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Narrative of the Captivity and Extreme Sufferings of Mrs. Clarissa Plummer

Clarissa Plummer

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NARRATIVE
OF THE
CAPTIVITY AND EXTREME SUFFERINGS
OF
MRS. CLARISSA PLUMMER,

Wife of the late Mr. *James Plummer*, of Franklin County, State of New-York ; who, with Mrs. *Caroline Harris*, wife of the late Mr. *Richard Harris*, were, in the Spring of 1835, with their unfortunate families, surprised and taken prisoners by a party of the *Comanche* tribe of Indians, while emigrating from said Franklin County (N. Y.) to Texas ; and after having been held nearly two years in captivity, and witnessed the deaths of their husbands, were fortunately redeemed from the hands of the savages by an American Fur Trader, a native of Georgia.



Mrs. Plummer was made prisoner and held in bondage at the same time with the unfortunate Mrs. Harris, with whose narrative the public have been recently presented.

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PERRY AND COOKE, PUBLISHERS.

1838.

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MRS. PLUMMER'S NARRATIVE.

It was in the month of April, 1835, that my unfortunate husband first communicated to me the unwelcome tidings, of his determination to dispose of the small but well cultivated farm which he then possessed, and to try his fortune, with others (some of whom were his near neighbours), in the newly acquired, and at that period much extolled country of Texas—a move which was very far from being approved of by me; but, so fully determined was he to try the experiment, that all opposition on my part proved unavailing. His nearest neighbours (Mr. Richard Harris and family) had already consented to accompany him thither, and the month ensuing (May) was the time agreed upon on which to bid a final adieu to their respective homes, and to set out in quest of a country far distant, which they had never visited, and knew nothing of, but by reports that were contradictory and not to be depended on.

Early in the morning of our departure, we were visited by several of our friends and neighbours, who came to bid us the final adieu, never (as they then expressed themselves,) expecting to see us again. Such, indeed, were my feelings on the occasion, that I could not disguise the dejected and melancholy state of my mind, produced by my aversion to leave the peaceful mansion which had been the home of my departed parents; and where I had spent in joy the greatest

portion of my youthful days. My friends being sensible with what reluctance I took my leave of them, and knowing my situation, viewed me, one and all, with an eye of pity; and on my account would have endeavoured to prevail on my husband to have given up altogether the idea of a removal to so great a distance, or at least to have postponed it for a few months, had not his farm and effects been already disposed of, and such preparations made as would have rendered a postponement inconvenient.

Had I at this period possessed better health, and been in a situation different from what I then was, I should probably have been less unwilling, and have had less cause to regret so arduous an undertaking; but, peculiarly situated as I was, and the possibility of my being still more so in the midst of an uncivilized or uninhabited wilderness, where I might be destitute of every thing so necessary and important in a perilous moment, I could not be reconciled thereto, or free my mind of the most awful forebodings! It was, however, the desire of my unfortunate husband (who had been made the dupe of others) that I should accompany him, and who, like thousands, thought that it would be greatly to his interest; but, alas! his anticipations of the easy acquirement of extensive property in wild lands, &c. were never realized.

It was about the hour of ten in the morning of the 12th of May that we bid farewell to our friends, and proceeded in wagons directly for Sacket's Harbour, where, having taken passage in a lake boat, and reached the south-western extremity of Lake Ontario, pursued our best route to Lake Erie, and from thence to the Ohio River, which we descended until we were so fortunate, after much toil and trouble, to reach New Orleans in safety. At New Orleans my husband and his friend Harris sought to obtain the best information possible which would be their best route from thence to their place of destination. The directions which they there received they endeavoured to follow;

but being without a guide, in their attempt to effect an overland passage, and to penetrate a wild and pathless wilderness, they, by following the only path that could be discovered, were led, as it was afterward ascertained, in quite a different direction from that in which they ought to have proceeded.

From the moment that we left New Orleans, it may be said with truth our most serious troubles began. The two families were very fortunately comprised of but six members ; one of these (the child of Mrs. Harris) was an infant of little more than four months old. We travelled in two separate wagons, drawn by a single horse each. The country through which we travelled was composed alternately of hills and swamps, the former in most instances steep and difficult of ascent, and the latter miry, and filled with innumerable hosts of those troublesome winged insects by which the weary traveller in those parts is so much annoyed. These, however, troublesome as they were, did not prove our greatest foes. After travelling in this manner for several days, and having penetrated far into the wilderness without knowing whither we were going, our course was impeded, and we surprised and made prisoners by a band of frightful looking savages ! We had, an hour previous, alighted from our wagons to partake of our almost only remaining scanty repast, when they (the savages) appeared, mounted on horseback, while the woods re-echoed with their savage whoops and frightful yells ! As soon as dismounted, their first object appeared to be to secure the two men, (Mr. Harris and my husband,) whom they seized, pinioned, and bound to a tree. Our wagons were next searched and plundered of their most valuable effects, and then broken up and burnt. This done, Mrs. Harris and myself were placed upon and secured to the backs of two of their horses, while others were loaded with clothing and other articles taken from our wagons. Every thing being thus arranged, the savages, well mounted, commenced their

march for their settlement, as it afterward proved. My husband, with his fellow captive, Harris, were compelled to lead the way; and so far distant from both Mrs. Harris and myself, as to render it impossible for us to hold any conversation with either of them.

Although my sufferings at this moment, in consequence of the feeble state of my health, were such as not to be easily described, yet I felt still more pained on account of the wretched condition of my suffering companion, (Mrs. Harris,) who, amid all her afflictions, was endeavoring to prolong the life of her helpless babe, and which, in a most miraculous manner, she succeeded in doing until three or four days after our capture; the little innocent having in all this time been cherished by being clasped closely to its mother's breast! On the third day its sufferings and privations became too great to be longer endured, which one of the savages perceiving, the babe was forced by him from the arms of its wretched mother, and thrown into a bunch of briars! which cruel treatment having been by the same savage monster several times repeated, it was finally, before dead, attached by means of a rope to the saddle on which the mother was riding, and not until while in the agonies of death, was it taken therefrom and thrown, with much indifference, upon a prairie, where it was left to perish, and its lifeless body was, in all probability, soon after devoured by the wild beasts!

I did not behold this inhuman act of savage cruelty without the most fearful apprehensions that such might ultimately be the fate of my own dear child, then a little more than five years of age. His strength thus far had held out remarkably well, having, when weary, been permitted by one of the savages to ride upon the back of the horse, which he improved; and what I considered a still greater indulgence, whenever they came to a halt, I was permitted to hold conversation with him, and to impart to him a portion of the coarse food allowed me; and never than on such oc-

casions could a child of his years manifest a greater degree of parental affection, as well as pity, for his disconsolate mother, as he for me, as well as for his not less unfortunate father, as if perfectly sensible of our situations. When I offered him a small portion of the food with which I had been presented, he in most cases refused to accept it; and whenever he could be induced so to do, it was on condition that he be allowed to carry a part of it to his poor father! My dear child, Heaven is alone witness what consolation it would afford me if fate had ordained otherwise, and he could have been spared to have been at this moment present with me; but, alas! in an hour of unspeakable distress, he was torn from his fond mother's embrace, and by a merciless savage of the forest conveyed I know not whither. May Heaven protect him, and grant that his life may be yet spared, that he may once more receive a mother's blessing ere she is called to follow the departed spirit of his poor murdered father into the eternal world.

As regarded my own situation, I found that my strength was fast failing me; nor could it be expected otherwise; for, having been when less feeble unaccustomed to ride far on horseback, the speed with which I was now compelled to travel by the unfeeling wretches in whose power we were, proved to me painful in the extreme. It was now and then that a melancholy glance of the eye of my poor husband met my own, and which could not on his part be misunderstood, as if begging my forgiveness, in thus subjecting me, so much against my will, to the privations and hardships which I was then enduring.

About noon of the second day from that of our capture by the savages, we arrived at—and I saw what my eyes had never before beheld—an Indian village. As soon as within sight, the inhabitants thereof, young and old, male and female, came out to meet us, shouting for joy when they beheld so great a number of their natural enemies (for they supposed us Spanish

Mexicans) in the power of their Indian brethren. We remained in this village one night, and a long and restless night it proved to me, being obliged to prostrate our wearied bodies upon the bare ground with nothing but the canopy of heaven to cover us, and constantly annoyed by the bites of swarms of gnats and musquetoës; so much so that we found ourselves in the morning not much relieved, and but in little better condition to pursue our journey by our night's rest. While here, we were visited by an aged white man, who, in very broken English, represented himself a Mexican by birth, and who many years since was taken prisoner by the tribe of Indians with whom he then dwelt; but having been finally adopted by them, and treated kindly, he now voluntarily remained with them, in preference to living with and enjoying the society of his own countrymen. He appeared to possess a perfect knowledge of the history as well as of the nature and disposition of these savages, and by whom we were told that their hatred to his countrymen of Spanish descent was hereditary, their forefathers having been treated with great injustice by them—that when we arrived at the place of our destination we should find a much more numerous population—that if we could convince them that we were not Mexicans, we would be treated with more humanity, and perhaps liberated; but, as they had been several times deceived in this respect, it would be hard to convince them; and as they were different in their dispositions from most other American Indians as regarded white female captives, Mrs. Harris and myself might expect some harsh treatment from them! an alarming truth, which we indeed thereafter realized, as the reader will learn, although to this moment our captors had offered neither of us any personal insult.

Having once more set out on our fatiguing journey, two days afterwards, while on the summit of a steep hill, our captors set up a tremendous whoop and yell, and which was immediately thereupon answered by

others, apparently at considerable distance, in a north-west direction; and which, as we supposed, was to apprize their brethren of their near approach, as in about half an hour afterward we were met by nearly one hundred, on horseback, principally armed and fantastically painted.

Although our sufferings (particularly as regarded Mrs. Harris and myself) had been great since the unfortunate moment when we fell into the hands of the unmerciful savages, yet too soon we found that new troubles and afflictions were to attend us; that we were, by compulsion, to be taken as the wives of two of their principal chiefs, and, notwithstanding the objects of our hatred and disgust, the most beastly liberties were to be taken with us! Mrs. Harris being several years younger than myself, and at that moment in the better enjoyment of health, a warm dispute arose between two of their chiefs (an old man and a young one) as regarded whose wife she should be. As soon as we came to a halt, Mrs. Harris was seized by the two, with the ferocity of dumb beasts, and pulled from her horse. Her shrieks brought her husband (although strongly pinioned) to her assistance at the moment that the two savages who had fast hold of her, were endeavoring to drag the poor affrighted woman in different directions. But the efforts of her affectionate husband to rescue her from the grasp of the highly exasperated savages cost him his life! After being prostrated by a blow from one of them with his tomahawk, he was seized by two or three others, and thrown upon a pile of burning faggots, where, in presence of his distracted wife, he was suffered to remain until his body became nearly consumed! What now became of Mrs. Harris I knew not, as I was myself immediately thereupon seized by the elder chief, and dragged into a thicket, followed by my little son, where, attempts having been made by the savage brute to abuse me, the shrieks of myself and affrighted child brought my poor ill-fated

husband to my assistance ; but, as in the instance of his friend Mr. Harris, having been pursued by his savage foes, he received from one of them a fatal blow before he could effect his object in releasing me ! Happily, at the instant, through the interposition of a kind Providence,) I succeeded in extricating myself from the old ruffian by whom I had been held, and approached and took the hand of my dying companion, who, looking upon me as if sensible of his situation, made an ineffectual effort to speak, and in a few minutes after (with my hand firmly clasped in his) breathed his last !

Overcome by the shocking spectacle that I had just witnessed, I felt unable longer to stand or help myself, and sunk insensible to the ground as one never to rise again. In this situation I was, as I was afterward told, conveyed in the arms of one of the savages present to the hut occupied by the old Sachem who had been the principal cause of the death of my poor husband. As soon as I had so far recovered as to be sensible of my deplorable situation, I found myself lying upon a filthy bed of leaves and moss, and the only inhabitant, besides my child; of a miserable hovel, the internal part of which was wretched beyond the power of human conception ! The old Sachem, the usual occupant of the hut, was absent ; and in favor of whom, if any thing can be said in his favor, it was that he did not attempt to abuse or disturb me while lying in this weak and helpless situation ; but, when so far recovered as to be able to walk about, I was doomed to endure a state of wretchedness that can be better imagined than described !— Never, no never could a human being of my sex be reduced to a more wretched condition. The old savage (whose companion I was now by compulsion to become) was, in person as well as disposition, the most ugly and disgusting of the human race ; a wretch whose heart was callous to every human feeling ; nay, one who could coolly and deliberately dash out the

brains of the harmless new-born babe, it could not be expected could be moved to pity, or in any way affected by the tears of its distracted mother. Such, indeed, was the dreadful reality!—In less than five weeks from the time that it was my misfortune to be placed in the power of my savage foes, I unfortunately became the subject of the premature birth of a male infant, which, although born alive, was most inhumanly dashed against a tree the moment after, and its mangled body cast to the dogs!! Oh! that I could forever efface that dreadful scene from my memory, which none but those of my own sex, placed in a similar situation, can have a true conception of.

Before I had gained scarcely sufficient strength to raise my head from my pillow (if it could be so called), I was forced therefrom by severe and repeated blows, which were inflicted upon me by the savage ruffian to whose will I had been obliged to yield without a murmur. In no other character than that of a blood-thirsty ruffian could I view or acknowledge him, although between us there had been (through his instigation) a mock ceremony of marriage, performed soon after I was so unfortunate as to be placed in his power; to which ceremony I yielded in the first place because I dare not object to it, and in the next, with the hope that it might induce him to treat me with more humanity. But in this respect I soon found myself mistaken; for, ever after that period I experienced little else but the most cruel treatment from him; nor can I now conceive it any thing short of a miracle that my life should have been so long spared, after having almost constantly, for the last two years, been made the subject of so much cruelty. I have been compelled, with heavy burdens on my back, (as represented by the plate,) to pass for miles through pathless woods, and wet and miry swamps, accompanied by my little son (until I was deprived of him), through fear that he might be abused if left behind. I have been in more than one instance reduced (as

well as my poor child) to almost a skeleton by hunger and want! and when, by extreme weakness and debility, was unable to move about, food and nourishment has been withheld from me for the space of one and two days, and for no other reason than because I declined gratifying a savage brute in his unreasonable and wicked request. Nor did he seek to revenge himself in this way alone; but, aware of my love and affection for my poor child, the more effectually to torment me, and to compel me to comply with his beastly proposals, he would climb with the affrighted boy to the top of a high tree, and having bound him thereto, would descend to the ground, take up his bow and arrows, and divert himself by taking deliberate aim at, and placing the arrows in, a limb of a tree within two or three inches of my child's head; threatening at every discharge that the next should pierce his heart if his request was not complied with! And in various other ways was the poor unfortunate child made the subject of his savage cruelty; sometimes in being compelled to bear burdens and to perform tasks that his strength would not admit of; and at other times in penetrating, perfectly naked, swamps and quagmires, until he became so mired therein that he could not proceed either way, and in which situation he has been suffered to remain for a full hour, calling in vain on his poor distressed mother for assistance. However painful such a scene to me, it was always gratifying to one who proved himself less humane than the most ferocious beast of the forest!

Such, indeed, was the almost constant treatment that I received from the old Sachem, who had me completely in his power, and who claimed me as his companion, or "squaw" as he usually termed me; and who, at times, (when it best suited his purpose) would manifest some slight degree of regard for me; but at the next moment would in all probability seek means how and in what manner to afflict me.

The clothing allowed me was of the meanest

kind, such as is usually worn by the female savages of North America. On my head I wore a three-cornered cap made of coarse blue cloth, and on my body a short gown or rug, and petticoat of the same colour and cloth; and for my feet, neither shoes or stockings were allowed me. Thus garbed (as represented by the frontispiece,) I was, when able to walk about, compelled to bear heavy burdens on my back, comprised of sacks of dried skins and furs. The hut which I had for nine or ten months occupied, was composed of a few worm-eaten logs piled one upon another, and covered with brush and moss, and was extremely damp, unwholesome, and filthy within; containing an earthen vessel for water, and another to cook in, and with no other bedding but that composed of a few rotten mats and half-tanned hides; in addition to which, the garments described by me, and which I was compelled constantly to wear, was in little or no better condition; while my poor boy, the short time that he was permitted to remain with me, was most of the time destitute of an article of clothing of any kind but a shirt, with which I had been so fortunate as to provide him. Having more than once been made sick by reason of the filthiness of my garments, which I could not avoid, I begged of my savage master to permit me to go to a brook near by and wash them out, but to which from him I received no other reply than that "Indian squaw no wash blanket," and "white squaw no better than Indian squaw!"

In the course of the nine months that I had been doomed to dwell the professed companion of the old savage mentioned, he was once visited by one of his tribe, who could understand and speak some English. From him I learned that that part of the country we then occupied, was but the temporary abiding-place of a detached party of their tribe, who, when at home, dwelt in a very considerable number at a distance further west; that but a small part had quartered

here for the purpose of capturing or driving back such of my countrymen (still supposing me to be a Mexican by birth) who should presume to encroach upon their territories, of which they had an exclusive claim. After taking considerable pains, I at length happily succeeded in satisfying this Indian that myself and unfortunate husband were not Mexicans, but native-born inhabitants of one of the United States of America, and who were not then and never had been at war with that tribe of Indians to which he belonged. With this information he appeared to be pleased, and promised that whenever he should meet with any of my countrymen he would acquaint them with my situation, and do all in his power to effect my redemption—a promise which he faithfully kept; for, as the reader will learn, it was finally through the instrumentality of this Indian that Mrs. Harris, as well as myself, owe our liberation from savage bondage.

From the melancholy period of my separation from my unfortunate friend, Mrs. Harris, until the present, I had received no tidings of her, and was about to believe that death, in pity to her, had put an end to her sufferings, when, at an unexpected moment, a white female was conducted into my presence by my savage master. For some moments I remained speechless, and filled with wonder and astonishment, to behold one whom I supposed another of my sex whom misfortune had, like myself, placed in power of the savage foe;—but, in a very few minutes, I recognised, in the supposed unfortunate stranger, no other than my sister captive, Mrs. Harris! From my emaciated and altered appearance, in consequence of the great hardships that I had endured since our separation, it seemed at first sight incredible to her that I could be the person whom she had so anxiously sought for. It was evident from her appearance that she had been treated with more humanity, and had been less exposed to the scorching rays of the sun than myself. She spent some time with me, acquainting me with the many trials

that had attended her in the course of our separation ; which she, however, (on my relating to her my own,) acknowledged but trifling to what I had myself experienced by the hands of the old savage ruffian in whose power I had been.

There was one circumstance which took place during the period of my bondage, that I ought not to omit to mention :—about a fortnight previous to the visit that I received from my unfortunate friend (Mrs. Harris), my Indian master was taken dangerously ill, insomuch that he became quite helpless, and unable to rise from his bed. His whole dependence was now on me for that assistance which his situation so much required. It was while in this condition that I remained for some time undetermined how and in what manner I ought to proceed ; whether it would be more for my interest to afford him that assistance which his situation required, or wholly neglect one who had been the vile and unrelenting murderer of my husband, and principal author of a great portion of the misery that had attended me. On reflection, believing that exercising a degree of feigned kindness toward him, might (should he recover) induce him to treat me with less cruelty than he was wont to do, I concluded that the course first mentioned would be the most safe and prudent, and accordingly professed a willingness to do all in my power to contribute to his relief. With this he at that time appeared very grateful, but, as soon as so far recovered as to be able to walk about and to dispense with my services, all my kind offices were forgotten ; and he proved himself of the same savage disposition as before, and particularly so in depriving me, in spite of my entreaties, of my only surviving child !

Soon after his recovery, preparations were made by the savages to return to the place from whence they came, and which was the permanent residence of the remainder of their tribe. In a very short time their horses (of which they had a great supply, and per-

mitted to range about, hobbled in the woods,) were caught, and brought to the doors of the cabins of their respective owners; and as they had not much else but themselves to convey, in less than one hour from the time that preparations were commenced, the farewell whoop or yell was given; the old sachem who had command over me, compelling me to ride behind him on one and the same beast. In this final remove with the savages I suffered much more than on any similar occasion; my savage keeper apparently was delighted more than ever in making me the subject of his tyranny; and before we arrived at our journey's end, I was in three instances most cruelly beat by him, and for no other reason than my having fallen thrice from the back of the horse on which I was riding, which, through extreme weakness, I was unable to avoid. In the last instance of beating me, it was with so much severity as to produce several deep and dangerous wounds on my head, and from which it was my expectation when injured never to have recovered!

It was in this second remove that I unexpectedly had another interview with my companion in misery, (Mrs. Harris,) and who appeared to view me with the same degree of pity and surprise as before; and when I communicated to her, in as brief a manner as possible, the ill-treatment which I had received, and in proof thereof exhibited some of the deep and dangerous wounds of which I have spoken, she appeared exceedingly affected, and wept bitterly on my account. From appearances, it was evident that Mrs. Harris had fallen into better hands, and had been treated with less inhumanity.

When within a short distance of the village to which we were destined, we were met as before by a number of the inhabitants, male and female, whooping and hallooing in a frightful manner! and all, with the exception of two, (females,) appeared much pleased with the success of their brethren in the capture of two whom they supposed the companions of

two of their natural enemies—the Mexicans. The two females mentioned were the squaws of the two sachems by whom we too had previously the misfortune as well as mortification to be espoused ; who, as soon as they learned that Mrs. Harris and myself had by adoption become the favorite companions of their husbands, manifested toward us all that rage and malice that jealousy could be productive of. As they seemed resolved on our destruction, and so expressed themselves to others of their tribe, and having full power over their husbands, the latter, through fear of the consequences, dare not admit us into their wigwams, but lodged us in log huts erected for the temporary shelters for their horses, swine, &c. in stormy weather. If there could be any thing wanting to complete our misery, the reader may well suppose that it was the conditton in which we were now placed ; but, however deplorable our case, a week after, by a sudden although long-expected event, I was, if possible, plunged into a state of still greater misery. It was that (by the instigation of one of the old squaws mentioned) of forcibly taking from me my darling child ! Yes, the savage brute who, by the treatment I had already received from him, had rendered life intolerable, came now to demand from me the surrender of all that the fatal tomahawk and scalping knife had spared to me ! I knelt, I wept, I entreated ; but neither my entreaties or tears availed any thing ; the only reply of the unmerciful wretch was, that “ my child was good for nothing, and cost too much to keep him, and that he had exchanged him for a good horse !”

By this last act of inhumanity my savage master had completed my wretchedness, and from which it then appeared to me death alone could relieve me. But in this I soon after found that I was mistaken—that the unerring hand of Providence could send relief at a time and in a manner that I least expected it. About mid-day succeeding that on which I had

been deprived of my only child, having sought shelter from the scorching rays of the sun in the hovel allotted to me as my lodging place, I was surprised by the sudden appearance of my unfortunate friend, Mrs. Harris, accompanied by one whom, from his first appearance, I judged to be one of our countrymen, whom kind Providence, in pity to us, had sent to our relief; and indeed, as such he was immediately introduced to me by Mrs. H. He proved to be a native of the State of Georgia, and had visited the country with two or three others for the purpose of bartering for furs. It was from the Indian by whom I had been previously visited, and of whom I have spoken as having some knowledge of the English language, that he obtained information of our situation.

He listened with much attention to the recital of my unparalleled sufferings, and appeared much affected thereat. He informed me that he should spare no time or pains to obtain the release of Mrs. Harris and myself, and would likewise do all in his power to aid me in recovering my little son, which, however, he did not succeed in, his Indian master having sent him to a far distant part of the country. But as regarded ourselves, he had been much more fortunate; he, for a stipulated sum, effected our redemption, and in four days from that on which he made us the first visit, we found ourselves, through his kind interposition, not only free from the yoke of bondage, but on our way to that beloved land of liberty and peaceful home which we left with so much reluctance, and from which we had been nearly two years absent.

Our journey thitherward was attended with much less difficulty than what we anticipated; it being late in the fall, we suffered much less from the heat of the sun and the bites of insects, than in our journey on at midsummer the two years previous. From what I most suffered, and prevented my enjoying that repose at night which nature so much required, was the reflection that my unfortunate little son was still held

in bondage ; and for aught I knew, subject to all the cruelty that it might please his savage foes to inflict upon him. If at night I was for a moment lost in sleep, that sleep was most generally disturbed by unpleasant dreams of beholding my child in a situation that called aloud for my assistance, but which I had not the power to afford him.

In less than three weeks from the day of our departure, we safely reached New Orleans ; where, agreeable to a pressing invitation of an old acquaintance and particular friend, I remained until the return of spring, when I departed for the land of my long-wished-for home, and at which I arrived on the 27th day of April last, to the great joy of those who had formerly been my most intimate acquaintance, and where, it is my sincere prayer that I shall one day be joined by my dear lost child.

CLARISSA PLUMMER.

P. S. It was my intention to have mentioned, that while a prisoner with the savages, they, in small squads or parties, were constantly making excursions against the small settlements of the Spanish Mexicans, and not unfrequently returned with more or less human scalps, which they displayed publicly, and afterward suspended from the walls of their wigwams as proofs of their valor. Not, however, but in one instance, to my knowledge, did they return with any captured prisoner. In the instance mentioned, they, on their return from one of their excursions, (in which three or four of their original number had been killed) they fell in with an aged Mexican, whom they took prisoner, and who, in revenge for the deaths of their brethren, they doomed to suffer in the shocking manner as represented in the plate, to wit, by being burnt at the stake ; to which horrid act I was myself an eye-witness.

NOTE BY THE PUBLISHER.

THE above concludes the Narrative of the Captivity, Sufferings, &c. of Mrs. Clarissa Plummer. Mrs. P. was in company with, and captured at the same time that Mrs. Charlotte Harris (whose Narrative was published but a few weeks since) fell into their hands. Although the sufferings and privations of the latter were very great, yet she herself confesses them to be in no way equal to that of the former. As Mrs. Plummer, (the Narrator) has among her acquaintances ever sustained a fair character as regards truth and veracity, her readers may depend that in the foregoing melancholy tale of her sufferings she has exaggerated nothing; and we are pleased to hear that means have been adopted by her friends that will eventually (if living) redeem and restore to her her lost child.

The Camanche Indians, by whom the two unfortunate females were captured, are the descendants of those who were found in the peaceable possession of Mexico when first invaded by the Europeans. They were then found very numerous, but a harmless and inoffensive people; and being unprovokedly attacked by their invaders, and having no knowledge of the use of fire-arms, thousands fell easy victims thereto; and as many more were by treachery captured, and as slaves, doomed to toil in the rich mines of the country for life. Others, more fortunate, escaped the vigilance of their invaders, and fled to the interior; where their descendants (the Camanches) still remain the lawful heirs of the soil, and the inveterate and natural enemies of the Spanish Mexicans, the descendants of their first invaders.

The Camanches continue not long in one place, but live a wandering life; and being very numerous and warlike, and withal great horsemen, they are a terror to the inhabitants of the frontier provinces of Mexico. Although friendly to those whom they can

be satisfied have been ever on peaceable terms with them, yet, having but little intercourse with the whites, it unfortunately frequently happens that the Americans who sojourn among them without an interpreter are looked upon and treated as enemies.

CERTIFICATE.

"I, Ebenezer C. Elfort, a native of Madison, State of Georgia, hereby certify, that early in the fall of 1837, being in company with others at Santa Fe for the purpose of purchasing furs, I was there informed by a Camanche Indian of the captivity of two of my unfortunate countrywomen, and who were still held in bondage by the savages ; and by my request was conducted by the said Indian to the wigwams where were confined said unfortunate white women, and whom, (as stated by Mrs. Plummer) I succeeded in redeeming out of their hands and restoring to liberty."