

1-1-1884

Memoirs of Harriett F Switzer - 01 Cover

Harriet F. Switzer

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January 1884. But it's cold. Even with the
my my my. The wind changed on
table near the stove! The wind changed on
Wednesday & blew great gusts, being in the right
direction, down canyon, the smoke filling eyes &
lungs. Is the first time it has happened tho, so
we have been fortunate. Russell & I were hugg-
ing the stove, sputtering & wiping our weeping
eyes. When we heard a muffled "hollow" out
side, & then we discovered Mr Board in plaster, with
collar turned up & Mrs Ward swathed in winter
coat, shawl & beils. They had stopped in to get
warm! Notwithstanding the discomfort of the
smoky environment Mr Ward, as usual, was
full of anecdotes & told of a jumpy meeting he
had had a few days before. He came across some
campers & said to one of them "My good man, can
you tell me the way to Bartow?" "Ball-fineest" was
the answer, "I'm a stranger in these parts & I
calculate to keep on being one, for it's the deendest
all firedest Neutry I ever see!" From that day
to this it has been cold with frost every night
& this morning a quarter of an inch of ice
on the water near the well. We have been able to
keep the lower part of the house perfectly comfortable
& each member of the family takes his hot iron
to heat with him, it keeps one as warm as toast,
otherwise the sheets chile one through & through.
We are happy in knowing that the bricks for the
kitchen chimney are on the ground. Father & wife
went for them himself & met a number of other
householders doing the same thing, all were so anxious
to get the bricks while they could. I fear this kiln
full will not give us enough for the hall fire-
place, but we can wait for that - (go to attached sheet #13)
* To be, or not to be - perfectly independent is
now the puzzling question to be settled. If Liz &
Miss Cameron come, it would be nice to have
some help with dishes etc.; on the other hand
everything now goes so smoothly I dislike the
thought of change & I welcomed with relief the
message from the coloured girl, I interrogated, say-
ing she "dote though we lived too far away from
her friends." But - Mrs Long is making suggestions

about the young white girl - I await developments.
How companionable a clock is! Our wedding
clock is hanging in the dining room and although
"I have no doubts" about the perfect time keeping
of a French article of the fancy brand, the tick
tock, tick tock sounds very homely & business
like. "Dreaming" said my husband as he came
in. "no dear, but I have just promised to do some-
thing that I felt I never wanted to do again -"
"What with it girly, what's the trouble?"
"You know I said when I came South that I
hoped never to sing at another funeral. I had
been called upon so often & in the close rooms
where the service was generally held, the women
& choir standing by the coffin & the odour of
life was almost suffocatingly sweet, it was
always a trying thing to do. Well, this morning
Mrs Chapman & Mrs Lyman drove up to tell
me of the death of Judge Holborn's wife, who had
been suffering from consumption for a long
time & at last succumbed. The funeral is to be
this afternoon, and - "would I help with the music?"
There is so little one can do at such a time that
I reluctantly, yet gladly too, said I would -
"I don't see that you could have done anything
else" Russell said -

I wish I had an artist's brush to paint
yesterday's scene. Instead of the close room we
had expected, we were taken to the end of the garden
on the sloping bank of a beautiful lake, was an
open grave, but so lined with green, there was
no earth showing. The sun danced & sparkled
on the water & shone through the trees onto the
palms, fur branches & flowers carpeting this half
royal resting place of a tired & worn out body.
Bishop Whipple's tall, commanding figure, with
his silvery hair which he always wore rather long
& the touch of colour given by his purple skull
cap, made the picture most impressive. Then the
group of mourners & friends, the six coloured men

of their varying expressions - that was the
human side, but above all was the blue, blue
sky & the stately pines that whispered - peace.
As we sang "Faith's journey ends in welcome to
our home," we knew that "Life, Long Shadows"
were forgotten, swallowed up in the "Cloudless Time."
That she, who had suffered so long & so patiently
was experiencing the "joy that ends the night of
weeping."
(Jan. 1884)

A Family Letter. February 1884.

Dear Over All. This is to be a family letter for
I have so much to tell it is going to be long enough
to go round the circle, & then some! I wish in
my last Epistle that Russell had gone to Gainesville
to see about a fine piece of high pine land that
he wished to homestead. I looked for him back
for several days, Joe driving me to the depot
to meet him; as the six o'clock train is apt to be
anywhere from 1/2 an hour to several hours late,
the waiting at times became "tiresome." However,
patience was rewarded at last & I discovered
the dear fellow standing on the platform, waiting
for me that time. He has had quite a little
experience of uncomfortable travel on this ter-
He has taken a bad cold from getting wet
in Gainesville & - no fire in his room, & I
as hoarse as a crow. En route home, the man-
gave over a cow, the engine kept the track, but the
passenger car went off & - if you will believe it -
there was no bell rope. So it was some few minutes
before the engineer knew what the difficulty
was by the time the train was stopped. The passengers
had been banged from side to side several times,
bruising them pretty badly. Poor Russ was very
lame all over. Fortunately the old fashioned
coupling on the car twisted & saved the train
from going down an embankment. So call
the chimney! There were no accommodations to be had
on the boat & the floor was the only sleeping place.
So you can imagine that my traveller was glad
to get home! And now, you can't guess what