

## HARDSHIPS

6/26/50

"...[MICE] are so troublesome here that you cannot save anything from them. In the chests my linen is gnawed away...Over night... everything, everything is eaten."

"...wine as a luxury has been banished from our house. I should probably never have great desire for it, if the water were cool and refreshing, but it is always lukewarm. We cannot get water-refrig. here. One has to fight many nuisances here. With this letter I am moving about from one place to the other. in the room you can hardly bear flies, gnats, and heat. Outside on the other hand there is so much wind that everything runs [blows] off."

"I hate the Americans here from all my heart. It does not occur to me to judge the whole nation after these few people, but am speaking of the persons around me only."

7/29/50

"It is a great inconvenience here that one cannot get any servants as soon as one lacks the means to buy negroes; then one must do everything oneself."

Maria likes to ride, but cannot because of the Indians. "some most agreeable rides on horseback I undertook, accompanied by my husband and Mr Gilpin along the shores of the Bay. Because of the greater delight one chooses the evening..."

But: "In spite of the awful heat during the day, the meadows are covered with the most luxuriant grass, which gives a wonderful sight! As far as you can see this fresh green turf with single clumps of trees. And as I indeed am such a great favorite of nice animals, it also please me to see masses of horses and cows jumping along on it so in liberty."

Maria makes trousers for Felix out of linen mangling-cloth. "And for myself I make from the ordinary garments skirts, which, for frequent want of my chambermaid--my husband--is more easily put on, but this, too, goes on very well. Now I shall become a milliner too, as I am about to make me a winter hat."

Advises Burtenbinders "to bring along for themselves a rather complete kitchen-furniture, for at New Orleans they are most scantily provided with it." Couldn't get mortars, or sieves, or coffee-drums. "Even if you buy a cooking-machine, you get quadrangular tin-bowls for frying pans. With part of the money he was to receive for the journey to Paso Felix intended to build a kitchen with cooking-machine, etc. separated from the house by a covered passage. Now this must still be left for a while. It is not agreeable to have the kitchen near the rooms because of the flies, heat, and smoke. An old fool built this house and very absurdly, for almost everywhere you find a separated kitchen."

8/17/50

"here we continually have the most insupportable heat. Since May we have not had a drop of rain, .." All dried up. and her horse "has to fetch 3 tons of water for watering every other day."

Expresses bad opinion of Americans. "...and moreover immensely given to drink. Therefore I live quite for myself..." Lonely when Felix is away.

re: servants: "But it is impossible to get anyone. Mexican women never work more than they have urgently to do for their house. American women of the class prefer to stay in a big town. and there is no one at all in service here. A German girl came here some weeks ago and also at one and 6-8 places where to enter. She chose the one where she most probably gets [the best] wages..."

9/26/50

Re: parents coming: "...only the owner of the hotel here is a respectable German." (She was worrying that they might tire of only her company.) "...take along for you some interesting books...as unfortunately we cannot offer you any reading matter. Nor can you obtain here a Weisse [white ale] at best a kind of bitter beer, which, however, is very good."

but "...for myself I have got restored from all the former weak state of my health, [presumably in Germany she had some health problems] thank God, without doctor and medicine."

"His [Mr. Busse's] present position is much better for him in regard of earnings, as he lives in town, and more agreeable for us...Now...it is so peaceful in our house, that I am feeling doubly happy by that."

9/27/50

but "I must avow that I can indeed not imagine to have written such a disconsolate letter that produced such an impression ...that I am living with Felix neither happy nor agreeable. ON the contrary, as I wrote in my husbands absence, one only could suppose that without him I can live neither happy nor agreeable. It is natural that I was very dejected and disquieted by Felix's absence because it has been a dangerous enterprise. IN addition, already some time before, perhaps by a cold, I had caught an indisposition, which exercised a sad influence on my mood... Moreover I can give you the holy affirmation that a change of my situation, may it ever appear so advantageous in outward respect, will never be welcome to me as soon as it might separate my husband and myself....And believe me, the conditions in regard of the Red Indians will certainly turn favorable, so that my husband will be able to build on our land and that then he will at once give up the surveyor business."

She asked for advice re: babies. "...the local manner to clothe children, which, however, seems to me really most disagreeable. Instantly after the birth it gets a little linen sash round....." Thought their way better: "...wrap them in a somewhat long covering and put the corners, round,..." Claims here everything is done "superficially and negligently...And whether it is not unwholesome to

the child if the night over it is not made dry and cleaned." Recommended an American woman, mother of 8, to come instead of a doctor. Mad. Meuly had her. "Mad. meuly is a really nice woman of 20 years, who got married with 15 years...She visits me sometimes, and I, too, go to her."

re: her newly added room: Felix cleaned it for her when he found her cleaning it before she put her things in it. "...and thus he is always intent on making me every little pain easy. In the morning he gets up early quite noiselessly and kindles the fire for me, puts water up, brings me washing-water into the room, enough, treats me with the greatest care."

"I have absolutely free will to do as I like, my husband always put up with anything. Never, never does he blame anything in the food, even if it had not turned out well. On the contrary he always says it tastes very fine thus, I just like it, and to prove it to me, he eats so much of it as if it tasted him excellently. If once I should not cook at all, I know he would say that is quite right and reasonable and if then he didn't get anything but a bit of bread."

"Here it is not so easy to write a letter. One always has to fight against great inconveniences: heat or strong wind and flies, among which some distinguish themselves especially to place themselves in the eyes, ears or on the nose." In the kitchen, because of the heat, she wore a shirt, with buttons, "grass-cloth petticoat, and light cotton skirt without waist."

re: money getting stolen from house: "...our money...up to now they were small sums only for safe keeping. For the chief work has been for Kinney and he has settled accounts on the landed estate. Then my husband has had great expenses for boards and timber to build our house in parts and to improve it on the other hand. It is very annoying that people here have almost no money and of course do not pay the work, either. Now two companies of soldiers will come to Corpus by which it will probably come into fashion to some extent."

Making a mattress for the baby out of Spanish moss, since do not have feathers.

10-6-50

re: mice: "And I thank God that I can offer a wardrobe to the nice things I have to await, to protect them from the dangerous mice, which it is impossible to exterminate. Every day victims fall, but sacrifices [of the mice], too, on our side. I have all things in chests and boxes and always one dress only, at the highest two, hanging outside...All the pockets have already been nibbled out..."

re: drought: "At least the urgently needed rain has come...Our cistern had completely got dried up and was rained full in one night for three fourths, and it is not at all small: 8 feet high, 12 square feet."

"Tomorrow we shall get two cows from the colonel, which I appreciate very much, for I gave myself really up to drinking milk...it has been these four weeks that I have not been out, as I prefer being in our house, where it is cool and more agreeable than in the town."



11-17-50

but "...there is always such excellent meat here as we don't have it in Berlin, as well as milk. The best cream in Berlin can scarcely be compared with this milk."

but "...I have the firm, firm conviction that in Berlin I should never have enjoyed such good health as was the case here and has been with few exceptions when it concerns a little cold, etc."

re: toothache: "...I have found out that creosote is the only safe remedy. Where this does not help, it is best no more to do anything."

4-23-51

but "Felix by no means wishes to exchange this liberty of America for a German residence..."

"The rancho, its land, the men and the necessary agricultural implements as ploughs etc., have cost very much...Felix was not even yet able to buy a yoke or oxen, but had to borrow them for ploughing."

asks how long until she can wear Mary and how to do it.

5-16-51

re: toothache that she has: "violent toothache that since several months always leaves me for short time only. I think it to be rheumatic, for Spanish fly and foot bath procure me some relief. The one ear (or rather behind it) has already been quite red from Spanish flies."

#### GARDENING

6/26/50

"We have some vines with bunches of grapes...but they are bad, thick skinned fruit. Of mulberries I had had many here, once also got a whole pail full of blackberries...The sweet potatoes are quite good, but at any ate I prefer ours. [white potatoes] They are also grown here. 3 shots for supper, from the room."

7/29/50

"Here I send you a flower of a nice, delicate creeper...it is a wonderful red. They are called Texas-stars; it is distinctly the 5 dentated star of Texas. The blossoms only open in the sun; as soon as he sets, they wither."

11-17-50

"With each day our garden is getting nicer, and Felix works in it together with Domingo with great zeal. .../Felix has acquired here a great reputation as a **doctor**, and he really cured some Mexicans with great success, and not quite easy cases, e.g. a carbuncle... The Mexicans all come to him instead of going to the other doctor. For these order two or three dollars for a visit, but Felix of course never takes anything for his cures, gives them medicine, etc. Therefore they also have a strong affection for him. For a drop of creosote he gave

"I have much to do and, it is true, the most manifold affairs... The other day, e.g. I have been on a discovery-expedition to the upper

to a Mexican woman, by which he had delivered her on the spot from the most awful toothache, we today got more than the quarter of a big ox."

"Some days ago, Felix again planted some 60 small orange trees we bred from seeds, 1 1/2 feet high on an average."

4-23-51

"He has my hens out there, [rancho] and I get a good deal of eggs without them being fed. Domingo built a little laying-house..."

"They say the Indian corn looks wonderful, and nut-trees as well as grape vines Felix reared from kernels, are already growing vying with each other."

"On the adjoining rancho there are a great many sheep, and therefore the panthers are there...Men are not attacked by them."

requested strawberry, gooseberry, & currant seeds. "For seeds are inhumanly dear here and almost ordinarily bad....I already grew, myself, peas, pot-herbs, cabbages, onions, cucumbers, pumpkins, dill, and salad, which we sell in enormous masses."

Also asks for "cherry-, plum-, and apricot kernels to grow them at the rancho, where the soil is excellent." Asks for bulbs of hyacinth, lily, crown-imperial, and peony-seeds, and cumin-seeds.

Says they have a kind of walnuts (pecan) there.

She just sowed aniseed & beans also.

5-16-51

"On our rancho they are busily working. The corn, they say, stands fine. Nevertheless the crop will be scanty if there will not be rain soon. We now have taken a third Mexican to get the fence done as quickly as possible."

#### ABUNDANCE OF GAME

9/26/50

"Thousands of partridges are already waiting in our garden to be eaten by you. On my birthday Felix shot 14 with 3 shots for supper, from the room."

9/27/50

"You inquire so eagerly after our Domingo, he is indeed still with us. As there is nothing to be done in the garden now, he has been away several times to shoot stags, generally always 2 days, and with three times riding away shot some twenty stags, of which he brought some here for us and then sold the rest, of the other the hides, out of which breeches and shirts for travelling are made. He then brought along wonderful big turkeys, ...In profusion we have here pheasants, big hares, snipes, partridges, and turkeys."

#### EVENTS

6/27/91 Felix:

"I have much to do and, it is true, the most manifold affairs... The other day, e.g. I have been on a discovery-expedition to the upper

Rio Grande to open a new commercial way to Chihuahualas....For here my safety frequently is based on the excellency of my weapons."  
"...only did I sometimes find difficulty to get in the fees for my surveyings."

"In Maria's letter I again find a long list of desirable trifles. Don't however, believe that we wish to become a burden for you with our necessities. But you will find it natural that my wife is in want of many things to the use of which she has been accustomed and which here can be no means be had for all the money in the world."

7/29/91

"Felix in few days undertakes the same way to Paso del Aguila, for long time probably. For the way shall be arranged for carriages. He has been assured of \$100 for this..." Since they have had a drought and great heat, they lost their garden and melons which previously yielded \$2-\$3 per day. So with this loss of income, Felix consented to go even though he considered it low pay. "At the former time he became lighter by 30 pounds, then in the beginning of this m month still had a bilious fever during which he was so weak that he scarcely could move a limb....[still] looking awfully miserable. In consideration of this I offered him my whole private property if he does not go away. But as this consists of 2 gold dollars only, he of course has preferred one hundred."

Next day: "since yesterday the intention to go to Paso del Aguila has changed. They did not grant them the military escort now. Because of the great number of Red Indians that stay in the surroundings they cannot miss any soldiers. ..."

"On July 4 there is always a feast given in celebration of the independence, this time even a ball. We, too, had been invited to it most ceremoniously. But just on that day my husband was lying very sick and had taken a vomitive on the day before. They say it had been very nice, and they have been together till the early morning."

"Then you may probably with the new year again hug a **grandchild**."

8/18/50

"Fortunately Felix was with all votes reelected surveyor, thus at least this income will remain for us. Sometimes my husband is cross-tempered; for all the work with the land [the rancho?] has been in vain, and he had to have the man for it as well as if everything had thriven well."

"Since Mr. Busse is no longer in our house, it is much better, and we now also are on quite good footing with him."

"Father asked about our divine service. We have no church here, it is true, but every Sunday there is English or Spanish and mostly Catholic service. Though I have not yet been there, I did not forget God..."

9/26/50

"My little room has now been established...Up to now, it is true there are only rough wooden walls, but you also gave me prospect of great embellishment of them by wall-paper..."



9/27/50

re: her birthday. "Felix presented me with a piece of jaconet for two-every day dresses, very fine dried peaches and chocolate which, I am sorry to say, if one does not but it oneself in New Orleans, is made of burned flour, starch, and sugar and is sold here very dear, and I baked a cake... Then Felix still got a big, long, wished for wardrobe and linen-press made for me by Mr. Busse. Mr. Busse came for breakfast at 7 o'clock and brought me a wonderful oleander-bouquet, then a selfmade, fine, strong head gear...then...a plate full of apples he picked up here anywhere...Mr. Busse stayed with us all day long. In the evening we eat partridges and were silently cheerful till 9 o'clock; then the festivity was over."

"We have now a rented a cow, which is being milked by the Mexican. My husband had not yet found an opportunity to buy a good, tame cow."

Maria got a dog. "...faithful companion and our house and excellent keeper."

10-6-50

Just got news that chest arrived in New Orleans 8/6.

10-6-50 Felix

"According to my opinion we are doing well. In August I was unanimously reelected for 2 more years and got the promise that my office will give me a very good income. It is true I will sometimes have to make longer excursions because of the surveyings, but this cannot be avoided. After all in a so thinly populated country every business requires travelling...And it is my principle better to work in youth and expose oneself to privations than later on in old age to be forced for it by need." Getting a commando of troops, which will secure the country against Red Indians. "Moreover continually more well off people are coming to settle here, so that in few years the inconveniences of a so-called new settlement will cease."

11-17-50

"IN SPITE OF THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE THINGS [IN THE CHEST] I am diligently going on sewing which completely claims my free time. I ordered moss to be fetched for a little bed, which in our neighborhood is growing on trees in great masses."

re: Felix' birthday: "We have scarcely known that this is a festive day for us. In have not been able to present him with anything. for to fulfil even the smallest wishes is connected here with such infinite circumstantiality and expense that it had to be left undone."

"a GREAT AGREEABLENESS WAS FOR ME THE COMPLETION AT LAST OF THE LONG ordered wardrobe and linen press." "Mr. Busse owns this fortunate talent quickly to copy or improve many things when he sees them."

"I wish to thank you particularly for the wall-papers, which will be an enormous embellishment of our house, and thank you for the other ample presents, of which I cannot tell which of them caused the greatest joy to me. Instead of one pair of waterproof boots you sent two. Felix is immensely pleased with them."

1-24-51

"On Tuesday, 14th, at noon at the last strokes of the 12 o'clock bell a little daughter arrived with us...All has passed fortunately after I had endured 10 hours near going mad. My poor Felix had great trouble (about me). Everything happened very unfortunately. The two Mexicans Domingo and Juan had started for our land to the rancho quite early, and my washerwoman, who was to come to us at the time of my feeling unwell, had been occupied...so that Felix was alone with me and saw himself obliged, in the 2 days, to care for everything. ..she has great blue eyes, dark-brown hair, and quite fine, white skin, narrow white little hands and feet."

"just now Felix has very much to do, to copy out land papers..."

"I had wished to name her Felicia, but Felix wishes her name to be Maria."

re: rancho: "A narrow water is running through densely bordered on either side with high elms. Felix will certainly frequently have to be out there to arrange work. As soon as it will have been properly fenced, my husband will build a house there and we will move there. It will be the right thing for me; for here in town I don't leave behind a great agreeableness."

"...besides terrible toothache is tormenting me. Even creosote is resisted by it (at the eye-tooth)."

2-22-51

"Yesterday...the first chest has at last arrived...Then my dress, for which I thank Mother a thousand times, which, though it was half past six in the morning with our breakfast already waiting, I tried on with the nice belt, etc. etc."

re: arts & crafts stuff: "For here I lack pretty furniture, and so I think that works of that kind shall decorate them."

"On the arrival of the things we made a festive day and did not work anything at all, though with our little Miezchen I have got sufficient, almost continually too much to do."

"...she has not a double chin, but a threefold one...Even now, while I am writing, I have her in my arm."

"The Mexicans are infinitely diligent. Felix often rides...along with them on Sunday and returns on Wednesday evening..."

5-16-51

re: her record book of letters sent:"...notes about the contents of each letter I send you and moreover exactly put in it when I write to you, of what day your letters are and when they arrive. I can very easily know what I wrote in them."

re: Christmas: "We spent Christmas at home in the company of Mr. Busse, who presented me with a nice pyramid with 12 candles and the Texas flag on top. It was amply hung with oranges, apples, raisins, almonds, and nuts, altogether very pretty. Bad luck only that in the following night the mice had entirely despoiled it...Felix presented me with a dress for the house and a little table for my room. I sewed a fine day-shirt for him, as the colored ones gradually come to an end...Domingo had shot stags. So on Christmas Day we eat beefsteak of stag-filet and potatoes, also nice fresh oysters and have peaceably been at home."



"You inquire so urgently after the act of baptism. But as there is no church here and priests only come here from time to time and this one started only few days before the birth of the little one, she did not receive any other baptism than ours." Says might take her to New Orleans to have her baptised there "in our faith."

5/16/51

DIARY: " Sunday, May 11. Got up at 6 o'clock, then after our daily custom had a cold bath in the washing-basin, cared for breakfast, made beds and had tea, ham with it. American custom properly is to have three warm meals. Then I bathed and dressed Mieke[Mary], leavened bread [probably kneaded & let rise], cleaned rooms, then sewed. From 10-12:30 had to do in the kitchen, between been with the child, then had dinner consisting of scalded rice, young pumpkin filled with meat, ...beefsteak, Spanish onion salad, sour milk; cleared baked, washed up. Then dressed myself, again sewed while Felix had the little one. At 4 o'clock Mr. Noessel came to invite us for a little carriage-drive. Since 5 months been out for the second time. We drove to his house. There we supped quite fresh butter and, not seen for 2 years, real fatherlandish old [aged] cheese and red wine. A cheese we received in addition. Then we still had a carriage drive of 1/2 hour and were at home again at 6:30. I first took the little one to bed, then cared for tea; after that had supper: ham, bread, tea, and wrote my diary for you. Then at 10 o'clock we went to bed."

5-25-51

re: details of Mary's birth. Went to bed 10 o'clock, woke up at 2:00 with pains; got up at 6 o'clock to fix breakfast. "But I had to give up my intention, as I felt quite swooning, lay down on the sofa til Felix with Mr. Busse had taken my bed into my room, which is more spacious, higher ( and furnished with a stove) than is our bedroom. Then I lay down in bed, and Felix wanted to fetch the midwife. But I did not wish to stay alone, and as Felix, too, was anxious to do that, he begged Mr Busse to fetch the woman." She couldn't come til after the birth.

#### DESCRIPTION OF HOUSE & GROUNDS

1-16-56

"The Democrats of Corpus elected him ambassador without payment for the assembly that meets today at Austin. His vanity is being roused in this way. ..."

#### ITEMS REQUESTED

9/27/50

My little room has now become finished and is very nice and ... It is 12 feet high, and 12 feet wide, 13 feet long, has a

7/29/50

Asked Julius "to copy out and send along some of the songs I liked to much to hear or new ones...as here I never can hear music and yet find the same joy in it as formerly."

8/18/50

"...2-3 dozen brass curtain rings for the mosquito-curtains, which I must now hang up every evening, which is rather bothersome...I should like to have a little bit of the ironing-cloth to make so-called

swadling-clothes for later time, as here they take towels for that purpose... a little comb...or an ordinary knife [for the Mexican]..."

4-23-51

for Mary: "I should like to beg you,...to send along a little wicker- or tin-rattle for the little [one]...for I do not possess anything of the kind...some short sewing-needles...still finer thread..."

5-16-51

"Do be so kind as to ask Dr. Henschel whether lymph can be sent away. I should like so much that our little one should be vaccinated against the small-pox, but neither the military doctor nor the other one own lymph."

"If you, dear Father, would send us seeds, do add a little birch-rod, for they cannot be got here, and already it is necessary at times. [for spanking]"

High price of hats and low quality unless you have a friend to shop for you in New Orleans.

"Insect powder...for in spring the whole ground here is alive with fleas...a pocket knife for Felix and that dress design of mine,...some pair of stockings for Felix, ...at Christmas...send one of the 4 now mentioned/...[for Felix] a pair of calf-leather boots...yards of solid cloth for working trousers, or a small case of mathematical instruments,..In the time of some months he has drawn more than 20 large maps. And for my little Mieke a little doll."

"the rattle will surely cause great joy, as for playing she has nothing but small pumpkins."

"...a little cigar-box for my husband as well as a very, very, very big, extremely big bowl-like up, for he drinks tea from a basin--I find this so nasty--...send along a lancet. When a quick bleeding is necessary with man or beast, such an instrument would be very useful."

#### DESCRIPTION OF HOUSE & GROUNDS

9/26/50

"My little room has now been established...Up to now, it is true, there are only rough wooden walls, but you also gave me prospect of great embellishment of them by wall-paper, for which I thank you from all my heart."

9/27/50

"my little room has now become finished and is very nice and cheerful....It is 12 feet high, and 12 feet wide, 13 feet long, has a ceiling above of white cotton cloth, as no boards could be bought, a fine joined together floor and less fine rough wooden walls, which, according to Father's promise will soon get a garment. On the north, in the middle there is a door to Felix's room, to the right of it there hangs my little book-shelf, adorned above.....porch quite densely grown as well as also our house with Texas stars, in which all day long the humming-birds are living humming like bees. "

10/6/50

"...you receive a little drawing of our house Felix made for you. The necessary explanation for it will follow. The aspect is from the front garden. To the right in the house the two windows, the door in the middle of them, is now Felix room, in former time our only room. ....To the right of the house...is a big shell-cistern and at the corner of the drawing to the right the fowl-house...front garden... Indian corn-, melon-, and pumpkin-field with the fine fig-trees...The space fenced in before the house is a wonderful grass-plot just as to the left...fig-and orange-trees...Of the verandah you really would not see anything but a high and thick flower thicket with a small opening. The plants (Texas stars) reach far above the antlers of a stag... .. alce...is planted around by rose-trees. behind the verandah there would now come our bedroom-window, which then with the kitchen fills the backside of the house."

"I hate the Americans here from all my heart. It does not occur to me to judge the whole nation after some few people, but am speaking from experience."

"Here it [house] has been painted with white oil-colour. The fine big orange- and fig-trees suggested on the drawing have now, sorry to say, disappeared, and not a single one of all them has been left for us."

"It is a great inconvenience here that one cannot get any servants as soon as one lacks the means to buy negroes; then one must do everything oneself."

Maria likes to ride, but cannot because of the Indians. "some most agreeable rides on horseback I undertook, accompanied by my husband and Mr Bilpin along the shores of the Bay. Because of the greater delight one chooses the evening..."

But: "In spite of the awful heat during the day, the meadows are covered with the most luxuriant grass, which gives a wonderful sight! As far as you can see this fresh green turf with single clumps of trees. And as I indeed am such a great favorite of nice animals, it also please me to see masses of horses and cows jumping along on it so in liberty."

Maria makes trousers for Felix out of linen mangling-cloth. "And for myself I make from the ordinary garments skirts, which, for frequent want of my chambermaid--my husband--is more easily put on, but this, too, goes on very well. Now I shall become a milliner too, as I am about to make me a winter hat."

Advises Gartenbinders "to bring along for themselves a rather complete kitchen-furniture, for at New Orleans they are most scantily provided with it." "Couldn't get mortars, or sieves, or coffee-drums. "Even if you buy a cooking-machine, you get quadrangular tin-bowls for frying pans. With part of the money he was to receive for the journey to Paso Felix intended to build a kitchen with cooking-machine, etc. separated from the house by a covered passage. Now this must still be left for a while. It is not agreeable to have the kitchen