PART II

THE OMAHA SUNDAY BEE.

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THE ORATORIO OF NATURE.

Sung with Ceaseless and Thrilling Effect by the Falls of Shoshone.

THE MARVEL OF OUR CATARACTS.

Sights and Incidents in the Vicinity of the Great Miracle of Snake River and a Visit to Them by a Bee Man.

SHOSHONE, Idaho, July 20.—[Staff Correspondence of THE BEE.]—Our party left this little town at 6:30 in the evening, with the intention of arriving at the celebrated Shoshone falls at about 10:30 o'clock the same night. There were two traveling men, one named Maguire from New York and the other Moore of St. Louis and two young women, the elder a Chicago schoolma'am and the younger her sister in the gawky age of feminine development.

The road to the falls has been cut through a plain of sage brush and lava. For twenty-six miles there is nothing to relieve the monotony of white sand, brush and lava, but the driver's stories and the jokes or conversational powers of one's companions. We suffered very little because of the lack of versatility of the party and became anxious only where the road became obscured under the starless clouds which had overcast the scene when the sun disappeared.

For nearly two hours we proceeded in the darkness, some fearing that we had lost our way, in which event there would be no alternative but a risky tramp through the desert under the chill night air.

The driver, however, continued to pick his way and finally announced that we had at length reached "the rocks." In this manner he designated the lava beds which extend four miles from the falls, and over which, in the dark, it is impossible to drive with safety faster than a walk.

One weary hour was spent picking our way through these adamantine labyrinths when the driver sententiously and informally remarked: "Here's where you get out!"

We disembarked without questioning and the driver tied one of the hind wheels to a side brace on the wagon.

"This is a steep hill an' I never hauled a living being down it in my life. I'll go ahead with the team and you follow."

"Are we near the falls?" petulantly asked the younger lady passenger, as if she were about disgusted with the journey.

"Yes, Miss, though they're down at the bottom of the hill," he good-naturedly replied, as he started off with his team.

We followed. It was as dark as a dungeon. We could not see two feet in advance. We soon discovered that the descent was most abrupt, so much so, indeed, that it required the united efforts of the party to keep us from breaking into a run, leaving the road and going we knew not where.

When we reached the bottom of the hill we were out of breath and the driver told us we had traveled a thousand feet. We again took the wagon and at that moment for the first time the hoarse voice of the falls greeted our ears. Almost at the same instant there was a rift in the sable covering above us and a white patch of cloud became visible. Whence it received its light we knew not. There was not a star visible. Profiled against this errant cloud were immense masses of rock, black as the night itself and towering above seemingly to a distance of thousands of feet. In this same uncertain light we saw or fancied we saw the windings of the Snake, but it was only fancy, because we could scarcely see the stream when the driver announced that we had reached the ferry. We boarded the latter which is about two hundred feet above the falls, horse, wagon, women and all. We took turns working at the windlass as we did also in speculatin what would be our fate if the ferry's cables should break! Once, while in mid-river, the current struck us with unusual force and all the male hands were required at the rope, while the women clasped each other in a corner and remained speechless until the bank was reached. There is little pleasure in traveling in the dark and there is little to reassure the traveler when he encounters dangers the magnitude of which must be determined by conjecture. For this reason, when the ascent of the opposite bank was undertaken, there was not a member of the party who did not feel that he or she had accomplished an heroic deed which would bear recounting after the return home.

As we climbed the hill, again in the densest darkness, everybody simultaneously remarked that it had begun to rain. A heavy mist struck us, rendering wraps necessary. This, the driver explained, was the spray from the falls, which the wind was scattering around with lavish generosity. In this mist, we reached the hotel, in which not a light burned, and in which every occupant must have fallen into the sleep of the just which even the crash of the falling water beneath was unable to disturb.

The hostelry stands on a height almost over the south end of the falls and was enveloped in a cloud of spray which, finding temporary lodgment on the roof of the porch, dropped in rain to the floor below. The landlord was aroused and the party stowed away for the night.

My apartment was the nearest to the falls and, despite the mist without, I left the window open to listen to the deep base voice of the falls which had not sounded unmusical from the first moment it reached my ear. The pitch was even and the volume was maintained with but the slightest variation, save when the sound waves were wafted to the opposite side of the canon. It then rose and fell with masterly sympathy and expression in a solo of nature's oratorio to nature's God.

I had heard that those whose sense of hearing was most acute or whose ears had been attuned to the closest harmonies, could distinguish a variety of sounds amid the rush of waters over the falls. I lay, for a time, and made an attempt to catch the various sounds, with but indifferent success. Some people say they have been able to distinguish eight; others, ten different sounds. But I am not one of those so musically constituted. I thought, however, that I could faintly note four or five distinct intonations, some of a comparatively high treble, and then I discontinued the investigation. I let the imagination have full play and there was no movement in music, mechanics or human agency, to which that of the falls did not keep accompaniment. I heard, again, the first school bell which sounded in my ears; the chime of the little church in the wood in which rare and radiant maidens were early and sweetly attuned to carol the praises of their maker; the booming of the guns which proclaimed, throughout the land, the surrender of Lee and the close of the rebellion and, with the imagination reveling in several of Patti's choicest arias, I fell asleep with the ceaseless volume of sound in my ears and sensible to the pulsations of the fall which rocked the hostelry like a cradle.

When I arose in the morning, the mist was sweeping in great clouds over the hotel and falling in rain from the porch. It promised to be a bad day for sight seeing because it was almost impossible to stand upon the brink of the precipice or within several hundred feet of the falls without being drenched. The falls also, were enveloped in the mist only the crest being in any manner visible.

About 10 o'clock, however, the wind veered to the south and the sun came out in all his glory, and the work of sight seeing was undertaken.

The hotel stands about fifty feet from the brink of the chasm. The latter is lined with dark pine trees while the bank is covered with a rich matting of grass. This is about the only departure from the reign of sage bush and is effected by the fruitful libation of the mist from the abyss.

From these pines, a rough walk leads almost from opposite the door of the hotel down a hundred feet to a ledge from which a full view of the falls may be had. But this path was so moist from the spray that Blondin himself would have hesitated in its descent. Accordingly, our guide took us by a sinuous path to a hight several hundred feet above the falls. There, however, while a good view could be had of the scene, it lacked in detail and accordingly another place was sought.

On our way thither the guide digressed, leading us down the precipice to the very surface of the river. This descent is one of the most perilous that can be imagined. The side of the chasm is almost perpendicular. Every jutting piece of rock and foot of earth was bathed in dew. A single false step would have hurled the unfortunate to destruction. He would have rolled from rock to rock and finally found lodgment in the raging waters which dashed against the base of the solid walls below. The descent was rendered possible only by the use of a half inch wire cable which led down the steep sides and which was fastened at intervals to the rocks along the route. In a couple of instances, slippery ladders were employed where the cable could not have been used for a hand-rail. By means of these agencies the party, saturated with rain, perspiring from tugging at the cable and, to a greater or less degree, covered with mud, reached the river. There men and women passed over a number of rough rocks strongly suggestive of gigantic mussel shells over which the undulating and angry waters roamed undirected. Between these rocks were hundreds of varieties of driftwood which the action of the waters had worn from angular into well-rounded proportions.

Our path led to "Diana's Bath," and with knightly propriety it was suggested that the ladies should enter the place first. This they did and upon informing us that we might enter the sacred precincts, the gentlemen followed.

The fair huntress had evidently finished her ablutions, because the place was tenantless. The bath is one of the many caves formed in the basalt by the action of the water, and is about thirty feet deep by two hundred feet high. In the middle of the enclosure is a pool formed by a crystal stream welling from the rock beneath. It was in this that the goddess had bathed her shapely form. This, too, served as her mirror. Her jewel casket hung up the rock, where a perpetual string of pearls trickled from a crevice and another passing over a bank of ferns was transformed into the brightest of emerald. The young women were charmed with the spot and desired to linger, but the men, not feeling at home in my lady's chamber, withdrew, followed by the fair ones, after several cards had been left for the goddess of the place.

With much difficulty we re-ascended to the summit of the precipice. The sun was shining warmly, the mist was rising perpendicularly because the winds had gone to rest. Shoshone falls were to be seen in all their glory. But who can paint that glory! Six years ago, when this wonder came into the possession of Dewey & Stone, John A. Creighton, of Omaha, and B. F. Clark of Butte, Mont., I read a description of it for the first time. Since then I have read what has been written of the falls by Judge Goodwin of Salt Lake, Lieutenant King, formerly of the army, and our own Hon. B. H. Barrows. It is needless to state that the descriptive efforts of these gentlemen are in themselves gems. But the grandeur and glory and impressiveness of Shoshone falls, nevertheless, will be experienced by no man who fails to see the great miracle itself. The Union Pacific sends two trains daily each way within twenty-five miles of the place, and the trip will repay any one who can appreciate what is both beautiful and sublime.

Two hundred feet above the falls the Snake flows between basaltic banks 800 feet high. Its surface is scarcely more ruffled than that of a mill pond. Suddenly, however, it encounters rocky upheavals against which it has been flowing for centuries. The transparent waters are divided. Some flow to the right, some to the left, and others are impeded and lashed into foam, but the stream, with its wonderful power, dashes, forming within a short distance three small falls, two of which face the west and the other, larger than both, describes an ellipse toward the south. A short distance in advance of the two falls first mentioned and on a lower plane are two more small falls, the flow from the more northerly of which passes the entrance to a Gothic cave, the threshold of which no man has transcended. Somewhat to the north and west of the cave rock, describing an imperfect crescent, is what is known as the Bridal Veil, the fall of which is estimated at eighty feet. This name is inappropriate, because the width is not proportioned to the height and because the lace-like transparency peculiar to the bridal veil is scarcely if ever visible in the fall. This fall, however, is imposing, and, of itself, would be considered a curiosity. But it is dwarfed into nothingness by the cataract of which it is but one of the forerunners. A hundred feet south hangs another wall of water, and still to the south stands an irregular pillar fifty feet high, surrounded by swirling waters, on the summit of which for generations, it is presumed, has stood an eyrie. There today the proud bird of the mountain is training the pinions of her eaglets to rise to the sun from the midst of a chaos, sufficient to awe the stoutest heart, so that hereafter, as the symbols of their country, they may be fearless amid the most trying dangers.

Down these steppes, around these pillars, past these caves, the main stream is swollen "by others meeting it, until a torrent, powerful and strong it sweeps to the abyss where all is ruin." For an instant before the fatal plunge is made, the waters, tired from the passage o'er the innumerable falls of the Snake, hesitate as if fearful of the deadly plunge. Their hesitancy is displayed in a snow-flecked surface, which, however, is borne along by the resistless tide from behind. Then it shoots far over the brink with a force seemingly capable of penetrating the center of the earth, and indeed of furnishing motive power to the machinery of the world. This wall of water is 210 feet high, forty-five feet higher than that of Niagara, while the crescent described by it is 950 feet from point to point. When the sun shines from the west within these miraculous waters may be seen coral caves, the grotto of Antiparos gleaming with even greater than its fabled richness and the deep recesses where a hundred Monte Cristos could have found long-buried treasures.

Anon, the mist arises and blots out the prospect from below, but leaves untouched the marvelous richness of the crest. There the water by hidden agencies is transmuted into snowflakes, cut into diamonds, woven into filagree and finest lace, carved into interlacings of marble, and wrought into mosaics of crystal and emerald finer than ever graced a Moorish temple or inspired an artist's dream, only to be hurled to destruction the next moment beneath.

There is no cessation to the iconoclasm, although, momentarily one hopes the power which is precipitating both the riot and the rain might be destroyed. Recovering from its shock, the water, greener than the emerald, flows silently away amid a halo of glory. The sun never shines on Shoshone without imparting to it the characteristics which have often been pictured in the new Jerusalem. The effects of light and color are such that it may well be doubted if they may be elsewhere excelled. Rainbows rise from half a dozen points, the arches springing sometimes from the banks on either side, and at others resting on no more stable foundation than the shifting surface of the river. Through these arcs of color, the weird, frowning, fire-burned walls of the canon, blasted and distorted into columns, pinnacles, mounds, parapets, and other forms innumerable are softened with a fresco-ing by the hand of Omnipotence, for the time being shutting out the repulsiveness which at other times is an element of their grandeur. Between these walls of alabaster and jasper, a thousand feet high, the river moves slowly, and we leave it on its smooth, gliding way to the sea.

The falls had a number of visitors this year and many of them have been from Omaha. At the head of one party was Mr. Guy Barton, whose daring recalled one's adventurous boyhood when an eagle's cliff could be scaled in the absence of the parent birds for predatory purposes.

Mr. J. C. Cowles, a pupil of the great Bierstadt, is here sketching the falls, and expects to have his work done to be reviewed and finished under the direction of his master in the winter.

E. A. O'BRIEN.

THE ART OF HOUSEKEEPING.

In Germany it is Made a Distinct Branch of Education.

HOW THE SCHOOLS ARE CONDUCTED.

An Interesting Report on the Subject from the United States Consul at Mannheim—The Course of Study.

There are no better trained and drilled housekeepers than German women. The time German boys give to Greek, Latin, mathematics and "the military" the girls give to simpler tasks and to learning how to be good, careful, saving, industrious wives and mothers, writes J. C. Monaghan, consul at Mannheim, in his report to the government. I must confess I never saw anything like it. Every town, city and district has its hausehaltungs-schule (housekeeping school). Every once in a while they exhibit, the exercises being practical and theoretical, the latter usually covering such themes as general knowledge of housekeeping; instruction in the nutritions of various foods, their qualities and ratios to a certain standard, their effects as blood, flesh and fat producers, etc.; care of the sick, knowledge of and nursing and caring for children; household arithmetic, mental and on slates. The practical part at the exhibitions consist of exercises in sewing by hand and with a machine, ironing, mending (patching), knitting (they are born knitters, seem to do it instinctively), crocheting, etc., and the making an' keeping of butter and cheese.

It is astonishing how carefully, cleanly, tirelessly, happily they work, singing all the time some lullaby song of Schiller or other national poet. Order is a German housefrau's first law. They develop a skill that seems astonishing. The scholars go to the schools, not as to a task, but as to a playground, with zest and interest. At the exhibitions one sees all kinds of products, which, like valuable works of art which reveal their beauties only on close inspection, awake most interest under a careful and minute examination. The best way to give our people an idea of these schools and their work is to present a whole course:

1 The course has for its object the teaching of housekeeping—

(a) Cooking, baking, washing, milking, uses of milk, making of butter and cheeses, and care of a kitchen or vegetable garden.

(b) Ironing, sewing, mending, patching, knitting, clothes (dress) making, etc. The scholars bring their own working tools and staff to work with and on. These things made and mended are exhibited on the last day of school, and afterwards given to the scholar who made them.

(c) General instruction in housekeeping, and in regard to preserving health when possessed and obtaining when lost; also, household bookkeeping.

2 At the head of each is a special committee of five, chosen from the district committee. The special committee has charge of the admission, dismissal, etc., of scholars; also of the rooms, the food, clothing, etc., of the boarding scholars, and has also an active part to play in seeing that the scholars are properly and carefully instructed. They carefully inspect all work performed, for this purpose visiting the school from time to time during hours of instruction.

3. Children are expected to visit the school of their own district, though exceptions are sometimes made and children out of one district admitted into the school of another. The girls must be sixteen years old and of good character.

4. Boarding scholars (and most are such) pay 1 mark per day for board. This goes into the district fund. The payments are made in two installments, one after the first two months, the second at the end of each term.

5. There are two courses, in summer and in winter. The summer course begins May 1 and continues till the time of harvest, when the girls return to help in the fields and on the farm at home. The winterm begins in November and continues till Easter, or thereabouts, with a two weeks' vacation at Christmas and New Year's. Each term has a length of about five months.

The plan of studies is prepared by the special committee of the district and the teachers. It aims to be as near practical as possible. Anything like the so-called French or fine cooking is seldom, if at all, indulged in. The manner of cooking taught is that based upon a scientific knowledge of all kinds of foods, animal and vegetable, and the best manner of producing them to secure pleasant taste and health.

Each school has a system or plan of regulations which the girls have to observe.

1 The scholars must be moral, industrious, etc., and no girl is allowed to leave the school day or evening without permission from the principal or teacher.

2 Visitors are allowed to call, and are received on Sundays and holidays.

3 All damages or destruction of property resulting from carelessness, willfulness, etc., shall be made good at the expense of the party or person doing the same.

4 As the scholars get enough of good, wholesome, well-prepared food in the school, they will not be allowed to buy food or drink outside, or to have it sent to them.

5 All changes and arrangements between scholars are allowed only with the consent of principal or teachers.

6 The scholars will get up in the morning on work-days at 5:30; on Sunday and holidays at 6 o'clock. As soon as the scholars are dressed they will assemble for morning prayer, after which they will go each to her daily task or study, as appointed in the plan of studies. At 7 a. m. breakfast is served, at 9 lunch, at 12 lunch, at 4 evening meal (a lunch), and at 7 p. m. supper. Grace is said before dinner and supper, and thanks to the Creator of all when rising from the table at these two meals. Evening prayer and "going to bed," 9:30 p. m. Differences of religious belief will be carefully regarded.

7 Sundays and holidays the scholars visit each the church in which she has been reared, Protestants the Protestant church, Catholics the Catholic, etc.

8 Walks and outdoor exercises, etc., are allowed only in company with the teachers.

9 Opposition to or contempt for rules and regulations, willful destruction or damaging of property, unbearable temper, untruthfulness and dishonesty will be warned, punished, and finally result, when carried too far, or when no sign of reform or a desire to reform appear, is expulsion from the school.

10 Protracted absence from the school must be by permission from the district committee and upon request of parents or guardians in writing.

The special committee will arrange the school plan and vacations.

11 The virtues especially recommended to the scholars to excite rivalry and emulation are cleanliness of mind, body and in their work, piety, obedience, diligence, frugality, carefulness, honesty in all things, little as well as gaeat, and patience.

Kitchen Class.—From 4:30 to 5:30 o'clock, getting up, dressing and bed making; 5:30 to 6, cooking coffee; 6 to 9, cooking and general work in the kitchen; 9 to 9:14, luncheon; 9:15 to 11:30, cooking and general work in the kitchen; ol :30 to 12, dinner; 12 to 1:30, work in the kitchen; 1:30 to 3, all kinds of handworking; 3 to 3:30, luncheon; 3:30 to 4:30, instruction; 4:30 to 6:30, cooking and kitchen work.

Second class—From 5 to 5:45 o'clock, getting up, dressing, and bed making; 5:45 to 7:30, breakfast, room cleaning, lamp trimming; 7:30 to 9, womanly hand-working, knitting, mending, etc.; 9 to 9:15, luncheon; 9:15 to 11:30, hand-work of all kinds; 11:30 to 12, dinner; 1 to 3, hand-work; 2 to 3:15 luncheon; 3:30 to 4:30, instruction; 4:30 to 6, hand work for women; 6 to 6:30, arrangements of rooms; 6 to 6:30, for both classes, supper.

Evenings—First class: 7 to 8 o'clock, work in kitchen: 8 to 9, light hand-work and finishing of tasks. Second class: 7 to 9 o'clock' light hand-work.

First class, plan of theoretical instruction—From 3:30 to 4:30 o'clock, Mondays, progressive instructions; 3:30 to 4:30, Tuesdays, hand-work; 7 to 8, care of the sick; 2:30 to 3:30, Wednesdays, cooking lessons; 3:30 to 4:30, instructions for further improvement; 3:30 to 4:30, Thursdays, lessons in housekeeping; 3:30 to 4:30, Fridays, improvement instructions; 3:30 to 4:30, Saturdays, instructions in the relative values of foods, their parts, effects, etc.

Anything more than a mere idea of the good done and being done by these schools it is not in the power of a pen to give; they are a part of that splendid system of education which is at the bottom of Germany's wonderful progress—more than wonderful when one thinks of her very limited resources, the niggardliness* of her soil, inclemency of her climate, and large areas of swamps and land good for little or nothing. I have myself seen so many practical examples of their good that I not only approve of, but most heartily commend them to the consideration of our school boards. I have seen young girls from eighteen to twenty-five take hold of and direct and run large households, superintending the buying, arranging, cooking and serving of meals and a hundred household duties. These schools, however, give training to all classes, and fit girls to fill almost any station in life, whether a wife or housekeeper, cook or general servant. They deserve a trial in the states.

*Vast quantities of fertilizers are imported and manufactured.

Uncrowned Heroines.

The last story I told you also leads me to a point on which altogether too little is said or written, and that is—the modern tendency to belittle or deride those women who go through life, unmarried; or, as the world calls them, "old maids." There are by far too many careless jests made of this class of women, says a writer in the Ladies' Home Journal. In the minds of many it seems a settled fact, that because a woman reaches the age of forty, fifty or sixty unmarried, that at some time in her early life she was the victim of either disappointed love or unreciprocated affection. This is a common mistake, as thousands of instances, both in history and in our every-day life can prove. There are hundreds of women to-day who have never married because of some special mission in life, either in their own families, or to the world at large, which they felt they could better accomplish if untrammeled by domestic cares. By their self sacrifice these women are heroines; and the very last person on God's footstool of whom jest should be made. Two of the sweetest women who have ever honored me with their friendship, and with whom to come in contact is like a benediction of goodness and grace, are addressed by the title of "miss." From their life-histories have I drawn many a lesson; and to the sweet fragrance of their lives is due many a gracious act of charity, and many a harsh word has been left unsaid. Should such women be ridiculed? Ah, no! let us rather be the scholars of their teachings, adapting the lessons they can often give us to our own lives. You and I may believe that it is for the greatest happiness of all women that they should marry; but that it is no reason why we should not respect those who by their lives show that they have decided otherwise. Some of the noblest women of the past, whose very names recall the greatest triumphs in the world's history, never married, and it needs no stretch of the imagination to believe that as good and great women are living right among us today as have ever figured in history. There are countless families today who will lose their brightest and most comforting members when the breath of her who never uttered the marriage vow, returns to its maker. Angels of comfort are these "old maids" of American homes, every day of their lives teaching us anew some noble trait of self-sacrificing and ever glorious womanhood.