and dinner pail are spread on the dirt floor. José (Salomé substitute), a black, sensitive-looking boy who appears full of zeal, has already built—in one day—a jolly little oven fireplace with plump adobe walls, not a wet dark-brown color, on the usual raised hearth.

Opposite me the open door—"battered" door, I add from my new vocabulary—with summer pouring down from

broken red hills. I can't see the higher piny peaks. Crickets chirp, cottonwoods rustle, and I hear José squencing mud and slapping it on the storhouse with a trowel. The process is of the simplest: dig a hole in the hillside, pour in water fetched from the ditch in any old tin can. Result, adobe plaster which dries a yellowy pink, very satisfying to the eye.

Many strenuous moments have preceded this peace. We spent last night again at kind Mrs. O'Bryan's, in order to get here early. Between feeding chickens and Gertrude's temperament, it ended by being well after nine, but because we found our new workman knocking plaster off the roof (not smoking a cigarette under a tree) my "pardner," as José calls her, concludes it is never necessary to be on hand—interesting, but not necessary, she says.

Not necessary? We began with a kitchen conference. José says he can build the room in two days, but needs five hundred adobe bricks. Where to get them? We might address ourselves to Miguel Martinez (called Mike), who has rows and rows of said bricks destined for a new house, spread out to dry in the sun below his brother Salomé's. But Salomé's attitude this morning was such.

... On the watch as we climbed the hill, our enemy-neighbor did greet us by raising his peaked hat. But the next moment he stole across the acequia and took away the ladder he had loaned, just as José needed it.

"Didn't I say so?" said Mrs. O'Bryan.

Salomé then climbed to his own roof and began pulling up weeds. Some he tucked, the rest he cast away. The roof had not had this attention for a long time; it looks like a flower garden. Everywhere we moved the brown, frowning face also moved, waiting and watching for another chance.

It came. Friday it had been agreed that we should have the privileges of Salomé's new well, as we can't undertake to dig one this year. But when

Gertrude sent José for a pail of water he returned with a thwarted air.

"Pardner he say, 'Get water.' That fél-low he say, 'No.' He no like Mr. Brown-Horse, I think."

Mr. Brown-Horse? José floundered hopelessly when asked to elucidate.

But I go too fast. Earlier came a drive in the Ford in search of 'dobs. None in the nearer valley. So we spin on to one of the last Tesuque outposts, a little store kept by the tribe of Chavez. The store is empty of merchandise, and Señora Chavez, short and vastly proportioned, with a long, thick, black braid hanging down her back, has no suggestions to offer. But the appearance of a very beautiful young Josefita opens another issue. Could she provide us with a daughter for a servant? Josefita looks eager, but is a little too young. Melinda, sixteen, will be better.

Gertrude is attracted by the lovely pink color of the señora's one garment.

"Where did you get the stuff?"

"From her own store," interprets Mrs. O'Bryan.

"I'd like some—"

The señora looks confused. It seems it is meal sacking, dyed by herself.

Evening.

Our old friend "Tom, the taximan," drove us in to-night. Tom is still gray and gaunt, but decidedly spruced and cheered by his new bride. Tom highly disapproves of our Tesuque venture, is sure we are being cheated right and left. He'd prefer to have us invest in motor trips like the one we took last year, beginning at Taos and ending at the Rito de los Frijoles.

"Did you know I had my weddin' in one of them cliff dwellings? You bet. Got to have *some* romance in your life. Say, Miss Gertrude, when's your turn coming? Couldn't scare up no beau in the East, could you?" To me: "Needs a man to boss her worse 'n any woman I ever saw. If anyone else kept me waitin' like she does, I'd charge 'em five extra every time."

TESUQUE, June 21st.

A crucial day; even Gertrude consented to be called at six. We actually reached the lumber yard at seven, and the ranch—in company with Brigham and his Mexican roofers—before eight.

José greets us as follows: "Lady like see Mr. Brown. He want twenty-five dollar ten hundred 'dobes."

Light dawns gradually. "Mr. Brown" must be Mrs. O'Bryan. She has found a thousand adobes, but the owner asks twenty-five dollars for them.

"Isn't that expensive?"

José grins, and Brigham, who scorns our greenness, says they cost only fifteen dollars a thousand in town. But there'd be the hauling. Why not have Joe make them right here? "Joe" grins again. "'*Sta bueno.*" But, protests the chief Mexican roofer, they wouldn't be dry enough to use for several weeks. The long and short of it—the "long" a hot walk to Williams's telephone—is that we conclude a bargain, though the bricks have first to be removed from the walls of another house. Labor of two more men. . . .

Meanwhile our deserted hill swarms, and Salomé's lower level, too; we seem to have patched things up, for his place is a roofer's highway. One man hauling gravel, another heating asphalt in a huge caldron, two more and somebody's little boy shoveling dirt off the roof—pounds and pounds go flying. The former owner patched his leaks with any defunct domestic implement—an ax, a pick, a washboard, a tin basin, and a grindstone were literally "unearthed." A cold-blooded gentleman, too, it seems. Five separate stove holes to be filled up. And rotten boards and defective brick. . . .

In the interval of watching these proceedings, which have drawn other spectators than ourselves (two stray horses, one burro, eight hens, one black dog, one gray kitten, and a young devil of a Manuel from next door), Gertrude and I test our fireplaces, encourage José—whose pace, alas! declines—cook our lunch, as usual, on the edge of the

acequia, scrape old paint off a door, drive out surplus animals, watch the spraying of our orchard, eat ice cream sent up by Mrs. Williams, and receive our first load of lumber, which one Matias, a presentable young Mexican, has managed to haul six miles in five and a half hours. But by five o'clock the roof is really finished—all but the adobe coping which José is supposed to add. It looks invulnerable, is just the color of the house, and has, at the back, three picturesque hand-hewn wooden gutters, guaranteed to dispose of all cloudbursts.

TESUQUE, June 22d.

José has now annexed a real "helper," his brother Ramon, who claims a high-school education, but has little English beyond "yessir."

"Say yes, ma'am, to a lady," I gently suggest.

"Yessir," he hastily agrees, with a quite adorable smile.

Matias, much more fluent, is not particular about respectful terminations Mrs. O'Bryan would say that American education had spoiled him. Yet isn't this rather sulky self-consciousness an inevitable stage in the transformation of the peon-peasant into a good American? And won't a little human converse establish better relations? After one trip with him on his team to fetch adobes—only thirty in a load, they are so heavy—Matias is a different boy. He proposes to lend us a wheelbarrow, will find us *vigas* for the *portal*, warns me solemnly that the men who are taking down the bricks are slacking on their job. . . .

Gertrude, likewise bent on true acquaintance, made the jolting journey across the river with Don Hipolito, who has also consented to "haul."

"My children, all *matrimonio*," he tells her, benignantly smiling. A grand old fellow, swarthy as the ace of spades with a very white shirt and moustache.

SANTA FE, June 23d.

My "pardner" waked me at 2 A.M. to describe the Rileys' fancy-dress bal

I was too weary to go, but she, of course, had the spirit to put on a Babani frock and start off with a gentleman dressed in leopard skin. These glimpses of American Santa Fe, caught after our days of Mexican manual labor, have their piquancy! Alice Corbin discoursing gayly of literary pioneers in her Summit porch. Randall Davey in the pink house up the cañon to which his wife's flowered dresses are so becoming. The De Huffs talking pueblo affairs over the dinner Josephine failed to come home to cook, the first night there was music in the Plaza.

Is that girl awake, or shall I have to arise and call her? (I hate to, for it humiliates her grandfather that the young generation is so casual.) The eldest Alarid is now our accredited servant. I can't help liking Josephine, though she won't get up in the morning, often runs off to the movies before we return from Tesuque, and finds our clothes irresistible. Our hats are never where we left them, and I shouldn't be at all surprised to meet one in the Plaza any afternoon—as Katharine Dudley once met her red coat. Nan Mitchell, who has just arrived, bent on Indian exploration, and joins our Mexican "*popotte*," can't understand our tolerance of these idiosyncrasies. But, as Katharine used to say, "Well, she can *cook*; and, after all, she's one of the belles of Santa Fe and has to have her fun!" Easy to see why Josephine joins us in looking forward to "Miss Katharine's" arrival.

Evening.

This was the first day of the carpenter Steffanson, and his yellow topknot, bright-blue eyes, and pink cheeks were in strange contrast to the dark-skinned element, who cast glowering looks from the shade of the apple tree as the Swede spread out his doughnuts beside our acequia lunch and asked us—if we didn't want a boarder?

"Get on the job, you fél-low," called José, impudently, at two minutes past one. It is true that the day's record is—just one window frame.

The carpenter insisted on bringing us home in the "queer kind of a car," about which he is as sensitive as a mother with a defective child, bound to prove that it has all its faculties. The car lacks entirely any outer integument, so its in'ards seem shamelessly exposed. Among them, however, no brake. We skimmed the hills in positively lurid fashion. A scenic railroad was nothing to us.

TESUQUE. Saturday Night.

Always some fresh crisis. Yesterday the carpenter arrived three hours late and then quarreled steadily with Joe—or Joe with him—as to methods of breaking windows and laying 2x4's. Gertrude had gone to an Indian dance at San Juan, and I, sole arbiter, wished fervently that my father had apprenticed me in the building trades. Is there just one right way to lay a floor? And is it Steffanson's or José's? My ignorance of the fundamental arts on which our civilization rests begins to get on my nerves.

To-day, no carpenter at all. We are rather glad to have it settled that way. José would be drawing a knife pretty soon. And he insists that he and Ramon can finish the work in a week.

The kitchen (still an imaginary quantity) is now provided with a stove. We yesterday visited on horseback the house of the round tower room, which proves to be really a century old or more. There we found a stove for four dollars, a dining table for one fifty, and—somewhere in a vast, overflowing family, whose relationships we can't yet disentangle—an oven expert, named Anastacio, who will rebuild our outdoor *orno*. The indoor *estufa* crossed the acequia this morning in a wheelbarrow, together with two loads of wood, on burros—enough to last a month. Will Melinda be really cooking us a dinner next Sunday, as José promises us?

This first week of labor has accomplished—*something*, we say, gazing at the littered hill after Don Hipolito and Matias have dumped their last loads,

and José and Ramon driven off in their old buggy.

"It looks like devastated France!"

Yet we have only to sit a few minutes on the edge of the ridge to find ourselves in a pure pastoral. Cows and their sportive calves are tinkling down from the pink *lomas* toward Salomé's corral. The little Mexican church half hidden in the arroyo behind us, shows its tower through the poplars.

Slowly the Mountains of the Blood of Christ turn literally blood purple—like Hymettus at evening. The light is Greek, but the gods of the Sangre de

Cristo are neither Greek nor Christian. More primeval and dangerous are the powers that dwell behind these furrowed ridges—thunder-birds, and coyotes, and eagles, and witches in black shawls.

"We did not come to New Mexico to worry about a carpenter—"

Later.

I spoke too soon. On reaching the Camino del Monte Sol we found this note from Steffanson:

Sorry to disappoint you. Car out of Fix. Will go out Tomorrow with Tarp to Camp till I finish the Job.

(To be continued)

GETHSEMANE

BY DAVID SEABURY

WHO knows what gray days dawned through Shakespeare's years;
 What long weeks fraught with somber doubts and fears;
 Behind old Dante's smile how pressed the tears,
 Or through what hells he never told, there grew
 The passion in his heart, the sense that drew
 His life to peace? The skylark wings and sings,
 Yet trembles at each shadow in the sky.
 With laughter on her lips the morning springs
 From pain within the womb of night, to die
 When day is done. Before the peace which came
 When Hamlet strode through his creator's brain
 Sense we not bitterness and brooding shame?
 Great light is but the darkness free from pain,
 Great Minds but they who suffered not in vain.



MRS. O'BRYAN'S PORCH OVERLOOKS A TANGLE OF FLOWERS

THE JOURNAL OF A MUD HOUSE

PART II

BY ELIZABETH SHEPLEY SERGEANT

TESUQUE, June 29th.

SOME of the Southwestern native spirit has got into my blood. I should love to linger in the Santa Fe Plaza on a fine summer morning. Instead, I tie my horse at the corner of the Governor's Palace and hurry through the long brown colonnade. Not one look at the prehistoric pottery. José needs nails, locks for the doors, hinges. What a job it is to rebuild an adobe *casa!*

"Buenos días, patrona!"

No mistaking that voice. There in the middle of the blazing street, his thin legs astride a diminutive gray burro, sits Salomé, our neighbor of Tesuque, two pack animals laden with wood before him. He lifts his hat, his little brown face spread over with a grin at his hum-

ble mode of address. "*Patrona!*" I smell a rat. Salomé has thought better of his sulking. . . . Yes, he is asking me to allow him to cut our wood. And his son, Pedro, would be useful if we needed an extra workman.

"We'll think about it."

"*Esta bueno, patrona. Muy bien.*" So, grinning back at me, he ambles on to barter his wood for groceries, I suppose, on the other side of the Plaza.

This shady quadrangle—green space in a burnt land, spot to gossip and trade and watch the *muchachas* walk by—is a straight Spanish inheritance, and seems still to belong to Salomé and his kind. A vaguely cowboyish artist comes out of the New Museum as I pass. I suppose he thinks *he* owns the Plaza. A long row of Ford trucks parked in

front of the new movie theater (adobe towers can be overdone); of course, the confident American farmers think *they* are its lords and masters. But so far as I can see, every single Plaza bench is occupied by tawny furrowed persons who smell of a long, dusty road from a tawny furrowed cañon. Our Mexican neighbors of Tesuque never say, "I am going to town"; they always go "to the Plaza." I am just beginning to understand the symbolism, the lure it has kept from the pioneer days for the scattered ranches and villages of the Santa Fe region.

As I approach the Capital City Bank a wagon with a round canvas top like a plump white sausage drives up to the curb. On its seat two dark men in sombreros; behind, on a pile of alfalfa, a dark woman wearing over her head a black shawl with heavy knotted fringe. The woman climbs down, shakes out her purple-satin skirt, adjusts her shawl in the manner of Seville, and starts for the cathedral. One of the men descends also, lights a cigarette, looks easily about, spies a crony, and lounges with him to the Plaza bench, violently gestur-

ing. I'll walk by. . . . Yes, I guessed right! The word that resounds is "Bursum."

My politicians are the same type as the men Gertrude and I employ for the repairs to our mud house. Fifty years ago their grandfathers were peons, to all intents and purposes slaves of the big Spanish landowners of the old Territory. Yet now these humble descendants wield the controlling vote in New Mexico. It is fashionable to call them "a race in decay." If so, decadence does not imply subservience to the American or Spanish-American ranchers who have gradually replaced the Spanish overlords. That I have already discovered. I met a descendant of the Conquistadores last year who winced visibly at the word "Mexican" and called too often on the memory of his ancestors. The "dominant American" had trodden rather brutally on his toes. But I wonder whether the native culture of the peasant Spaniard has not been fortified rather than transformed by "American influences." Neither sagebrush nor piñon seems more tenacious. We note, to be sure, a few signs of mod-



MRS. O'BRYAN DRIVING HER HAY RAKE

ernism: Matias knows that New York is on the Atlantic Ocean; Josephine Alarid, our serving maid at our lodgings in town, would rather die than wear her mother's black shawl to mass, though it is wondrously becoming to her clear brown skin. But Salomé? I doubt if he is especially different from his great-grandfather. For instance, he builds a new well, but continues to dip water from the irrigation ditch for drinking. And he calls no woman *patrona* in his heart. Isn't his adobe *casa* as good as or better than ours? And he has what we have not—a burro or two, several cows and pigs, some fields of alfalfa and chili, and a long, long hour, after he trades his wood, to discuss the disposition of his valuable vote in the Plaza of the state capital.

Reflections on the country and people string themselves along the six miles to Tesuque (Gertrude is carpenter hunting and I ride on ahead to see that José does not do irreparable harm to the living-room floor). An hour's solitary ride is a rather pleasant oasis in a day that begins and ends with the sociabilities of the Camino del Monte Sol, and continues through the midday heat with the acute conflicts of Tesuque building. It is impossible to describe the vortex of activity in which we are whirled from cockcrow to sunset. But here at least I can gather my thoughts—if the process

that goes on inside one's head to the jog trot of a horse, with the sun burning down on hard white road and piñon-dotted distance, can be called thought. About as intellectual as the purr of a cat behind the stove, this sense of physical well-being that fills me. Yet there is nothing really lulling and comatose about the New Mexico sun and heat. That's where the Southwest is different

from the South. One's senses are always keen, one's mind is always awake, thanks to the fillip of altitude in the air and the extraordinary stimulus that comes from mere vision.

Vision is never twice alike. Today, as I reach the top of the rise that commands the vast view of the Rio Grande Valley, I seem to be looking down into a giant contour map—or perhaps from some high-poised planet into the mountains of the moon. These loose, sandy wastes were lifted, æons ago, into queer ridgy whorls by a titanic blast of wind, and then abandoned to silence

and immobility. . . . Yesterday the coloring was pure joyous color—yellow, red, purple, blue—no line, no detail. The day before it was all geometrical pattern—long horizontal sweeps of mesa, sharp slants of aspiring mountain, with nothing but cerulean space swimming between. To-morrow, every rock stratum, every flat roof, will stand out with microscopic clarity. No, the land is never twice alike



ALVINA AND LUCIANA READY
TO PLASTER

save in that magnitude and that majesty which give a stretch to the soul—or make it feel like a needle point in eternity. I can't be sure yet what the country does to my soul, but I know it keeps my eyes in such a state of bedazzlement that I have difficulty, once arrived at our devastated hilltop, in focusing them on a floor.

Here is a specimen of the conversation that ensues:

I: "José, that board is five inches short of the wall."

J. (*with a hen-pecked sigh*): "Pardner" (*he means my friend Gertrude*) "he not like knot holes."

I: "But you should save the boards with knot holes for the roof."

J. (*shrugging his shoulders*): "Matias he choose bad lumber."

I (*firmly*): "José, take up that board and use another."

J. (*bending his little black head crossly over the board and ripping it away so roughly that it splits in two*): "That fél-low" (*now he is trying to shift the blame to Steffanson, our late Swedish carpenter*) "he no sabe how lay two by four."

What is one to do with such a workman? All Latin peoples are not, alas! gifted for craftsmanship. Anything less like French technic than Mexican technic can hardly be imagined. Another window frame gauged during the time we spent at dinner at the Harshes' just now.

An excellent farmhouse dinner it was. Our sketchy and increasingly dusty lunches by the acequia are over and it

is a comfort to get away from repairs and Mexicans for an hour to the cool adobe in the apple orchard below. An adobe under a desert hill is capable, we discover, of having within an air of Middle Western comfort, even to polished oak and brass bedsteads.

The telephone rings while we are at table. Mrs. Harsh, a young woman still, dark, and burnt darker by the sun, jumps up to answer:

"Yes, it sure is. . . . No, I didn't get to go to town to-day. . . . Why, I use Swansdown for my cake. . . . Sure I'll give it to you—three cups of flour, four eggs. . . ."

It seemed to me at first that farm life in the Southwest does not differ greatly from farm life in New England. Yet it differs in one essential at least. It is founded on hope, not on despair; on action, not on inhibition. No setting

your teeth to meet the hard and grim in Tesuque; the world looks sunny. The children's faces show it. Edith's—a lovely, fresh young face below a crown of brown-gold hair—somehow reveals that at nineteen she can fully and freely choose her woman's destiny in this underfeminized land. And fourteen-year-old Frank, without a complex to impede, wants, with an open-hearted smile, "to go East to college and be an engineer." His father and mother smile more soberly. They have neither of them seen the Atlantic or the Pacific.

Conversation is chiefly agricultural. Few apples this year. But the first cut-



THE WALL THAT BUCKLED

ting of alfalfa is just fine, and two more to come before summer ends.

"I have the water to-morrow," says the rancher, with satisfaction.

"But can't anyone draw on the irrigation ditch when he pleases?" asks Gertrude.

Far from it. "The water" so essential to all Southwestern farming is apportioned in turns by a potentate called the "*Mayordomo*"—a Mexican potentate whose decisions are not always popular with the "Americans."

"You'll meet him soon enough. A one-eyed fellow." Mr. Harsh finds Mexicans to be "folks you can get on with if you treat 'em right. No reason why they'd be your slaves." His wife joins in, "The people around here are all good people." I needn't be afraid to live alone when Gertrude goes. . . . This pair has a rare poise and kindness and a humorous tolerance of our tenderfootedness. They never offer a suggestion, but are ready with a generous and helpful one when we ask for it. Whatever our Mexican neighbors may prove, we are extraordinarily lucky in our American neighbors.

TESUQUE, July 2d.

We are cooking supper to-night on the ridge, over a fire built of odds and ends of lumber. It is a chore to get to the other side of Santa Fe in time for an evening meal after a day of Tesuque labors. We have tried every form of

locomotion but walking, from Mr. Harsh's milk truck to José's old buggy. So we are delighted when the two friends who share our town *popotte* decide to ride out to join us instead, at the incomparable sunset hour.

Nan Mitchell gravitates naturally toward the view and the frying pan. She loves great spaces and, after her experience in Serbia and devastated France, has a tendency to do more than her

share of hard work. Katharine, the artist, is fascinated by the details of building and decoration; she moves instinctively toward our paint pots—not to mention our acequia, into which she plunges almost before she gets off "Old Blue." She chooses a secluded mint-bordered curve where nobody but one of the little Salomé's, herding calves and cows down from the hills for the night, could be a witness. Katharine fits, as no other Easterner does, into the New Mexican scene. Her thin, sinewy figure, her fascinating little dark face, her mop of black bobbed hair,



DEMOLISHING THE KITCHEN WALL

her bright-colored clothes, might have a Spanish derivation. All the Mexicans adore her—even our neighbor readily lends a coffee pot at her behest. Even his snooping poodle licks her hand. She insists we misunderstand them both.

To-night we look with new feelings on the triangular field with the group of cottonwoods at its apex which stretches from the acequia back to Salomé's corral. It belongs by rights to this estate

and, in spite of excellent resolutions to get in no deeper, we have ended by buying it from Williams—"about an acre." We shall put in alfalfa, and maybe a corral at the far end for our horses.

Of course, José's promises to finish up this week have come to naught. Floors done, window frames in, but still no sign of a kitchen. We have accepted as part of the Mexican genius that crookedness which Robert Edmond Jones put, from New Mexican inspiration, into the background of his *Macbeth*. Every one of the four doors in our living room is a different size and set at a different uneven angle. (The door into the dining room is so low that Gertrude gives her tall head a crack every time she goes through.) But we do somehow want the doors to *open* and the windows to *shut!* One of the troubles with José and Ramon is that they each have a secondary occupation—playing the fiddle and banjo at Mexican *bailes*. They can scarcely wait to start home an hour earlier on Saturday nights.

Just here, as I sat scribbling, there rode up beside me a black-visaged personage who proved to be the famous *Mayordomo*, Señor Francisco Jemenez. He had come to oversee, in relation to the ditch, certain constructions we are making, and he also wished, oh, fervently, to sell me his ragged sorrel pony. I agreed to try it, but that did not persuade him to leave. He just sat there, his large black orb wildly roving from

one to the other of these four ladies in riding breeches engaged in unknown rites. One thin one with a bright-red handkerchief tied over her hair, mixing blue calcimine. Two other tall and thin ones kneeling over a fire. And another, neither tall nor thin, writing in a book. Not till I gave him some oranges for his children did he leave, murmuring under his breath. Tesuque is used enough to American farmers' wives, but finds us a remarkable species.

RANCHO ESCONDIDO,
July 3d.

This is the first really peaceful day since we came to New Mexico. It was not intended to be such. After inconceivable efforts we made arrangements with one Jones, a carpenter, to break the Sabbath and the Fourth. Then Mrs. O'Bryan, the kindest of neighbors, who takes all our troubles on her shoulders (shoulders that look very slight and slender, yet lift a hundred-pound sack of grain like a strong man's), in-



A CARPENTER AT LAST

vited us to come out again to be near enough to oversee. But of course Jones did not turn up. So we had the luxury of wandering in the fields and orchards so beautifully tended by our friend herself. Here at last, and inside the house as well, is French technic! What a lunch she cooked, too! And then, in the hour of digestion, we sat in the cool porch that overlooks a tangle of flowers, listening to tales of the old days. Mrs. O'Bryan's is the sparkle of a spirit that laughs at itself, and her speech

is as piquant as the chili she puts in her rice.

Her son, a young engineer, here for the holiday, only half approves his mother's reversion to Southwestern type after many years in Paris. "She used to be the fussiest little dresser you ever saw," he lamented.

Her blue eyes danced. "Yes, I wouldn't go out till my veil was just so, if it took an hour, like any Parisian.

And how many hats and sets of furs did I have when I came home? Well, I tell you, I sometimes wonder why I'm here. This week, now, when I was driving the hay rake and tramping down alfalfa on top of the wagon. Tramp, tramp and a shower of green. Tramp, tramp till I ached all over—and suddenly I asked myself what I was doing it *for*? Just to feed two little Mexican ponies I bought for twenty-five dollars apiece!"

All the same, the son is proud of his mother's masculine capacity, her fearlessness.

"You ought to see her shoot. The natives just stand around and gape when she takes her shotgun and brings down a chipmunk. That's the only reason I feel safe about her in this lonely place. They know she has a six-shooter under her pillow and won't hesitate to use it if anybody fails to state his business."

His mother said that she was brought up just like a boy with her brothers.

"Did I ever tell you how I shot a man when I was only twelve or thirteen? We

were living in Las Vegas at the time. There had been some trouble and all the young men were called out to patrol. My two brothers elected to go on duty the same night, leaving my mother and me alone in the house. My mother was a Southerner of the old school, you know. My father (he was pure Spanish) met her at St. Louis when he was sent there to the university. She couldn't for her life have handled a gun. So the boys

said, half in joke, 'If you hear anything, Mame, don't take any chances.' Well, I did hear something mighty suspicious"—and she went on to describe how, going into a dark room, she saw a man trying to force the window, and how she sat quietly in a chair, holding her gun until the right moment. . . . "We never knew how badly he was hurt. We found a trail of blood as far as the gate the next morning."

So the tales went on. It is not difficult for an Otero to go back to the days when life was really lightly held, when

great landowners had not only Spanish dependents, but "bought Indians," in their ranch houses. (So that, I reflected, is where the peasant Mexican got his reputed Indian strain.) As if to point the contrast, our hostess's "Cousin Manuel" just then appeared in his big car for a Sunday call. This large and genial gentleman is a combination of astute Republican leader and successful sheep rancher and looks no more Spanish than Mrs. O'Bryan herself. A child could discern that he is a typical West-



LOOKING ACROSS THE ACEQUIA AT SALOMÉ'S WIFE AND ELDEST SON

ern American, and it would be interesting to know by what process he has evolved from the Spanish grandee who drove in a coach and six and governed men and land with a high hand. It was during Mrs. O'Bryan's father's lifetime that the Santa Fe railroad came into the Territory—indeed, he had been instrumental in bringing it. Power seems to be something that hands itself down hereabouts; and one feels, both in our friend and her cousin, in their talk, manners, and looks, precisely that quality—hereditary power over the soil and the men of the soil, and a sense of personal stake in the larger governmental organism which, in this now very much modified "frontier," is still more closely involved with the soil than it is in the Eastern states.

TESUQUE, July 4th.

A new way to spend the Fourth—knocking adobe plaster off walls. José and Ramon had worked all day yesterday on the walls and we supposed them ready for the ministrations of

Señora Alvina Trujillo, who came bright and early from the house of the round tower to begin calcimining. But after dubious inspection she informed me in Spanish (she has no English) that the whole thing must be done over. The city *muchachos* had made a mess of it. I decided that she was probably right. So we armed ourselves with hatchets and knives and set to work pulling off old layers. Blue ones, pink ones, yellow ones, white ones! The natives calcimine at least once a year and plaster almost as often.

This afternoon, Alvina's sister, Luciana Sais, summoned from the village, has been here, and they are beginning to replaster. First they studied our various soils with expert attention, and chose the pink earth by the storehouse. They then mixed earth with water and attacked the job, throwing the liquid mud with a clever, strong flip of the wrist against the wall, smoothing it with a trowel, then spattering it with water and smoothing it again with the flat of the hand or a piece of sheepskin. They



Photograph by the School of American Research

THE SANTA CRUZ CHURCH, ONE OF THE TREASURES OF THE SOUTHWEST

are infinitely swifter and more skillful than the men, and it is pretty to watch the two—Alvina, stout and comfortable; Luciana, thin and gaunt, both very bright-eyed and Moorish-looking under the white towels that envelop their heads, chattering and spattering away from the tops of two ladders.

Gertrude arrived after lunch, full of her usual verve. Ducking out of the dining room, she inquired, pertinently: "What *is* José good for? Not for carpentry. Not even for the plastering that is supposed to be his trade! Can he build that kitchen wall?"

This job, the most considerable one of our undertaking, looms immediately ahead. And unfortunately we have had a heavy thundershower to suggest that the rainy season—accursed for adobe building—has begun.

July 6th.

Our hill is again alive with antlike activity. Inside the house Alvina and Luciana are calcimining at last. The kitchen wall is slowly rising—José and Ramon, full of charm and inefficiency, have demanded a second "helper," so Salomé's tall son Pedro is bringing up the hill the bricks that Hipolito is again gracious enough to haul and dump. Matias, assisted and encouraged by me—he needs the spur of constant admiration—is building a terrace back of the house with the stone left over from the kitchen foundation. Anastacio, the oven specialist, "helped" by Alvino, one of Hipolito's sons, is making bricks for the beehive *orno* with a funny little mold—they are quite a different shape from ordinary adobes. I seem to have met Anastacio's closed, square, subtle face before in some Spanish painting. Maybe it is the dark beard showing through that gives it distinction—distinction and more than a hint of guilt—whereas Alvino's plump red cheeks radiate all the Christian virtues. I am not surprised to hear that he used to be sacristan at the cathedral. But the climax of this long list is a *carpenter*, a shy little fellow

named Ortiz whom my energetic "partner," seeing her departure for the East rapidly approaching, plucked bodily off a Santa Fe roof and brought out in triumph in a taxi. He still has a dazed air.

Ortiz is to stay in Tesuque, so—as relations had recently been very good—I crossed the acequia to give our neighbor the first chance of a boarder. Salomé told me, with his irritating grin, that the price would be three dollars per day. So I recrossed the acequia and handed Ortiz over to Anastacio at seventy-five cents.

TESUQUE, July 8th.

At last I can date my journal Tesuque and mean it. For we are here, bag and baggage; ever so much more of both than we wanted, it seemed, when we came to pack it into Tom's truck amid the flattering lamentations of the Alarids. The señora, the señor, our Josephine and the other six children, Fido, Queenie, dear old grandfather Lobato, and the large family of flies that had established itself in our kitchen, buzzed about us as we labored. But for these last I should be a bit homesick to-night; the charming little orchard of the Camino del Monte Sol, the insalubrious well, the sociable *popotte*, have a halolike radiance as they recede. What in the world shall we do without Gormly's store around the corner? What shall we do without the *Fanciulla del Ovest*?

Tesuque goes to bed early. From our knoll at nine o'clock I see no lighted window, smell no cedar incense. Under the brilliance of the stars Salomé's house makes a dark, unfriendly bulk. The black dog, no cousin of Queenie's, growls from some distant lair.

It is no more cheering indoors—less so. In the sputter of two candles (no kerosene yet) this precious *casa* of ours looks exactly like a stage hovel. The bedroom is a beautiful Mexican blue, the living room is a peerless white, but both are piled high with furniture,

trunks, barrels, boxes of groceries, pots, and pans. The kitchen is still unfinished and the dining room full of tools, putty, paint, lumber. . . .

"What's that?" asks Gertrude (we are both on our cots now, she reading, I writing) as a forlorn wail echoes from the mountains.

"Coyotes."

"Did the kitchen wall look out of plumb to you?" I ask, with some anxiety, after a long silence.

"No," answers my "pardner," firmly—she always suspects me of looking on the dark side—"just irregularity in the bricks."

"What's that?"

This time I am the inquirer. Certainly there is a very queer scratching very close to the house.

"You're nervous," exults Gertrude, sleepily. "You'll never stay here alone." But later, after the candle is out, from the other cot, "What's that?"

A queer, sharp little patter like hail falling into the room. Feeling it on my face, I scratch a match in haste. It is gravel, dropping from the *vigas*. So that is why the Alarids envelop their beams in cheesecloth!

July 9th.

Tragedy. The kitchen wall has buckled.

I got up early and went up on the knoll and my heart sank several thousand feet. The walls of the new room were unmistakably bulging. Gertrude, dragged from her bed, would scarcely agree. The human eye, she remarked, is deceitful. Then the Tesuque workmen arrived, stood about staring and whispering—half pleased, I fear, at our betrayal by the Santa Fe *muchacho*. At last Anastacio approached with his dark, overt air. He had known all along; this, that, the other had been wrong. The whole must come down. . . .

Mr. Harsh having confirmed this judgment, even Gertrude is convinced. The kitchen and its builders must be scrapped.

José and Ramon are so humiliated in the eyes of their peers that, in spite of the loss they have caused us, I can't help feeling sorry for them. Ramon bluffs it out with a foolish smile, but José stalks about blacker than night, muttering. For ourselves, we have again discovered something that cuts deeper than José's ignorance—our own. Adobe houses may look as if built out of a child's blocks, but it takes the hand of experience to pile them.

Evening.

We have been down to the village, and the mere sight of the long, low houses, the feathery tamarisk trees, the female figures with white cloths on their heads standing out against the sunset, has soothed our sore feelings. In Tesuque, few flowers, no bright paint; dark-gray adobe, white trimmings, an irregular village outline straggling over a series of bleak ridges under a pinnacle hill with a cross. It has a sort of ascetic pathos and simplicity that suggests Palestine—even to the rough little corrals where cows and burros stand ruminative in the twilight, as if translated from pictures of the Nativity.

Our object was to find one Timoteo Griego, Anastacio's brother, who is reported to be an excellent adobe man. A slender fellow whom we accosted at the bridge proved to be Tim himself. He must have been a great buck at twenty. He is perhaps thirty-five now and has a mouthful of gold teeth that sparkle as he talks and seem somehow to impede his English. But he inspires confidence. He is very busy with his own roof. . . . Solicited to work in all directions, too. . . . He is an expert well doctor and digger. Still . . . he would like to help two ladies. . . .

"I hear you're a Democrat, Tim," says Gertrude, with her most beguiling warmth. "So am I."

Tim beams now with every tooth in his head. The Republicans may be all right in other places, he explains, but here . . . Anyhow, to-morrow being

Sunday, he'll look at that kitchen and put Gertrude on the trail to Cowles. My friend is casting off her burdens and riding into the mountains with Nan Mitchell. If Timoteo doesn't come back won to our cause, her record in the A. E. F. will be disproved.

Alone in the *casa* to-night. But all the strangeness is gone. I think of Gertrude up there under the pine forest without envy. It is utterly satisfying to be here on this terrace, learning the chirping note of Tesuque crickets; recognizing the rustle of Salomé's hungry poodle in the bushes; taking my fill of the Southwestern night sky, till I seem to be actually swimming in deep bright blue—blue pools sparkling with phosphorescence; still blue pools reflecting the stars of some yet more distant crystal heaven. I wonder whether my maternal uncle, who went to old Mexico as a young man and stayed seven years, used to look on such a sky and say, "This is why I left New England." Queer that people so devoted to family furniture and stone walls should have our tendency to migrate. My grandfather paid dear for his migration. On the California ranch where he established himself after the Civil War he was—as my aunt solemnly warned me on the eve of my departure—"murdered by a Mexican."

Two oblong yellow windows in the village to-night. And concealed in the warm dark air is a voice about the age of Matias's or Ramon's, singing a Mexican love song. Each verse begins gentle, imploring, but ends with a change of key that stabs like a knife. Something of this sort:

Sweet, my sweet, Lalia, my sad,
A kiss, give a kiss to your Mexican lad.
Your kiss would crumble the mud of a wall.
Curse my girl, she's a cactus, her lips are
like gall.

Curse my girl—as I listen to the queer threat in the melody, I think of the story Frank told to-day at dinner. When

quite a little boy at the district school in another part of the state he saw one of the older Mexican boys go up to a pretty *muchacha* walking to school with two girl friends.

"Maria, will you marry me?"

"No," she answered, laughing. Whereupon the suitor pulled out a pistol, shot her in the heart, and then killed himself in the road in the midst of the shrieking children.

July 15th.

Each week brings a new vicissitude. The Acequia Madre went dry just as Timoteo had agreed to make our kitchen safe for democracy. Adobe bricks cannot be laid in the wall without mud mortar mixed with water—so the kitchen had to wait. It seems a little odd to the tenderfoot that when the heavens are streaming (so much so that we nearly lost those same bricks by disintegration) the ditch should be empty. The floods that come down from the mountains are precisely the reason—they wash out the channel that leads the water from the mountain stream into the acequia. So Tim had to wait until all the male population of Tesuque had been called out by the *Mayordomo* to repair damages.

Now we have a good, strong Democratic wall (built in two days, whereas José spent five on his failure). The roof and floor must wait until next week, for to-morrow is Gertrude's last chance to collect data in regard to the Indians. There is supposed to be a dance at San Idefonso and we have long planned a week-end ride to the pueblo with our two friends.

MISS TRUE'S RANCH, July 16th.

The shade of this apple orchard seems like the green gloom of the bottom of the ocean, after the glare of the desert roads. Extraordinarily delicious! Our blankets and packs are scattered under the trees among the hollyhocks. Mrs. Thompson, the wife of Miss True's "rancher," whom we found occupying one end of the long adobe farmhouse, would have unlocked the main house for our benefit

in Miss True's lamented absence, but we insist we are going to sleep outdoors. The racy Mrs. Thompson and her sister, a little, brown wrinkled person (they both suggest "Westerners" in a Bernard Shaw play), are all in a twitter at our unexpected arrival, combined with the odd determination of my three friends to have a swim in the Rio Grande. I could not for my soul have "made" that quarter of a mile down to the river. Thirty-five miles with no training but a few jog trots in and out of Santa Fe.

My bones may be weary, but I feel recreated by the beauty my eyes have seen—and amazed that I have actually crossed the wide space between the two great mountain ranges which make the boundaries of my daily panorama. Miss True's ranch lies as close to the one as our little adobe to the other. So the Jemez, which usually tower as the blue ethereal back-drop to our view, are now reduced to a series of strange, gray-white cliffs with flat tops; whereas the red foothills of the Sangre de Cristo have leaped heavenward into a lofty, jagged line of peaks. I am amazed, too, that I have actually done the thing I have so long dreamed of doing—forded the Rio Grande just beyond that most romantic of landmarks, the Black Mesa.

The square, velvety mass looks from our knoll almost due north. But, of course, we could make no bee line for our objective, the Indian village which lies at its base. We had to follow the meanderings of the Española road—or call it the Taos road—the single, hard, white highway that leads north from Santa Fe and out through the narrow arm of the Tesuque Valley into the wider valley of the Rio Grande. Gertrude and I had been over it before by motor in early spring. But how little one knows New Mexico till one travels it on horseback in summer! Some one gave me, as a child, a "Curtis" photograph of a vast cañon with high rock walls in which are lost a few pygmies on horseback. Well, I have felt all day like

one of those pygmies. In this part of New Mexico one always seems to be traveling in a cañon, great or small. Even the Rio Grande Valley is a larger cañon between two mountain ranges. But what no photograph can render—and will any canvas ever render it, though this is a painters' country?—is the brilliance of the colored spaciousness one moves in, the strength of the land which, as soon as one has reached any sort of vantage point, reveals to the eye its hard, bony structure, its sandy muscles.

To-day, by the time we had got out of the cultivated valley bottom to the place where Tom, the taxi man, points out the "Camel," and Greek and Egyptian temples pile themselves up in golden sand, at least six thundershowers were blackening six quarters of the heavens, and lightning was flashing up in broken perpendiculars, as the guns used to flash on the western front. But these fireworks were ten, twenty, fifty miles away, and the Liliputian riders progressed in a glare of sun, in a blazing silence shattered only by the jolly hoofs of "Buck" and "Billy" and "Blue" and Demecio Griego's Mexican "race horse."

It was borne in on us, as we paused at the Pojoaque corner for some "soft drinks" which the Mexican storekeeper fished out of his well, that there could be no dance going on—nobody on the way. But what did we care? In our vast desert ride we had passed no houses since we left Tesuque, save one village just the color of the sand. But the road into which we now turned had the quality the French call *intime*; it was friendly; it was bordered with gay little Mexican houses with colored inset *portales*, and woodwork painted green and orange and blue, and dooryards full of dahlias and hollyhocks. Great box-elder trees made patches of black shade on the white road. Lush fields of intense green corn stretched toward the legendary slopes of the Black Mesa, the red-gold river, and the purple peaks beyond. We had come down two thousand feet since

we left home, and our horses, taking a deep breath of valley freshness, started on a gallop for the pueblo.

As we rode into the big, oblong plaza, built about with a continuous row of one- and two-story adobes, the village seemed dozing a brown, Egyptian sleep. The cottonwoods made a tattered, wavering pattern on the plaza's yellow floor. No sign of dancers around the *kiva*.

"Let's look for Alfonso, first," said Katharine, dismounting.

Alfonso is an artist, a remarkable artist, though untaught—*because* untaught, the Hendersons would say. His traditional dance pictures were by far the most interesting things at the Independent Show in New York last winter. Alfonso's mother met us at the door and, recognizing our painter as a friend, with smiles and broken Spanish led us into her clean, empty interior. A long adobe bench built into the whitewashed wall, a few pottery jars and bowls of meal and water, a string of gorgeous blankets hanging on a rope stretched under the *vigas*: it was the typical Pueblo house and in it the typical thick-set Pueblo woman with her broad, red-brown face, her bobbed black hair, short, shiftlike dress, high white buckskin boots, red-and-green woven belt, and silver chains.

But Alfonso had gone to the Santa Fe Museum. So Katharine proposed that we go on and see Julian and Marie. Marie is the best pottery maker of the Rio Grande region. And while she was displaying her beautiful black *ollas*, the strong-featured Julian saddled his horse and pulled his gray sombrero with its band of silver buttons over his two long braids of black hair.

"*Mucho* quicksand," he said. "I show you the ford."

Julian is a famous eagle dancer, and as he rode ahead of us between high rows of tasseled corn, and swam his little black pony across the treacherous currents, the supple strength of his muscles showed through the billowing of his gaudy plaid shirt, through the thin blue cotton that covered his lithe, straight

thighs. How he seemed to "belong" to the dramatic cliffs that rose ahead, the region described in archæological treatises as the Pajarito Plateau! The plateau, we knew, lay at the top of those whity-gray cliffs, and above it rose other cliffs, pinkish yellow, where the ancient people carved their dwellings. Gertrude and I began to recall our visit to the Rito de Los Frijoles a few miles to the south. And the last time we approached this ranch was after a visit to the Puyé, a few miles up the river—with Tom to introduce us.

"You got to know Dame True," Tom had said. "She used to be Indian teacher at Santa Clara, and, my! she knows more about the Pueblo Indians than all the rest of 'em put together!"

Tom was certainly right. But tonight, alas! there are to be no stories. Miss True, like Alfonso, has gone to Santa Fe.

I see my friends coming back from the river, waving their towels.

"We've found a perfect haystack where we are going to sleep in the moonlight," calls Gertrude.

And then the voice of Mrs. Thompson: "Ready for supper, girls?" To her sister in the kitchen: "Go ahead, Marge. I guess I got 'em all bunched now."

ESPAÑOLA, July 17th.

Sunday dinner, followed by a *siesta* in the Española hotel. Our moonlight night on the alfalfa stack was so inspiring that, instead of returning as we came, we are continuing the much longer road on the western side of the Rio Grande through Santa Clara pueblo to this "Western movie town"—that is Alice Corbin's phrase—and then back to Tesuque through the exquisite Santa Cruz.

We had our Indian stories, after all, because Miss True's mother suddenly appeared like a prophetess from the cottage in the field beyond the ranch house where she chooses to live all alone. She is a very tall, thin, commanding old lady

with parted white hair and eyes that flame in deep sockets when she talks of Indian wrongs. I called her a prophetess—I think she is like a figure in Greek tragedy. If I ever write a symbolic play of New Mexico she will be the leader of the chorus. The Indians of Santa Clara, where her daughter was so long a teacher, flock to consult her ancient wisdom "every Sunday of the world," as she said. I could myself listen spell-bound for a year.

She suggested to Nan Mitchell and me a plan to ride up Santa Clara Cañon and over the divide into the Zuñi country, with Gertrude's and my ancient friend, Santiago, for guide. We have been consulting the old chief about it this morning. He and his pueblo again wove the same spell of incantation over our spirits that made us captive last year; it is a sort of pastoral spell. For the village spreads out at the edges into wattled corrals huddled full of goats and sheep, and beyond that again into green fields that look down on the Rio Grande. No single big plaza here; the one-story houses are built about a series of tiny barren squares always full of women baking in the beehive ovens, or burning in smoldering fires the black pottery for which Santa Clara is famous. A silent little church faces the whole purple length of the Sangre de Cristo.

As for Santiago, not even the beaver skins twisted about the two braids of white hair that frame his twinkling old face have changed. To be sure, he is no longer Governor. His blue room looks a little sad without the two ebony-and-silver canes that are the badges of the

Governor's office—one presented by the Spanish Crown, one by no other than Abraham Lincoln. But there was still a ring of gubernatorial magnificence in Santiago's parting "*Adios, amigas.*"

TESUQUE, July 18th.

Back on the job more dead than alive after an interminable ride home in the thunderous dark. The moon played us false, and we had lingered overlong to enjoy the flowery lanes behind Santa Cruz's seventeenth-century mission church.

This is one of the real treasures of the Southwest, not to say of the United States. Of course one reason we found it so beautiful and moving is that the fine white spaces under the carved *vigas*, the painted altars and frescoed chapels, the strange, tortured brown *Cristos* and stranger *santos* in pink ballet skirts are no curiosity for tourists as are the California missions—indeed, few tourists know of their existence—but the center of an ardent religious life. The aesthete who wanders in will recognize Spanish influence transposed to a primitive region, Spanish traditional art handed on through the brains of priests to naïve native craftsmen. But Salomé and the politicians from the tawny cañons tie their wagons at the gate and walk in, hat in hand, to kneel and pray.

Gertrude leaves in three days! Unbelievable and desperate thought! If we lived in a vortex before, it is a very cyclone of activity that now hurls us—with a train of brown men following after—from kitchen to corral.

(To be continued)

THE JOURNAL OF A MUD HOUSE

PART III

BY ELIZABETH SHEPLEY SERGEANT

TESUQUE, July 19th.

LAST night we had a house warming for our Mexican neighbors, a long-promised celebration of the conclusion of their labors on the mud house. The labors, of course, are not really over, but the party had to be now or never, for Gertrude goes East to-morrow.

Our white living-room wall, lit by candles in tin sconces, was as enhancing to the Mexicans of Tesuque as the white walls of Taormina dance halls used to be in carnival season to Sicilian peasants. Arriving in shy, gentle groups, they wedged themselves against it: a thick row of men, women, and children with somber heads, gregariously consorting, with arms and bodies pressing one another, supporting one another by warmth, smell, touch. At first I had no sense that we were entertaining familiar individuals like Alvina, Salomé, Anastacio. I saw only a woman's profile under a black shawl, a ruffianly male silhouette, a brown arm clasping a child, an earthy fist fondling a mustache. Sharply etched on the white background as patterns on an Indian jar, these symbols seemed associated, like Indian patterns, with elemental forces: rain and drought and harvest, cloud and stream and mountain. Dark, dark, Spanish faces, tanned to leather, tortured with deep wrinkles. Should we ever penetrate their mysteries? I suddenly felt that Gertrude and I were strangers and aliens in our little *casa*. For all our six weeks' hard work among these natives in the burning sun, we were still too pale to cast a proper shadow on a white adobe wall.

The guests, however, gradually

emerged from their sustaining consanguinity as separate friendly beings who made us, their hosts, at home with a very charming courtesy. Salomé brought chairs across the acequia to help seat those invited and uninvited. (His own family filled seven places.) Anastacio and Matias, two musicians out of a Spanish painting, played rhythmic old Mexican airs on a fiddle and banjo. The Moorish-looking Timoteo, after a pretense of being too old, sang songs with a folk cadence, assisted by Eulalia, very fine in her red skirt, and led his younger brother into a leaping, finger-snapping duo dance that threw flickering grotesques on the wall and again took me back to Taormina. But the couple we most enjoyed were Salomé's nieces, Flora and Celanese—aged four and six. Thin little brown arms jauntily interlocked, red calico bodies held stiffly, eyes and ringlets melting together, they spun jerkily and tirelessly round and round and round, like two tiny toy figures on a music box fashioned by a primitive artisan. Outside in the dark a constant scuffling and whispering went on. When the ice-cream was served, a few more strange boys squeezed in. Gertrude, who has the most beautiful hospitality I know, East or West, can now leave satisfied that the *casa* has been faithful to her best tradition.

Anastacio has no air of a Spanish musician this morning, in his blue working shirt. He is always needing something inconvenient and unobtainable. To-day, in his knotted English he demands "medecina for bees." Bees are

nesting in our *vigas*. That is *muy malo*. He must have *medecina* at once, or the beams that support the *casa* will cave in on our heads.

A little way down the hill, Tomas leans reflectively on his shovel. There is something about a burly brown man leaning on a shovel at two dollars a day that rubs my New England fur awry. Yet I know Tomas is merely waiting to do as he is told; only, like most of the males of his race, he is a little lacking in initiative.

"Have you got the path the right width, Tomas?"

"*Quien sabe?*" he shrugs.

"Gertrude, come quickly and look at this path."

"No, you come here first and decide about the slope of the roof."

In another twenty-four hours there will be only one of us. I must somehow pin my friend down to common views on fences, gates, corral—not to mention paint and curtains.

July 22d.

How one sleeps in the Southwest!

Waking up in the morning is like swimming to the surface of a vast lake of silence and peace. On the surface of the lake to-day certain necessitous thoughts are floating.

Set front fence.

Hang gate.

Train Melinda.

Mix blue-green paint.

Alfalfa for Billy and Buck.

My mind noses up to these thoughts. Then, fearful of entanglement, swirls away again like a wary trout. Down under the surface is a mystic green depth where one can float and dream.

Over in that drowsy backwater something tinkles and shines. A shine or a tinkle? Yes, it's a tinkle. Salomé's cows are being driven out into the mountain pastures.

I open my eyes. They look straight up into a gold-brown ceiling made of a fine row of round beams. Fifty years old. That is what one of the roofers said. Fifty years ago a young man,

the color of the beams, cut them for his bride. First he made mud bricks in a mold and laid them out in the sun to dry. Then he took a sorrel pony and a string of gray burros and rode up into the red flanks of the mountain. He had a sheepskin on his saddle, and an ax, and frijoles in a red handkerchief.

September is a golden season. It was warm yellow with rabbit brush in the open lower valleys, and the fuzzy piñon trees that patched the first rocky slopes were thick with sticky cones. He put up a hairy hand for a cone and turned the tiny nuts on his tongue, rich and sweet and round. So he rode along, chewing and whistling and spitting out the shells, and hawing to his burros as they splashed through the brooks.

It was frosty yellow when he came to the stern ravines where the gray-mauve trunks of the aspen trees bury themselves so deep and chaste. Frosty in the high thin sunlight, where their heart-shaped leaves were trembling; chill in the shade below the trunks where the streams ran hidden. Sun on the aspen tops, but a black forest looming on the next ridge.

It was cold among the dark pines. Especially at night in the light of a full moon. All day he chewed and whistled and sweated as the round trunks fell. But at dusk he lit a flare of scented cedar wood. And when the smoke made a thin, pungent spiral and the moon sailed up over black peaks he wound himself in his sheepskin. And with the firelight turning his faun face red, and the moon turning it pale, and a tribe of little gray burro ghosts rustling and browsing uneasily in the scrub, his soul sailed off—sailed off to meet his dark bride in the sparkling spaces of the sky.

I must wake up. Colors. I must decide on colors to-day. Strong colors for the strong southwestern light that pours through the three casement windows above my bed. Our blue wall has the most beautiful surface. Perfect aesthetic satisfaction on its mere tex-

ture and its soft, rounded contours. Chinese pink like the bureau might be right for the window frames.

A stir in the living room. Nan Mitchell has got up to make a fire in the fireplace for our coffee. It is just like her, charming and efficient person, to come to help me through the hobbledehoy period of the house.

Workmen's voices. Workmen, but, alas! no Gertrude. I miss her badly. Hectic rush crowded sentiment out of the last days. But now I shall see my friend, my long-legged friend in riding breeches, with her vivid face of eternal youth, at every corner of the ranch. I shall see her, her bags still unpacked, within an hour of train time, painting one more blue door; and half an hour later, still in apron over breeches, trimming cottonwoods along the acequia with a hatchet. Naturally, when we pulled into town the train had gone. . . . Gertrude was somewhat disturbed, but not unduly. Tom could get her to the junction at Lamy. Tom did—setting his weather-beaten jaw. But Gertrude, already on the Pullman steps, remembered that she had forgotten her valuable new dressing bag.

"Gosh! you sure do beat the Dutch."

He looked up, as if he were twenty-one, at the unperturbed lady in New York clothes who smiled down at him through her eyeglasses. She mustn't worry. He'd pack it himself, and insure it and express it.

"It *has* been worth it, hasn't it?" called Gertrude over his head with a new accent in her voice. Or shall I say an old one, an accent not colored by blue paint?

July 23d.

Miss Orgen we invite
you to a feast to-day
24 at 2 o'clock pleas
come in at noon
its a baby Party
at Frank
Jimenez home
and a dance in the
evening and night

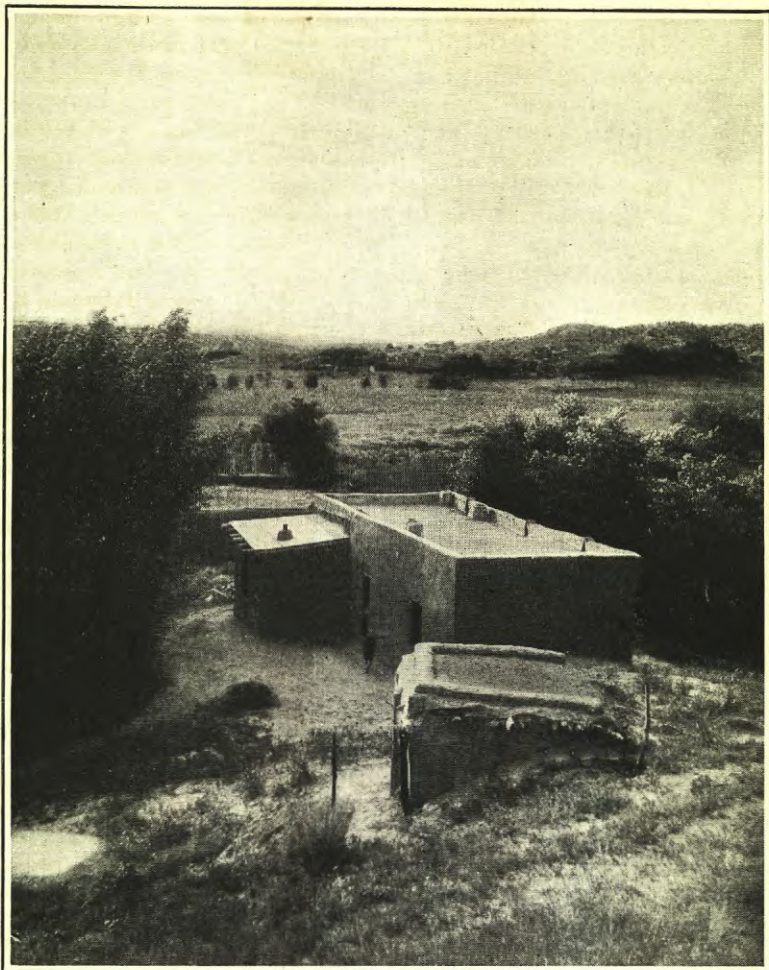
The above, written on a smudged picce of ruled paper, was delivered just now by a small, Spanish-speaking urchin. Though this is not the twenty-fourth, and I am no Orgen, it seems to be a bona fide invitation to the christening to-day of the Mayordomo's youngest—and that of his new Bailie Hall.

We can just see Francisco's long roof from our knoll. His is one of the last houses in Mexican Tesuque, reached by a sandy arroyo that runs up from the highroad into the hills. My young neighbors, Frank and Edith Harsh, and I went together, at about one-thirty—a compromise between "noon" and "two o'clock." No other guests had, however, arrived. Francisco, decked out in a fiery red necktie, greeted us with a pleased gleam in the eye that flashes under his beetling brows. He called his wife out of the kitchen; one child in her arms, half a dozen others clinging to her long, sagging petticoats. The potentate of the ditch is proud of his half-Irish wife and her honeyed English words and her many children. *The* baby, we learned, had not yet returned from the Santa Fe cathedral. Indeed, it was all of an hour before a generous assortment of godmothers and godfathers descended the important bundle from a wagon.

Now the guests began to straggle in. Frank Harsh wished, in a famished whisper, that we'd had some grub before we came.

At quarter to three the walls were well lined, and Francisco began to pass a tray with five glasses on it and a basket of variegated soft drinks. ("Tonics," they call them in New England summer trains.) I was the fifth in line—luckily!

At three-fifteen a plate with a cup of sweet, thick chocolate and a piece of cake. When that was consumed the men streamed outdoors, as if there were to be a long intermission. At three forty-five we decided to leave, though our host protested that the meal hadn't yet begun.



THE MUD HOUSE ON THE HILLTOP

The evening was very enchanting. Musicians on a raised platform as in Sicily, dark beaux and dark belles dancing under the beams, dancing quadrilles with swift, whirling figures, and a row of aged crones, like a cubist's dream, sitting along the benches with the children. All the children of Tesuque upward of a month old were present, and most of them did a great deal of dancing. (I see where Flora and Celanese learned their steps.) At last the distinguished Don Romaldo, one of the village notables, put on his spectacles and read

out of a paper in Spanish stating that Francisco Jimenez had a permit to open a dance hall. Then Francisco, with fierce looks, enjoined the *muchachos* to "put away your knives and pistols and drink no whisky." We went home early. But I learned from Melinda that there was a rather exciting quarrel over a girl at two in the morning.

July 24th.

The blood pressure of this hilltop has gone down measurably within the last three days. What kept it keyed so

high and breathless during Gertrude's stay was not only her zestful temperament, but the necessity of treating the mud house like a recalcitrant burro; it had to be shockingly prodded and belabored to reach a definite point at a definite time. Much distance remains to be covered, but Nan Mitchell and I are taking it at a slower pace.

Houses respond to leisure as gardens respond to rain. It is the only thing that really makes them bloom. My plump little brown handmaiden, Melinda, in spite of pervasive paint pots and turpentine, keeps ours most tidily swept and dusted. That helps to turn it into a place of order and charm and cool summer clarity. The living room is the nearest to completion. The books are in the white bookcase by the dining-room door. The salmon-colored Spanish chest has found its rightful place between that door and the fireplace. There are a big black Santa Clara jar filled with juniper over the hearth, and a round, terra-cotta bowl of startling carmine Indian paintbrush combined with purple and yellow blooms on the long table with wrought-iron ends. The room would be too austere without some bright flowers, though the green-blue doors stand open deliciously to the riotous brilliance of pink foothills and blue sky.

The truth is, it is enough to *live* in this country. Just to live. Work isn't necessary for the salvation of the soul. I feel as if I had grown vastly in grace

by spending an hour with a funny horned toad. They were cutting alfalfa all up and down the Tesuque valley the last days. The heavy sweet perfume still floats and broods over the thick green beds of mint along the acequia where—down beyond the field, and the fence, and the new rustic gate into the corral—Buck and Billy are cooling their knees in a silver curve. Sunflowers are

springing in tufts all over the field. Hollyhocks are beginning to blossom under the apple trees. I am happy.

M. Bergson once telegraphed a French philosophic friend of mine that he had discovered the secret of the universe. I believe I have a sneaking feeling that I may discover it some July morning on our knoll. Watching the thunder showers, just now, rolling northward across fifty miles or so of mountain, forty miles or so away, I thought I understood the Indian symbol of the

Thunder Bird. A great, chaotic whorl of blackness that suddenly blots out a mesa with two misty wings—and then, as suddenly, floats on, leaving the mesa table clear and colored like blue aquamarine between its sharp, terrible ravines—what is that but a demonic bird? I keep my eyes on a long, yellow ridge, classic and austere as Greek marble. Now the Thunder Bird passes over the peaks behind. Now he drops three or four feathery cloud shadows. Deep, deep purple, they float and tremble against the golden pallor. Or is it I who am



SALOMÉ DELIVERING WOOD

trembling? One may live for years in the East without having a revelation of beauty so intense.

July 31st.

This is Sunday morning. Melinda's little sister, the beautiful ten-year-old one, with arched eyebrows and bobbed hair, appears timidly at the door, huddling something orange and green in her arms. Out of the bundle peers a bright, perky eye. Do I like him? Will he do? they anxiously inquire. Nan Mitchell's horror at seeing her Sunday dinner alive at eleven o'clock makes the Chavez sisters explode in giggles.

Melinda has been used to hard farm and dairy work all her life. So she trots about in the hot sun, carrying heavy buckets of water, collecting vegetables and fruit and eggs and cream from our ranch neighbors, running down to fetch the groceries when kind Mr. Harsh honks at the gate, and thinks it all a sort of holiday adventure. She cooks very well, scrubs the kitchen floor on her knees, and polishes the shoes. All at the age of sixteen.

She goes home after lunch and we get our own supper at eight or nine o'clock, after a sunset ride. A wonderfully liberating system we find it. We cast off the painter's trade about four, have a pleasant tea, catch our two steeds in the corral, saddle them by the storehouse (I am still almost as green at this hostler business as I am at building a bridge of cedar poles), and start out. Our horses are an ill-matched pair. Lazy old

yellow Buck—rented first by Gertrude from Natalie Curtis Burlin—scarcely responds to a spur. Billy can't be touched with one. I made no mistake when I bought Billy. He has a gentle heart and swift, gay legs, and his generous vitality runs by transfusion through my veins.

We rode this afternoon to our own Indian village, the pueblo of Tesuque, four miles or so to the north of us. Tesuque is counted one of the least interesting of the Rio Grande pueblos. It is one of the smallest, and too easily accessible from Santa Fe. Yet tonight the square Plaza seemed to inclose within its brown walls Ancient Wisdom. The Indian fields we had crossed on horseback, the wild, rushing river we had forded, the shady lane of giant cottonwoods, shut it far away even from the motor road—from everything but the scarified peaks of the Sangre de



EULALIA AND MELINDA

Cristo, now steeped and swimming in purple sunset light. They towered above the whitewashed purity of the church front and the low line of flat roofs. Doorways were vacant, roofs populous. Majestic beings, their brows bound with red or orange, stared down at us. Sages. Two pretty young women in black skirts and loose, high white boots, red calico shawls fluttering from their shoulders, hurried across the square. Another, old and fat, with a black pot on her head, scuttled up a ladder to her house on the second story.

We got off our horses and wandered about, leading them by their bridles.

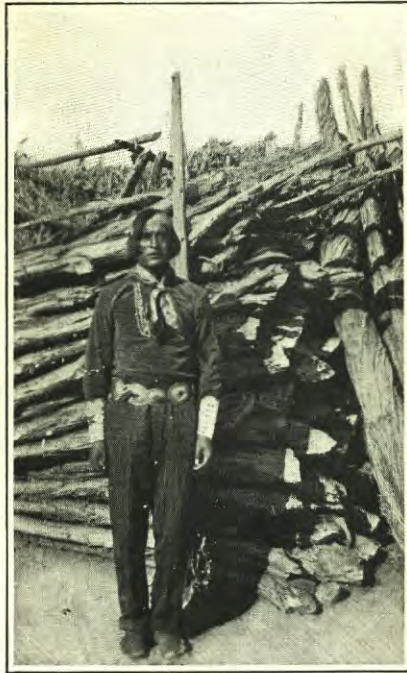
Faces smiled from dim interiors. A very old man in a blanket, holding a baby in his arms, followed along the western roofs, chanting a soft, croon-like rhythm. The baby was sucking a gray, pot-bellied clay figure. Did you ever stare down an ancient well upon the glint of water, and imagine what it would be to live down there in the cool and look up at the blue of the sky inclosed in a gray circle of stone? The evening hour in Tesuque was like an hour at the bottom of the well. Life had a rare color and purity as you gazed up above those roofs. And the silent beings who guarded them—silently watching us come and go—were living in a mood as different from that of our hilltop as the mood of the hilltop from the mood of Broadway. They had got much farther than we in understanding the secret of the universe. Their ears were attuned to voices we could not even hear. So merely looking at them, we rode away renewed in spirit.

August 4th

Only those who have the intimate confidence of the Pueblos can hope to see the many dance festivals that interspace themselves through the seasons. They are solemn religious ceremonies, usually connected with the primal functions of the earth, and rarely heralded in advance. But every Rio Grande pueblo has one fiesta a year on a specified date—the name day of its Catholic

patron saint—which all the New Mexico world and its tourists may attend. The greatest of these is probably the Corn Dance at Santo Domingo on August 4th. Santo Domingo is one of the largest in population and the richest of the Rio Grande Indian groups, and has been among the least accessible to white influence. Nobody goes there with a camera; for if he does it will be quickly snatched from his hand and broken to bits.

Nan Mitchell and I started southwest from Santa Fe about nine in the morning, in one of Tom's cars. There were many other motors ahead of us on the mesa, and as we dropped down the horrific zigzag mile of Lavajada hill—which descends to a much more tropic zone, climatically, than that of Santa Fe—they were like a line of black beetles strung on the straight white thread of road. And yet when we reached the village—and bumped, the first minute, into



A SANTO DOMINGO INDIAN

friends from New York and Philadelphia and Boston—we and all the rest of the crowd were so caught up into the glaring symphony of sun, sky, dust, beating drums, bright colors, and furious physical movement, that we scarcely seemed obtrusive. The scene absorbed us into itself like grains of floating sand.

Mass was just over as we arrived. The procession was pouring out of the whitewashed gloom of holy church into the pagan whiteness of Indian streets. The Catholic statue of Santo Domingo

led the way in the tottery, shoulder-borne manner of Catholic saints in Italy. He had one or two attendant Franciscan priests. But the bitten Mongolian faces of Pueblo elders hedged him about. And he was followed by a mixed rout of taper-carrying, intoning Indians and Spaniards, all marching and chanting in an extraordinary dusty glare.

I have never seen such whiteness. No wonder the houses of Santo Domingo are built with deep shaded *portales* edged with adobe walls. The upper tier (approached by ladders and set back some distance from the edge of the lower roofs) have not only *portales*, but screens of green boughs. We climbed a ladder, and paid a small sum to occupy a red blanket on the dangling edge of such a shady roof.



MEXICAN VISITORS AT THE MUD HOUSE



A BURRO "TIED" IN NATIVE MANNER

The Saint came to rest in a rustic shrine built for him at the end of the Plaza—under the satisfied gaze of the watchers on the roofs. So far as I could read the faces of these Indian spectators, their patron was now become a sort of functionary like the Governor; or perhaps a holy personage like the Sun Priest or the Cacique, or possibly a sort of God of Rain. Indian faces are harder to read than Indian colors. Yet the colors, too, are subtle and complicated. Velvet shirts, belts and chains of wrought silver, turquoise beads, striped blankets, brilliant silk scarfs, have a beauty in themselves. But their great beauty in Pueblo hands lies in their combination. This combination reveals a decorative sense more bold and varied and precise than that of Bakst himself. And there was as much beauty of sculptural grouping as of color. Biblical simplicity, Greek proportion, Barbaric power, Oriental detachment—the clustered figures on the roofs, the massed groups along the white porticos, seemed to embody the absolute of all the catch phrases, and give it a ring of discovery. But suddenly all eyes were drawn to a great, round yellow khiva, like a mediæval tower. Out of its sacred bowels, its round, dark inner chamber, the dancers were emerging Friezelike, they



Photograph by Wesley Bradfield, Santa Fe

THE GREAT FIESTA OF THE SANTO DOMINGO CORN DANCE

stood above its pale, walled top against the blue.

Friezelike they turned, a line of men, a line of women; friezelike they wound downward and started their rhythmic dance. A hundred men with red-brown, nude bodies, white loin cloths, coyote skins, and floating, shining hair; a hundred women, barefoot under their black, short shifts, with blue *tablitas* poised like monuments above their square-cut locks. Two long lines, moving in single file to a double beat. Heavy, ripe-breasted women stirring evergreen boughs from still, stoic wrists. Lithe, free-leaping men shaking gourds with vehement sweep. And, wound about their double isolation like a sort of moving pattern, the black and white Koshare, the comic clown-devils, the holy delight makers.

I saw a Corn Dance at San Felipe pueblo on May 1st of last year. The costumes, the colors, the measures were

basically the same. But that was the Spring Dance—the dance of feathery blossom-time, the dance of the ecstasy of germination. And this was the Summer Dance—the dance of full fruition. Here in the syncopation of feet, in the echo of drums, in the hoarse, insistent cry of choral voices, was harvest, teeming, prolific, overwhelming. The force of great yellow ears bursting free of their lush green sheaths. And the rain the dancers were invoking was no soft spring patter; it was a purple summer tempest, a cloudburst, a clash of fire and flood. As the day wore on and one group of dancers succeeded another and the sun stood always more high and burning in the sky, the pulsation grew volcanic, hypnotic. It racked our nerves, it tortured our eyeballs, it beset our ears. It blasted, it demented us till at last we fled away. But we had scarcely reached the Indian fields when, with a grand burst of thunder, down came the ease of rain.

(To be concluded)

THE JOURNAL OF A MUD HOUSE

PART IV

BY ELIZABETH SHEPLEY SERGEANT

TESUQUE, August 5th.

I AM ridiculously glad to be in Tesuque again, though away only one night. And now here is Katharine Dudley stretched on the couch in her red and white clothes, her head on a pile of pillows, smoking a cigarette. She reads me snatches from Gauguin's *Journals*. Katharine has (among others) two qualities that I supremely value in human beings; a sense of leisure and a sense of creativity. They generally go together.

Katharine's passion for house decoration made her delightfully eager to judge of the result of my labors with a paint brush. While Tom and Melinda were toiling up the hill with the luggage she rushed into the *casa* and gazed about . . . jumped on a chair and tried great-grandmother's Persian shawl on the wall . . . put it back on the couch where I had spread it . . . pronounced everything perfect except the desk. That must (very decidedly and instantly; she hadn't even taken off her hat) be bright pink instead of black. The room needs pink. She's right.

We shall not, however, devote ourselves to decoration, except by the way. Katharine is going to make pastels of Mexican Tesuque, which she has long wanted to study, and I am going—I scarcely dare believe it—to write. All my time and productive energy have so far flowed into the house.

August 7th.

Painters certainly have the best of things in New Mexico. Far from being the type of artist who sets up an easel in the open and "paints from nature," Katharine is of the moderns; adapts nature to her own brilliant and indi-

vidual vision; uses her mind on it in a highly selective manner. Still, while I sit at my table and, with a formidable effort, escape from the enchantment of out of doors into the mental subsoil where ideas germinate, she mounts Buck and clatters off to the village to make thumbnail drawings from his back. When she does a pastel she pulls the pink desk to the terrace door on the foothills, or sits under the apple trees. By contrast, writing as an art seems all circumscribed and indirect.

In odd moments we have finished the dining room. The big Mexican cabinet (rather like a French peasant *armoire* in shape), with tin panels perforated in flower patterns in its ends, is now chrome green. Also the baseboard and the bench and the woodwork of the built-in cupboard, where our Indian dishes stand against a white background. The window frames and doors and chairs are dull pink, very close to the natural adobe which I have kept for walls and fireplace. During a sociable stop at the house of the round tower the other night we discovered a homemade and carved oval table of dark wood. With a bright rose damask tablecloth (dyed by Katharine) on top, and underneath an old, striped, rose-and-white Mexican blanket (picked up by me at Santo Domingo), it stands in front of the big window whose small-squared panes open toward the room. A row of Luciana's geraniums in tin cans adds the last native touch. All this and the glorious view beyond seen from the living room through such a crooked, low little doorway as never belonged in mortal house.



MEXICAN WOODCUTTERS COMING DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAINS

August 8th.

To-night, as we returned from a gallop in the twilight, Timoteo rose up beside the bridge (it was so dark that only his eyes and white teeth showed) with a big bunch of cosmos in his hand. He had been patiently waiting for us to offer "a present from my wife." We cantered up the arroyo at once to return thanks, and found a slim, dusky, deer-eyed creature standing among the tall flowers, as if she were just ready to flee into the hills. Mexican women, when they are not the bold, languishing type, have a sort of wild gentleness that makes a deep appeal.

August 9th.

Mass is said every three weeks in the little Catholic church hidden below us in the arroyo. This morning at eight the bell began to toll, and we hurriedly dressed and crossed the acequia, squeezed through Salomé's fence, and so on down through the charming lane bordered with wild cherry trees that separates his fields from ours. Salomé was hurrying along ahead in his pointed hat, with a collection of shambling sons—all wearing that dressed-up, self-con-

scious look which even Catholic men take on when headed for church. Mrs. Salomé in her shawl, with a big girl in red calico, was as natural as if going to market.

If only the Southwest could be ruled by a Roman Catholic potentate with an archæological and æsthetic tradition! Every year one more old church, full of crucifixes and carved beams and strange dark saints—the sort of church that Americans cross the ocean to visit in Spain and Italy—is transformed into a neat little modern sanctuary with polished oak pews and commercial Madonnas all golden hair, pink cheeks, and blue robes. The priest tells me that in some places the people demand that "the Mexican" shall remain above the altar. Alas! not the Tesuque people. But the walls are at least pink and blue, and covered with tin candle sconces. I like sitting in the cool, beside my blackshawled neighbors, listening to a sermon on duty in the German Spanish of a Franciscan Father, and then emerging into hot sun, yellow sand, and jabbering village talk.

One imbibes a sort of easy insouciance

from this hot sun, this blue sky, this gentle native population. But behind one discovers, even on the religious side, something more tense, more sinister and superstitious. Tesuque has no Hermanos Penitentes. It is too near Santa Fe. But even in Tesuque we believe in spells and charms, and only thirty miles farther into the mountains I have seen men flagellating themselves on Good Friday morning, and dragging heavy crosses to the tune of a strange high flute note.

The tensions of altitude and climate, the majesty and terror of landscape, may seem to call out no æsthetic response in these simple people. Katharine and I ask ourselves whether a Mexican or an Indian sees, at all as we see, the marvels we look at from the Tesuque knoll. Even if he does not, their emotional effect has shaped the basis of his life. And Mexican superstition and folklore and Indian legend and tradition alike must draw much force from the sense of innate significance, the elusive, instinctive, terrible-wonderful thing that lurks in the natural background.

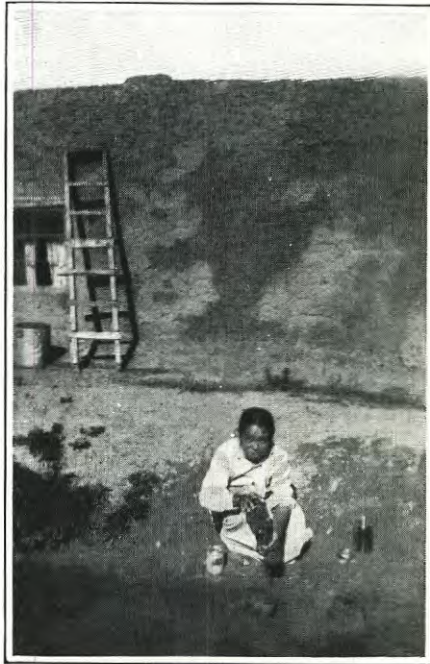
August 13th.

I am sitting against an apple tree on the uppermost of our three terraces, under a real grove of sunflowers. On the terrace below, branches hung with round, reddening apples form a pattern against the blue Jemes Mountains. Tiny, white-throated birds dip and flutter about me.

In my ears a hot hum of locusts and the deep rush of Tesuque River, flooded with the water that is daily emptied from the heavens on to the mountains. The rainy season—usually only July—has its drawbacks. But Katharine and I have just managed to steal two incomparable days on horseback.

If only one could command, at will, the exquisite moments when, for no discernible reason, every hour is charged with a happy perfection and every impression has the heightened clarity of poetry! These last days were of that sort; they stand out for me as a sort of Theocritan idyl. Ciupodero in harvest time will always exist in memory just as we saw it—timeless as the mountain village of the "Ode on a Grecian Urn."

Yet we had started for a mere afternoon's excursion with a little lunch on our saddles. Our objective was the nearest of the twisted, desert-bound cañons that run down like so many outspread fingers from the rocky peaks of the Sangre de Cristo into the broad fertility of the Rio Grande Valley. The rough track to Rio Medio leaves the highroad a mile or so below the Chavez store. We had to pause at the store for shelter from a whacking shower, and an air of tragic fatefulness still hung in the blackening-brightening sky when we decided to go on. Nothing keys up the color and contour of New Mexico like a



OUR NEIGHBOR, MRS. SALOMÉ

black sky. The long series of pink, desert ridges we climbed, the cloud-covered peaks on our right, the Grand-Cañonesque view on our left shot with wide streaks of sunlight, breathed an apocalyptic mystery. One train of burros laden with wood, attended by some smiling Mexicans; after that, no human sign for two hours. We were deciding we had missed our way when suddenly from a cedary-sandy whale-back we found ourselves looking down into a valley.

Narrow, deep and secret, like some rustic Sicilian vale. A thick line of green trees through its center suggested a stream. In fact, we could hear it rushing along, and smell, like a rich perfume, the alfalfa and corn and yellow wheat that grew level on either side to the cañon walls. The hand of man had done something very grateful to shape into gentleness and peace what the hand of God had created in violence. The little, flat-roofed adobes scattered here and there were a completely natural outgrowth of the red-brown soil. And the first human beings we discovered—two strange old witchlike crones, also

red-brown, framed in an oblong open window—were equally earthy. Their red-rimmed, bleary eyes looked out from some nether mystery of their own upon two extraordinary strangers. They thrust upon us green pea-pods straight from the vine—evidently a delicacy.

"Many thanks, señora. Is this Rio Medio?"

A negative shrug.

"What place?"

A shrug.

"How far to Rio Medio?"

"*Quien sabe?*"

So off we trotted, no wiser, through the heavy-scented ripeness and cool of the fields.

Our next encounter was with a dark-skinned young Corydon, emerging from a gate, holding by the hand a black-eyed pair of ragged children.

"What is this place, señor?"

"Ciupodero. . . . See the goats down there?" The white teeth flash. "They are threshing my wheat."

So they were, a circle of black and white goats turning and turning in the sun, while a lad cracked a whip at their heels—as if this were indeed a mountain



READY TO LEAVE SANTA CLARA PUEBLO FOR THE MOUNTAINS

valley in Sicily or Greece. Adelaida and Pino—we were told with a charming smile—were bound with their *padre* to oversee the operation.

"How far to Rio Medio?"

"Maybe a *milo* up the cañon."

"And the other way?"

"Nambé—maybe six *milos*, I donno. You go Nambé to-night?"

Katharine and I, having not even a toothbrush, looked at each other and said why not? By all means on to Nambé! We had only, said Corydon, to follow the "crick."

So Buck and Billy, none too pleased, again turned their heads toward the unknown. The creek is usually dry enough, we opined by the wagon tracks that curved through its edges. Finally we lost it and ourselves in a wild country all shaped in towers and battlements of yellow sand against mountains the color of the wine-dark Ægean.

"More color and form here," exclaimed Katharine, "in five minutes than in fifty years in the East! I want to make a drawing."

But she decided to do it on our return to-morrow. A bad decision. In New Mexico each *mañana* holds a new plan.

Katharine is a first-rate adventurer. It was she who found the junction of the Rio Medio and Nambé rivers and galloped ahead triumphantly into a great valley with the floor as flat as a table—broader, vaster, greener, more

remote from its mountain background than the Rio Medio Cañon, watered with a stronger river, scattered with farms rather more prosperous and civilized. We had emerged from Theocritus into a pastoral of Virgil.

"The pueblo? the *tienda*?" called Katharine.

"Ahead, ahead!" I still hear those soft voices responding from wheatfield, from wagon, from adobe doorways, as Buck and Billy flew on toward the sunset. We crossed the pueblo, a sad, dying little place with few Indian inhabitants. We crossed two arroyos with flowery Mexican dooryards, and at last reached the store, beside the flowery *placita*.

While I bought a few necessities, Katharine arranged for our night in an adjoining house, again straight out of the Georgics. It had a bare, clean-swept doorway where tobacco was spread out to dry, and

beds of bright dahlias, and a gate into a hayfield, and a table under a leafy arbor where we were soon eating fried eggs, and frioles, and chili, and currant jelly, and little sweet cakes, served by a woman of classic feature with a white towel tied over her head. Meanwhile a dog named Paw-pee (puppy) looked on, and the flies—"very industrious," sighed Señora Martina Ortiz (in Spanish, of course)—"I wish they would get tired"—were waved



SANTIAGO'S CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILD



OUR CAMP IN SULPHUR SPRINGS CAÑON

away, and three laughing daughters flew about airing spotless homespun blankets and patchwork quilts. How they all adored one another, how they adored having unexpected guests, how amused they were that I wanted to buy an antique painted *santo* who stood on a shelf in the kitchen, a rough native statuette in an elaborate purple-and-brown cotton robe, with a pink-paper hollyhock in his girdle! We retired early to our comfortable beds in a great, cool room, sacred to visiting priests, as well as to family best clothes, under cheesecloth hangings, and family photographs. The family dolls hung on the walls like saints, but there were other saints, and pink flowers, and homespun rugs.

Before we dropped off we heard father and brother returning from the fields, and then saw through the window the united family group eating supper in the arbor, in a lamplit circle, discussing with eager gestures the peculiarities of their guests. The picture, softly irradiated by the yellow glow, hung, like some old Spanish painting of a peasant group, on the dark wall of night.

Next morning we arranged that the

santo (sold for seventy-five cents) should follow us by the mail carrier to Tesuque, and went on, with dahlias tied to our saddles, and fond farewells in our ears, in search of the ancient Indian shrine of Nambé Falls. How we lost our trail among great rocks and pines high in the mountains, and were rescued by a handsome young woodcutter, and had a glimpse of a tremendous rush of water, and found our way over the hills to the happy Rio Medio Valley again, and again saw goats and gossiping threshing groups; how we drank coffee in a friendly dooryard, bathed in an electric mountain brook, and returned home with a sense of high achievement—all this would take too many pages of my Journal to relate. But the moral of the tale is that the real way to see New Mexico is simply to go off on a horse, and then on and on, rejoicing that nobody knows or cares whether you ever come back, taking adventure and beauty and night's lodging as they come.

August 16th.

Katharine has gone and Nan Mitchell is due in a few minutes. Meanwhile I am wondering *what has become of the snake*. Shall I tell my guest that I saw

a horrid gray curl of something disappearing under the curtain of the larder? The doors and windows are screened. How could a snake get in? I must (I thought) have imagined it. To make sure, I cautiously lifted the curtain with a broom handle. Alas! There he was, coiled in a menacing attitude under the lowest shelf. I darted to the door and called Salomé; no sign of life at our neighbor's. So I decided to watch the curtain until somebody came. An hour passed—slowly. If ever the curtain stirred I pounded on the floor with the broom handle, and it was still again. Finally I heard Salomé's voice, and made a lightning dash to the door. He hurried over, hoe in hand, and dramatically I lifted the curtain.

No snake.

Salomé was darkly sympathetic. No doubt it was poisonous. Very dangerous. Probably hidden and would spring out later.

We looked under all the furniture, we shook the hangings.

All in vain. No snake.

August 17th.

My guest took the news of our lost gray visitor calmly, and Melinda has spent the morning filling up with adobe mud the few holes and crannies in wall or floor by which he must have entered—and again sneakingly departed.

August 20th.

We live with our eyes turned skyward this week, and welcome every sort of hopeful prophecy. The rains are really holding up a little and we are starting on Monday for the pack trip with Santiago, projected at our visit to Santa Clara last month. I have been trying to finish the house (the kitchen is calcimined an Italian stucco pink, and the last wood-work is painted) while Nan Mitchell, already in spirit on the high peaks, devotes herself to collecting everything two inexperienced ladies may need for six days' journeying with an old Indian philosopher.

August 21st.

We rode into Mrs. O'Bryan's ranch just now to say good-by to our friend, who was spending Sunday afternoon among her tall hollyhocks with some of her innumerable Spanish cousins. I fancy this wise rancher thinks our expedition a little mad, but she carefully didn't say so. She merely spoke of rattlesnakes and insisted on our taking, from her generous stores, a remedy for the bite—along with a tarp tent, and salve for Billy's back. But one of her elder relatives looked at the blue Jemes peaks and then at the two who were planning to climb them, with a frankly ominous doubt.

Later.

Santiago has arrived from Santa Clara, a charming presence in a starched khaki suit, washed to an immaculate pale yellow, topped by a red bandanna, which makes his lined, smiling face very black, his canny setter eyes very bright, and his two braids, wound with beaver skins, very white. The very pink of Indian sages. We cannot possibly ask such an urbane old gentleman how he expects the miserable pony he bestrides to do twenty-five miles a day. And as for the pack horse, the "one pack animal" which he assured us would suffice, the stalwart creature his letters had conjured up proves to be a mere wraith of a patient pony. Two bedding rolls, a tent, a cooking kit, food for three people for six days, grain for four horses . . . I simply must not think of the pack horse's future. Instead, I must get the sage's supper while my friend hurries down to the Harshes' to borrow the rope that the sage failed to bring. The Harshes continue the finest of neighbors; they do more for us than we ever can repay.

"What do you suppose he is thinking about?" whispered Nan. "He just sits." That is exactly it. Sits in a chair in our living room, wrapped in a monumental peace which no white man

ever approaches. Is he thinking or just existing?

He was perfectly at ease at supper and pronounced it, with a grandfatherly smile for me, "*muy buena cena.*" After that, with an old brown finger, he tried to trace our route on the table.

"One day the Puyé. Two day the cabins. Three day San Anton'." We must trust fate, for no idea can we get how long a "day" is in either hours or miles.

We felt a little delicate about suggesting an army cot in the kitchen, but Santiago took the problem out of our hands with perfect courtesy.

"I—me sleep in li'l house. Here my bed," holding up a sheepskin.

So to the storehouse under the knoll, full and more than full of saddles, grain, rakes, wood, he repaired, and we have just seen him stretched out there on his sheepskin, smoking a cigarette and meditating, like Diogenes, in the light of a lantern hung from the beam.

SANTA CLARA PUEBLO, August 22d.

Contrary to all expectations, we are spending our first night under the roof of Santiago's daughter at the pueblo. Nan Mitchell revolts at our inglorious fate. Considering that it is raining hard, I am glad to be lying in my sleeping bag in this funny little bare blue room. It seems perfectly clean. And its brown adobe dado, and tiny inner door into the unknown (not even big

enough for a child) enchant me. We are watched over by San Antonio, suspended in blue satin on the wall. Santiago has thoughtfully provided all necessities, even a glass pitcher of drinking water.

Too sleepy to do more than note the main events of the day. The first making of the pack was long and difficult.

Every can of soup, every tin of sardines was eyed by our sage with a rather unsage-like gleam of appetite.

"Wetakehim," he would say, extending a swift brown hand and dropping the delicacy kerplunk into a canvas bag. Poor pack horse! The guide even suggested additional purchases at Española. Among others, a five-cent fishline.

"I—me get up when ladies sleep and catch li'l fish for breakfast." Santiago's real interest in this trip is clear. I know a

passionate fisherman when I see one. Morning was well advanced when our guide got off on one starveling, driving the other under a tower of roped canvas from which we averted our eyes. But not until twelve-thirty did Buck and Billy start, bearing two riders already exhausted. And not till two-thirty did the whole party "meet up" and lunch briefly on alfalfa and sandwiches. Main impressions of the rest of the day: glorious stretches of yellow flowers; eerie power of Santiago to keep his animals abreast or ahead of us, though we frequently galloped and he never



Photograph by Wesley Bradfield, Santa Fe

SANTIAGO DRESSED UP

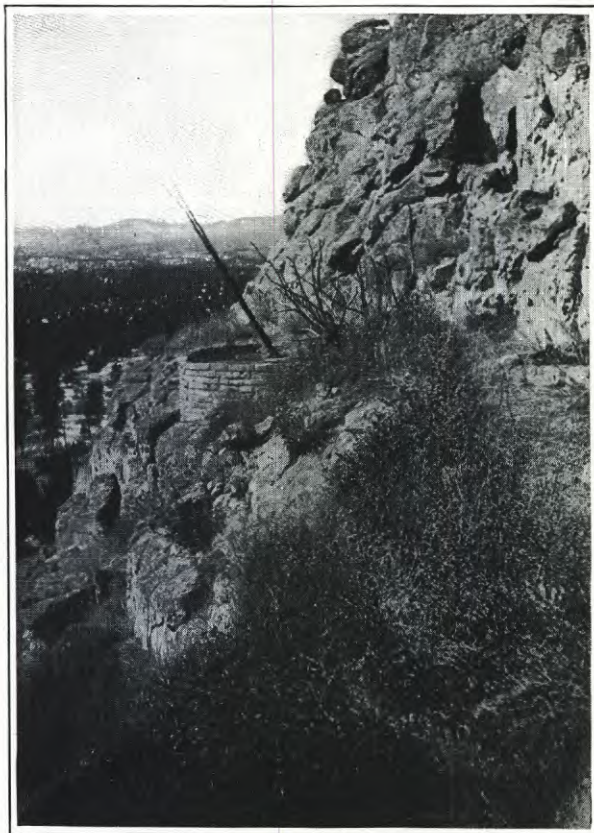
went beyond a short jog trot; cool beauty of shadow-filled cañons, and bird songs and farms buried in green trees as we approached Española in a thunder shower; cross meal of two friends at the hotel; dark, rainy ride to the pueblo

On the pine a faded cloth notice urging trespassers not to cut timber or otherwise poach on Indian land, signed Robert Valentine. Robert Valentine, assistant to Leupp, under Roosevelt, was himself a very constructive Indian Commissioner under Taft. He died, still young, some years ago. There are friends of his and mine who would be greatly touched to see his fine name still living in this ancient Indian forest.

The first effect of the green forest was banal after the open New Mexico country—indeed after the lower end of the cañon, which is a wide, sunny farming valley, with well-tended Indian fields and red, sandy desert sides. I was almost sorry to see these sides growing higher, grayer, more rocky; to see the piñons succeeded by pines. It seemed that we were climbing into the Adirondacks or any other high mountain scenery. But already Santa Clara Cañon has "got me." It has a spirit of its own, and in the cool, silent, damp, green clime that we have reached the river is a living presence.

What matters our funny little ephemeral procession on the trail? The river flows on forever, and the stout trunks of the pines are rooted in indestructible time.

With the change in the landscape our guide has also changed—rather oddly. Early this morning, in the heart of his busy and populous village, he was the genial host, providing us with breakfast (cooked by his daughter) and presenting us ceremonially to his fat wife.



THE KHIVA AT THE PUYÉ

(Santiago had gone ahead to make things ready).

May San Antonio protect the night from all insects!

SANTA CLARA CAÑON, August 23d.

Horses browsing, saddles and packs scattered over the ground, a pungent fire smoldering. We have just cooked our first real meal in the open beside a mountain brook, under a great pine.

It pleased him to have the various bucolic or domestic communal operations interrupted for our important departure, to note the children swarming and the women gathering in their doorways. When we reached the pastoral part of the cañon he was discursive; pointed out his little farm; told us how the Pueblos hold their land in common, but by custom apportion certain fields and houses to certain families. His own had, he said, been handed down from father and grandfather and would be divided among his children. Yes, he was very conversational the first couple of hours, but as soon as we really got away from the haunts of men he too became reticent and remote, like the trees.

Nan Mitchell takes the lead on the trail, for old Buck proves better at it than Billy. Then I come. As I look back I see first the pack horse trotting and rattling along (the creature's load is always twisting and falling off). Then, behind a pair of meek ears, an old black face. A sage's face? No longer. There is something hard, sealed, crafty even in its lines. It is as if the forest were full of alien dangers.

THE CABINS. *Later.*

The heading will do, for we are encamped on a round hill above the forest ranger's house. But I write by no glowing camp fire. A cold electric flash lights our uncomfortable quarters on the cold and nubbly ground, behind a barricade of fence rails. We are literally barricaded with our packs and saddles against marauding cattle mad for salt, which have tried ever since we came to devour all our possessions.

There the wretches come again. I can hear them nosing and pawing, and even see some spectral shapes. I rattle a sack full of knives and frying pans, a whole *batterie de cuisine*. It doesn't scare the cattle, but it wakes Santiago. He is lying on his sheepskin just behind the tent and gets up with a chuckle to give chase. Think of having a sense of humor about it after this weary day!

There. He is back on his sheepskin. Snoring already.

Lying down seems to put one terribly at the mercy of those horns. . . . I shall finish the day's record. Five hours in the saddle this morning. Three and a half this afternoon. About five-thirty I felt on the point of extinction. We had seen aspens succeed the smaller pine growths, and spruces and magnificent copper pines in their turn succeed aspens. We had seen the grandiose dark walls above us sprout red caves and tent rocks and Gothic battlements, and again grow hoarily forested. We had splashed through the river some twenty-two times. And still the cañon turned, and still Santiago urged us severely up the wet, dim, mossy trail to those elusive "cabins."

At last a hopeful sign. Smoke. Blue smoke floating and drifting over the river. The forest ranger must be cooking bacon. He would give us seats by a warm fire and feed us. . . . But the smoke clung curiously to the mountain-side. Was it smoke? Suddenly Santiago burst into an Indian chant.

"What are you singing?"

"Song of Cloud - that - look - like - smoke."

A creepy loneliness again descended upon our spirits.

The ground grew boggy, and the dusk thick. Billy slipped and sank in the mud with a wild, wallowing struggle. We got him out unhurt, but somehow preferred to proceed on foot. At last, after several gray cabin shapes, the forest ranger's. But no life, no smoke. It was locked tight.

Santiago did not know how to pitch the tent. He pattered and muttered. It was a long way to the spring. Still, fire to build, supper to cook, beds to make. Dark and cold. And just at this point one cow seizes my saddle blanket in her teeth and rushes off with it, while another tosses a leather coat over her head like a toreador.

I need not add that we had no Indian philosophy and folklore before bedtime.

SOMEWHERE ON THE TRAIL, *August 24th.*

Though we rose at six and labored frantically, we didn't get off until ten. No fish for breakfast, either. The cattle prowled and marauded to the end. But bathing before sunrise in a freezing, frothing mountain brook created by God for you alone is a sensation that purges the soul of fear.

We crossed the divide, leaving Indian land behind, and are now lunching at a considerably lower level on the edge of the sheep country. We left the Mexican wagon road for a herder's trail awhile back. So far only cattle, including bulls with curly heads and horns, which, when they catch sight of our cavalcade, come charging down from the peaks with prodigious roars. I am glad I had that protective bath.

SULPHUR SPRINGS, *August 25th.*

We are intentionally lazy this morning. Although we ourselves cook, wash up, make fires, prepare the packs, and saddle our own horses, our Indian grandfather seems to need a bit of spoiling. If only we had a young Indian boy along to do the chores! Santiago should be reserved for ornamental pursuits and for finding the trail.

He led us like a magician through the beautiful park like sheep valleys of Santa Rosa and San Antonio. Miles upon miles of great, grass-grown reaches with streams flowing through them and rolling hills on either side—hills soft as velvet to the eye, with here and there a huge pointed blue spruce standing alone. Like an English estate upon a giant and solitary scale. But the only lord of this estate, except ourselves, was, yesterday afternoon, a wild Mexican cowboy, galloping like the wind.

At one point it was necessary to cross the bright-green, quaking bottom land, and make, without a trail, for Sulphur Springs. The horses were nervous.

"More bad here," Santiago ominously exclaimed. "I—me go 'head." And ahead he went, tracing a winding path over the bog with a crooked little stick

which he shook and jiggled like a wand. After him trotted the rattling pack horse, after the pack horse Buck and Billy, all safely guided by that crooked stick.

We paused on a hill to breathe freely, and our guide volunteered a reminiscence.

"I camp here with two li'l ladies."

"With Mrs. Parsons?"

"No, that other time. Two li'l ladies from Philadelphia" (quizzical expression dawns). "He camp. I—me fish. But li'l ladies he want know too much. I—me tired, I—me headache. All time come say: 'Santiago, how cut rod? Santiago, how catch fish?' . . . Oo, two li'l ladies from Philadelphia make me tired."

What will he say in future of two li'l ladies from New York?

We had rather hoped to go home *via* James Springs and James Pueblo, but time fails, and we must return by the same route from Sulphur Springs.

Evening.

This has been our first perfect day. No rain, no fatigue, a delicious camping place under pines above a lush, green meadow made for our hungry horses' delectation, and such a sense of leisure that Santiago has actually gone off in search of worms.

We had eaten our supper, and still Santiago did not appear. Had our grandfather had a heart attack? Deserted us? I believe I fully realized what complete security against the indifferent wilderness that wise old white head has offered us when I saw it on the opposite hill. It looked benign as a saint's.

"I—me pick grass for my wife broom," he announced, sweetly, as he came up the hill with a bundle in his arms.

He also produced a safety-match box full of worms. But as he gazed at its crawling contents a queer look came into his kindly, setter eyes.

"You camp the Puyé to-morrow?"

We gave a firm assent.

"Mm! Very far. Start seven, get up four. I—me no time fish. . . . *Pov-recito*, I put him back. . . ." What tenderness in the old voice! Was it for the worms, or for a fisherman cheated of his rights?

For the first time he sat by the fire and told stories in the dark. How you catch wild turkeys in the snow by whistling on two bones from a turkey's shoulder. How the San Ildefonsos were besieged on their Black Mesa. . . .

Now he is asleep, and so is my friend. The sky is crystalline, with stars piercingly bright. The trunks of the pines are like sharp black shafts that shoot from earth to eternity. Stars, trees, soul of man, all merged to-night for me in one creative unity.

THE PUYÉ, August 26th.

I now know, once for all, that cold forested peaks and inclosed mountain valleys make less appeal to me than the vast, bright-colored, sunny landscape in which I habitually live. The sensation of again getting out *into the view* sets something free. Santiago feels as I do. The watchful gnome of the mountains is gone; the genial sage has returned. And here, as at the pueblo, more than there, Santiago is our host, as some wise old Greek peasant might be one's host at Delphi. He had a private trail, short and steep, to lead us up from the cañon. Like the cañon, the Puyé is on Santa Clara land. He knows every cave in this wonderful, semicircular, yellow-pink cliff, every stone in the crumbling "community house" on top of the plateau. The Khiva is his pride. For did he not help Doctor Hewett in the excavations made by the School of American Research some years ago? Did not his own ancestors inhabit these caves? The Puyé is his ancestral heritage.

The comparison with Delphi is not

fortuitous. This hilltop, littered with piles of pale stone and fragments of ancient decorated pottery, all overgrown with bright yellow and red flowers and scented, gray-green sage, recalls the marble-scattered hillside of the sacred precinct. And the view from the Puyé is finer and more soul searching, if anything, than the view from the Delphic theater. Sitting against a warm wall of rock at sunset, my eyes follow the Rio Grande all the way from where it cuts a deep channel through the rocky gorge below the Rito de Los Frijoles to where it loses itself in another gorge below the dim Taos Mountains. The beautiful length of the green valley lies between, along the glowing blood-purple of the Sangre de Cristo. Those mountain-sides, like the river and the cliffs, have a long history to tell, a geologic history bared to one's sight, and dramatic as the life of man through the ages.

As the glow dims, one notes ever more and more detail. Cañon upon cañon, peak upon peak, rock upon rock, tree upon tree. - If only Gertrude were here!

I can almost make out, if I try, a little mud house under a rocky knoll, in a certain familiar green valley.

I can see a brown neighbor with a pointed hat gazing with a friendly—yes, now really friendly—expression of welcome from his white *portal*. I can hear warm American voices of greeting in the ranches below in the apple orchards. . . . I shall not be sorry to get back to Tesuque to-morrow. Tesuque is home. But why, comes echo, make New Mexico home? Why own a half share in a mud house so far from New York and New England?

Perhaps so that one can spend a summer night on a cliff of the Ancient People, while an old Indian—thinking of his own rights in the primeval kingdoms of the earth—bursts into a rhythmic chant as he lights a fire of gnarled roots on a gray rock ledge under the sky.

(The end)