

60

Charles Whiting, Sr.

Pulpit Canyon, in the Mexican Sierra Madres, forms a forbidding piece of the boundary between Chihuahua and Sonora. My memory reverts to one wintry day when Father drove our big dappled grays, Vic and Clip, over a treacherous bit of road in that canyon. I still see the noble pair as they, fearlessly, guided the lock-wheeled wagon down the perilous cliffs, stepping cautiously over the slippery rocks, while I breathless with fear, at a distance, looked on, and father, at their sides, followed in speechless anxiety their every move. But he knew they could be trusted to make the descent safely, and they did. Ah, how he adored them. he adored all his horses. I never saw him angry but once. It was when one of the boys had neglected a horse. He used to remark, "They say animals have no souls, but if I can't have my horses in the Hereafter, for me it will not be Heaven.

I always associate him with those two horses. He was so like them in character: fearless, dependable, patient, cautious and faithful in the service of his Master, when at twenty, obedient to a call of the Church with our mother, a bride of sixteen, seeking a home, he braved the bandit-infested desert wilds of Arizona.

As a child, I remember his coming through the tall pines at sunset, his horse laden with venison and wild turkeys, and I scarcely able to reach his booted leg, gazed at him, my hero, as he dismounted. Early impressions remain - it seemed to me a man without boots was really not a man. Perhaps that is why I have always admired uniforms.

I, his eldest living child, believe I speak for the rest when I say that our happiest childhood hours were those spent by the chimney fire with father reading aloud Ragged Dick, the Coral Island or telling us of his hunting adventures or of practical jokes played on others. He had the keen sense of humor of all Grandma Whiting's boys. He was always our companion throughout life. He taught Pearl and me to waltz at home with Mother as musician.

His sound judgement and careful teachings were our guides through life. Among his sayings were: Avoid snobbery. Dress so as never to attract attention either by shabbiness or ostentaion."

"Accept no favors so that none will be expected in return."

"Never incur a debt without seeing a means to repay it."

The fortitude and patience with which he bore the loss of our home and lands in Mexico were unparalleled. His quiet, unassuming manner won friends where he went. I think he never had an enemy.

We cling to the memory of his sterling qualities. Many men have attained greater worldly fame, or in the church, but to us, his children, there has never been a man more truly great.

written by Alice Whiting Gustavo.