

JULIA ARTHUR'S OWN STORY OF HER CAREER

(Continued from page 7)

scious of any possibility of danger that they dropped me from their anxious minds, which were seriously concerned with their problem.

I walked more slowly than they did, and they were far ahead of me when, without warning, the rails of the trestle seemed to cross, then to rise up toward me. I realized what had happened. I had grown dizzy. The ravine below was appalling. It seemed to have no bottom. The men were too far in advance to give me immediate help. I could only drop down on my hands and knees, shut my eyes and call out. When the men hurried back they found me in this undignified position. I would not, could not, rise to my feet. Still on hands and knees, I crawled back to the starting point, which was a high embankment, and from there ignominiously slid down to level ground. I had put on a white linen dress that morning. It would have been hard to detect the colour of it when I reached the foot of that embankment.

ONE night, I remember, one of the managers of the Silver Bell Mine, in Arizona, in which my husband was interested, took me up a towering mountain in his automobile, which he had put on car trucks. A great storm was in progress, and the effect of thunder, lightning and sheets of rain in that wild setting was unique and superb. Later the storm stopped and a full moon rose, lighting up the whole region with an effect of waving flames. At first I could not understand this, until I discovered that the ground all around was carpeted with the most brilliant yellow poppies swaying in the night breeze. Among these, as a last touch to the picture, stood hundreds of dark cactus plants with arms upheld to the moon.

There was a large settlement of miners and their families at the Silver Bell, most of them Mexicans and Italians. They all lived together in a sort of bowl in the mountain, and this settlement was a favorite resort of mine. I had to amuse myself in some fashion while my husband was busy, so I spent hours playing with the children of these miners and telling them stories. I discovered that there was a supply of candy at the company store, and I gave orders that on each of my visits a bag of candy should be given to every child in the settlement. Then I had the excitement of watching the distribution and seeing the youngsters "repeat" on us. They all looked very much alike. Their simple method was to join the line, get their candy, slip away to change the little head shawls they wore, and blithely present themselves in this disguise as though for the first time. My visits were the great excitement of the year, and I am sure it was not the candy alone which made them love me and give me the name by which I soon became known throughout that region: "The Christmas Lady."

When we remained in our own car, we had every comfort and luxury. But we often left the car and roughed it with "the boys," and at such times I ate strange things. Once in California, during a dinner at one of the "tent cities," I sat by chance where I could watch the operations of the cook, who was a Chinaman. The result was that I ate nothing. When I left, this cook pressed a pie upon me, as a special offering, and for a day or two I debated the problem of what to do with that pie. Should I bury it, or drown it in a mountain stream? Before I had decided the question the pie disappeared—and though I never dared ask its fate, I still have a sick fear that Mr. Cheney ate it!

THE best of the many fine things about those days was the attitude of the Western men I met. There were some superb types among them, men whom it was an honor to know, and they paid me the high compliment of treating me as though I were a man. They were doing big things—building a railroad—and I saw them in action. I could write volumes about wrecks, wash-outs, tunnel blasting, all-night and all-day work, all to bind the East and West together by that thin iron thread. Knowing that I was deeply interested, they talked to me of their work; another of my most delightful memories is that of tramping over miles of onion and cabbage farms with B. F. Yoakum, while he talked to me of irrigation and railroad problems. The irrigation problems we have always with us. As one dear old lady put it: "My dear, we haven't enough water here to bathe a goldfish in!"

Once, in the Grand Canyon, I overheard Captain Hanse, the famous guide, tell a party of pathetically trustful travellers some hair-raising bear stories. I listened without comment and, I hoped, without expression. But a little later he came to me. "Them yarns wa'n't fer you," he explained shamefacedly. "Course you knew I was jest tellin' them folks things 'cause they expect it!"

Another picture I shall carry through

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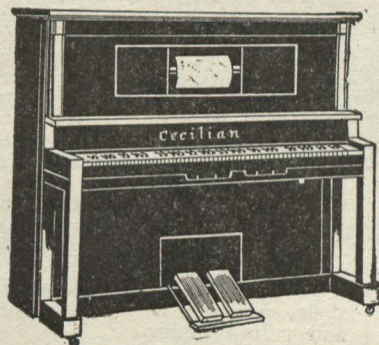
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