CAPTAIN GRAY'S COMPANY;

OR,

CROSSING THE PLAINS

AND

LIVING IN OREGON.

BY

MRS. ABIGAIL J. DUNIWAY.

"Westward the course of Empire takes its way."

PORTLAND, OREGON:
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY S. J. McCORMICK,
1859.

INTRODUCTION.

A SENSIBLE and popular lady writer has remarked that want of time *should* be no apology for defects of authorship. I heartily agree with that lady's views, but when a frontier farmer's wife undertakes to write a book, who has to be lady, nurse, laundress, seamstress, cook and dairy-woman by turns, and who attends to all these duties, unaided, save by the occasional assistance of an indulgent husband who has cares enough of his own, in such a case—and this is not an exaggerated one, as many who know me can testify—"want of time"—is a necessary, unavoidable excuse for fault of style or discrepancy in composition. Youth and inexperience, also, are other excuses, which, though I am not exactly ashamed of, especially the former, must, in justice to myself, be hinted at, in this my first literary effort of magnitude.

My object has been, not to scale the giddy heights of romance, but rather to write a book which the world's workers, the stay and strength of our land, shall read with benefit. If time-honored customs have been fearlessly assailed, it has not been with the object of awakening notice, applause, censure or criticism, but because I earnestly believe in the principles advocated, and wish the reader to *think* and *investigate*. Let him, with the Bible as his text book, Nature as his guide, and Christianity as his principle, search and know for himself

before he condemns. Skeptics, you who laugh at the Bible, who mock at the mission of the lowly Nazarene, who considered the most humble worthy of *His* notice; ye who live merely that you may amass riches, eat, drink and die, this book is not for you. I leave older and wiser heads to parry your studied blows, while I turn, in respect and confidence, to the lenient, intelligent, pious and elevated, for encouragement and assistance.

I have taken some liberties in the arrangement of incidents that some may notice, but a better wielded pen than mine has asserted that this is the novelist's privilege. Hundreds can testify that romance has been almost wholly set aside in the incidents of travel over the Plains, and wholly avoided in the description of scenery.

If this book but cast a ray of hope, or gleam of consolation before the pathway of the weary; if it should cause one reader to look higher than this earth for solace, or open up to him a better way to live and enjoy life, or shall be instrumental in causing the sterner, to look more to the welfare of the weakest of the tried and suffering of the weaker sex, these pages, penned under every disadvantage, shall not have been written in vain.

To those who have other work to do than spending their time in perusing romance without shade of reality, but who delight in the ideal when accompanied by use, truth, reform or investigation, this volume is respectfully and affectionately dedicated.

A. J. DUNIWAY.

SUNNY HILL SIDE, OREGON.

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CAPTAIN GRAY'S COMPANY,

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CROSSING THE PLAINS AND LIVING IN OREGON.

CHAPTER I.

THE GOODWIN COTTAGE.

"I TELL you Madam, the law is upon my side, and the less you complain the better for both of us. You need not think that I will give up my just claims upon any one's property. I have a deed of trust in my possession, which entitles me to this charming little spot, and you must remove and give me immediate possession of the premises."

The person who spoke these authoritative words, was a man about five feet four inches in height, and very thick set, and broad shouldered. His hair was red and coarse, showing off to no pleasing advantage, a round, flushed face, from which peeped forth a pair of keen, small, grey eyes. His teeth were firmly compressed, and voice raised to an angry key, as those unfeeling sentences were uttered.

Reader, go back with us in imagination, through the dim vista of time, for a period of nine years from the date of this work—imagine yourself upon the spot, and we will introduce you to the cottage and its inmates.

'Tis not situated in the suburbs of a pleasant village on the

Hudson river; nor will you find it along the margin of a dancing, rippling stream in Virginia or Carolina. Nor are we going to describe a cottage and grounds of New England scenery, nor yet a stately farm house of the sunny South, but a regular Illinois scene.

About half a mile from the banks of the Illinois river, upon one of the beautiful rising grounds so common in many portions of that delightful country, at the time of which we speak, there stood a little cottage. 'Twas no choice piece of Gothic architecture, nor yet a straw thatched hovel. 'Twas composed of small, maple logs. The outside had been carefully whitewashed, giving the place a cheerful look.

There were four front windows, covered with snowy muslin curtains, and ornamented outside in a fantastical manner, with vines of brier-rose, wood-bine, cypress and morning-glories. In the front yard might be seen clusters of all kinds of flowers that luxuriate in the balmy air of that genial climate. Purple, red and white roses bloomed in luxurious bunches, and were trained in a manner that a professional gardener would do well to imitate. Lilac bushes were neatly trimmed, and though not in bloom at the season of which we speak, (July,) yet their broad green leaves presented such a pleasing contrast to the varied hues around them, that no one would have thought them out of place.

Here was the dahlia, geranium, chrysanthemum, piney, and tulip, while pinks, china-astors, marigolds, nasturtions, and violets, bloomed in profusion. On the right side of the cottage stood the orchard, every tree loaded with delicious fruit. To the left, and some distance from the dwelling, was a little barn, every crevice revealing bunches of sweet, newly mown hay. In the rear of the house was the kitchen garden, which was as carefully tended as the front yard, revealing vegetables good enough to tempt the most fastidious appetite.

The front door opened into a square parlor, with a white

mat upon the floor, and a bed in one corner was ornamented with snowy muslin drapery.

Under a front window was an ottoman, neatly covered with cheap damask. A half dozen chairs, a few choice pictures, and some flower vases teeming with blushing roses, were arranged with taste in this humble, but very comfortable apartment.

At one corner of the fireplace, was an easy chair in which a lady was seated, whom we will introduce to you as Mrs. Goodwin. On the ottoman sat the man who used the language of the beginning of our story.

He was engaged in an earnest conversation with the lady, upon a subject which appeared to distress her greatly. She was calm, however, and spoke in a mild tone, but her lips trembled as though some uncouquerable emotion struggled for victory.

"But," said she, "I purchased the land and it is the only home I possess. I bought it with the only means left at my disposal, after my husband's administrators settled our business. I can show a good title to the land."

"No doubt, madam, no doubt of it, but I have purchased a deed of trust that was given five years ago on the land. The man who sold you the place should have told you that the title was not perfect."

"I was not to blame about it, Mr. Hammond. Mr. Wells did not tell me that such a title had been given."

"Well, Mrs. Goodwin, it's useless to talk about it; by the laws of the land the place is mine, and you must remove in one week from to-day. You are poorly able to stand a lawsuit, and I'd advise you to keep out of a scrape. It's pretty hard, but I suppose it's fair;" and without saying a kind or even respectful word, he arose, made a stiff bow and departed, slamming the door after him in a way that showed plainly that Mrs. Goodwin's frail cottage would not last long as a habitation for such a man as him.

After he left the room, the widow sat perfectly motionless, not knowing what to do or say, until she heard him shut the gate. Then arising from her chair, she walked slowly to the little bedroom, and closing the door, buried her face in a pillow, and burst into tears.

When introducing our readers to the family, we neglected to speak of Effie, Mrs. Goodwin's daughter, a girl of twelve summers, who sat, pale and almost breathless, on a stool behind her mother while the conversation was going on.

Effie was a blue eyed, curly haired, rosy cheeked little sprite, who seemed determined at all times to make the best of everything. Many a ray of bright sunshine had beamed from her laughing eyes, and penetrated deep into the recesses of her widowed mother's heart, causing that mother to thank God daily for confiding to her such a jewel.

Effie had been sitting as if petrified, not knowing what to do or say during Mr. Hammond's visit, and after his departure she had remained perfectly motionless until the sound of her mother's sobs coming from the bedroom, caused her to go involuntarily to the door. She peeped, not through the keyhole, for there was none, but through a seam in the batten door, and beheld her convulsed with grief in a manner that she had never before witnessed. This continued some minutes. She then appeared to grow calmer, and kneeling upon a strip of carpet beside the bed, she poured forth earnest supplications to the Father of widows and orphans, humbly beseeching the Ruler of the Universe to grant her strength for coming trials. Her prayer was ended, and turning with swollen eyes to the bed, she kissed, with a mother's earnest tenderness, the blooming cheek of little Willie, who was sleeping sweetly. Willie was a darling child. His high, broad forehead, curling chestnut hair, bright black eyes and rosy lips, and above all other beauties, a sweet disposition, made him the pet of his mother's circle of friends, as he was the joy of the family.

Mrs. Goodwin turned from gazing upon the lovely features of her sleeping boy, and came from the room with a steady tread. Seating herself again in her chair, she beckoned Effie to her side, clasped her to her bosom, and again the pent up tears gushed forth.

"Mamma," said Effie, "couldn't we set up a little store in the village? Herbert can do the business and we can keep house and trim bonnets and we can both embroider neatly. Don't you think we could get along."

Mrs. Goodwin smiled faintly as her daughter talked, in her sweet winning way, of these things.

Taking Effie's proffered kiss, she said, "My child, we have no experience in such matters, and we would not know how to manage. Besides, it would take money to set up and we have not got it."

Here, then, was a dilemma which Effie's childish hope and eagerness could not solve, and having nothing more to say, she remained silent.

"I feel so badly on poor Herbert's account," said Mrs. Goodwin, and tears started afresh in spite of her efforts to repress them.

"The poor boy has been so much elated with the success of his summer's work, that I can hardly bear"—here sobs choked her utterance, and she buried her face in her hands and seemed to forget everything else but present poverty.

"But, mamma, Herbert is young and strong, and it is not his disposition to yield to discouragements. He'll do his best for us," Effie said, throwing her arms around her mother's neck and placing her blooming cheek against her careworn face.

Her cheerful words seemed to have some consoling effect, for Mrs. Goodwin arose, went to the kitchen and began to prepare the evening meal, striving hard to straighten her swollen

face and look cheerful against Herbert should return from his day's work.

The table was soon loaded with excellent viands, all procured from the sweet little ten acre farm. The tea was produced from herbs grown in the kitchen garden, and the milk and butter were obtained from the widow's only cow. The two dozen giant maple trees in the four acre pasture, yielded the sugar, while the corn and vegetables were grown in the garden and among the fruit trees. The flour was obtained by Herbert's work away from home. Two acres fenced in an oblong square and sloping gradually towards the timber, were reserved for meadow.

They had been waiting for some time after tea was ready before Herbert came home, and Willie, who had awoke in a glee, was beginning to grow sad on account of seeing his mother's anxious face, when the gate was opened, and the sunny countenance of Herbert coming up the walk, showed that their misfortune was unknown to him.

"Come, Will, give me a kiss, your lips look like double cherries," were his opening words of pleasure.

When Herbert looked at his mother, he saw traces of recent tears upon her usually cheerful countenance, and changing his mood in an instant, he asked with great apparent concern, the cause of her trouble.

"We are without a home, my son; a man came here to-day, who has a deed of trust in his possession which calls for our snug little home, and we must leave here in one week from to-day, forever."

Nothing could have startled him more than did this calm and earnest announcement. He had always been taught the theory that "out of debt is out of danger," and as it was his mother's invariable rule to keep free from incumbrances of this kind, he could not imagine how their little property had become so involved.

"It was not my doing, Herbert; I have never contracted a debt of one dollar since your father's death. A deed of trust was given on this land some time before I bought it, but I did not know it until to-day."

Herbert did not reply. He was evidently revolving some important matter in his mind and with his lips firmly compressed and eyes riveted to the floor, he appeared lost in reverie.

"Herbie, I've got such a nice apple. Mamma told me this morning when the dew was on the clover, that next summer I should have lots of apples on my tree, and I might do just as I pleased with them."

So spake little Willie, as he came bounding into the room. After receiving Herbert's kiss, he had sprung away and darted through the shrubbery into the orchard, when he found his large red apple on the ground where it had fallen during the day.

For weeks he had watched this apple with deep interest, and now that the red, ripe fruit was in his hands, his joy seemed to know no bounds.

"Mamma, what are you crying for? Are you sorry I got the apple?"

"No, my dear, enjoy it while you may. I feel thankful that my little pet does not feel as we do."

"But, Mamma, what is the matter? Why, if Herbie doesn't look like crying too! Effie, do tell me," and looking earnestly into his sister's face he tried hard to read her thoughts.

Effie sat down, took the little fellow in her arms, and told him of their troubles in her own soothing, artless way.

"Must I give up my apple tree?"

"Yes, darling, we must give up everything that grows here."

The child looked bewildered, as if he did not comprehend

all that was said, but he understood enough to destroy his habitual gayety.

"The supper, Mother, the supper! The rascal won't cheat me out of that, I guess. I've worked hard since dinner, and I want some of your good bread and butter. It's a little singular that no one else cooks so good as you do," said Herbert, as with his usual cheerfulness, he went to the well, filled a basin from the wooden bucket and applied the clear, cold water to his face and head.

They sat down, each one to a side of the square table. Mrs. Goodwin invoked the blessing of Heaven upon their repast, and with no appetites for food, they began slowly to partake of the evening meal.

Herbert was fifteen years of age. His forehead was high and broad, and the hair dark and curling. His eyes were of a changable hue, which defies description. It was next to impossible to tell whether the full, sparkling orbs were dark brown or hazel. The nose was slightly Roman, the lips full and of a roguish expression, while a small dimple in each cheek, when a smile played over his face, gave a pleasing finish to his regularly chiseled features.

"What shall we do, Brother? Where shall we go?" Effie asked after a painful silence.

"I can't tell, Sister, but I'll try to think of something to do. By the way, Mother, couldn't we break the force of the deed that rascal's got hold of? Now, I have it, I'll break that piece of writing, and I guess he can't help himself! Come, Mother, cheer up and eat your supper. Will, you shall keep your apple tree. Effie, don't be afraid. *I'll* teach that madcap that he's got *somebody* to deal with."

"Ah, my dear boy, you are too impetuous. Mr. Wells, of whom I bought the land, is dead. His children are very poor and cannot redeem the place, besides I do not believe a reasonable sum would purchase the deed you speak of.—

Hammond has got his eye on this place for some purpose best known to himself, and he is unprincipled to a great degree. We have not the means to go to law upon uncertainties: besides I do not believe a law-suit would benefit us much in the end, even if we were successful. The lawyer's fee is equal to the oppressor's demand. We can get along some way: we will do the best we can."

Herbert arose, and with the whistle so peculiar to him, sounding cheerfully as ever, started for Mr. Hammond's temporary lodgings.

Mrs. Goodwin and Effie cleared away the tea things and taking Willie by the hand when their work was done, they wandered forth over every spot that time had made particularly dear to them. Even Willie was sad and seldom spoke, and his mother appeared entirely wrapped in her own sober thoughts. Her face was pale and her lips would sometimes lose their color, but she said nothing, and seemed to forget that Effie or Willie were with her.

They walked until tired, and then slowly returned to the house, resumed their different occupations, and waited with anxiety for Herbert to return.

The well known sound of his footsteps was soon heard coming up the walk. He entered the parlor, seated himself upon the ottoman, and throwing up his beautiful hair with one hand, and bringing the other to his knee with considerable force, he exclaimed that "Ike Hammond would be sorry for this some day."

"Come, come, my son, don't get angry; the blow is indeed heavy, but He who sendeth the storm, tempereth the wind to the shorn lamb. We must take care that we do not even worse than Mr. Hammond has done."

Herbert looked abashed as he met his mother's kind, reproving glance. Throwing aside a magazine which he had unconsciously taken up, he looked her steadily in the eye and

said, "Now, Mother, do you really think that the Almighty sent this blow upon us."

"Without doubt the hand of God is in it, my son. Now tell me, Herbert, did you not begin to think that we were able to get along without any one's help? Have we not placed too much confidence in our own strength? Have you never thought that by our wisdom we have gotten all this?"

"O, Mother if I could moralize as you can, I would'nt mind difficulties! But when I get away from you and any one crosses my path, I get *so* angry."

"Did you say anything ugly to Mr. Hammond?"

"I did. I called him a thief and a villain!"

Herbert turned scarlet as he made this confession, and his mother looked as if deeply grieved.

"We must ask God to forgive you for this, my son. Do you feel sorry for your conduct?"

Tears started from his eyes but he did not reply.

Mrs. Goodwin took the large old-fashioned Bible from its resting-place on the stand, and read some choice portions of its many precious promises, after which they all knelt down and while the mother prayed audibly, the children joined with silent but apparently deep devotion, in the solemn and beautiful exercise.

"The prayers being over then sweetly they sung." Even Willie could sing charmingly. The hymn chosen was one well suited to the occasion. How many hearts, when oppressed with grief and weighed down by trouble, have found a soothing balm in the words of the old-fashioned hymn:—

"Jerusalem, my glorious home,
Name ever dear to me;
When will my labors have an end,
In joy and peace in thee?"

When Effie awoke the next morning, the meadow-larks were warbling forth their songs of gladness upon the morning air. The window of her little bed-room had been left

open, admitting the sweet odor of blushing roses, and the pleasant morning breeze played with her sunny curls, as with a young girls usual reluctance about early rising, she hesitated, yawned, and again closed her eyes.

She soon heard the sound of her mothers footsteps, in the kitchen, and knowing that she ought to stir, she arose, made her simple toilet, and went to the window. The smell of flowers and the songs of birds, made her completely happy for a time. She even forgot that the place was no longer theirs, and reveled in sweetest joy while watching the scene.

A rap at the door aroused her from the deep reverie into which she had fallen.

"Come Effie! You'd entirely forget that folks had to get up, if you didn't get a hint, wouldn't you? My sissy had better get ready for breakfast."

Then with a gay laugh Herbert bounded away, and Effie came from her room in time to see him jump the gate with the milk pail in his hand, on the way to the barn-yard.

"Be quick Effie," said her mother, "and get the lettuce and radishes for breakfast. We must work briskly for the next five days."

This was the first time that the merry-hearted girl had thought of their misfortune since she awoke, and with a cloud on her usually sunny brow, and a load of unhappy thoughts at her heart, she went with a basket in her hand to the garden. Hastily getting the required vegetables, she went with them to the well and cleansed them in the clear cold water. Then cutting the leaves from the rosy-cheeked radishes, and the roots from the nice curly-leafed lettuce, she quickly prepared them for the table.

"Effie," said Herdert as he returned from the barn-yard and set down the milk pail on the curb stone, "come, sister, let me have a kiss; you hav'nt kissed me these two weeks. Don't look so sad. I've got a plan in my head that I'll war-

rant will work to a charm. Farmer Gray is going to Oregon next spring, and we can go with him. They've got up a donation law in that far-famed territory, and instead of ten acres of land, we'll have three hundred and twenty. Don't that look like living?"

"But the distance, brother?"

"Pshaw! Everything that's worth having is worth working for, and crossing the Plains will only be one summer's work."

"Come to breakfast children, or have you forgotten to eat?" said their mother as she stepped to the door.

They went to the kitchen which served the double purpose of kitchen and dining room, placed the lettuce and radishes in a dish, and sat down to the table. Effie was the first to speak. "Herbert thinks he knows what we can do, Mother."

The visionary and sanguine boy smiled as he told his mother of his bright dreams of the future.

"The plan does look promising, I believe. I have a valuable gold watch in my possession, your father's wedding gift, which I can part with rather than give up the enterprise. I did intend to have always kept it, but I should wrong his memory, were I to keep it when his children are destitute of life's comforts."

Mrs. Goodwin appeared to be talking to herself, as was sometimes her habit, and when her soliloquy was finished, she looked at her children with a half sad, half pleasant smile and told them that she was willing to try to go.

"Now, Mother, that's just like Mrs. Goodwin, and that's praise enough for anybody. She is the best woman I ever saw; she has a spoiled boy, however, but I guess it isn't her fault."

Herbert continued to talk in a gleeful manner, concerning good women in general and Mrs. Goodwin in particular, until all seemed as gay and happy as himself.

He went away early to his work, promising to call during the day and see Farmer Gray about going to Oregon.

Effie and Willie kept busy until ten o'clock with their lessons, and Mrs. Goodwin, when not engaged in household duties, kept herself busily employed with her needle. She was troubled, but the true spirit of Christian fortitude sustained her. "He heareth even the young ravens when they cry," was a promise not to be disregarded.

CHAPTER II.

A VISIT TO FARMER GRAY'S RESIDENCE.

READER, in the beginning of our story you went with us in imagination to the widow's cottage.

Now, follow us again through the same number of years, and we will go with you to Farmer Gray's Illinois home.

The house was built of large, rough logs, and was two stories high. The crevices between the logs were *chinked* with pieces of split wood. The rooms were made tight by a plastering of mud, with the exception of the front room, which, in Mrs. Gray's language, was *pinted* with lime.

The walls were decorated by numerous Pictorial Brother Jonathan's. A double mud and stick chimney, with fireplaces of huge dimensions, was situated like an ugly dirt mound as it was, in the middle of the house. The furniture looked just like the people, and the people looked just like the furniture.

"Well, la bless us! I wonder what this world's comin' to next! Here's a poor woman been turned out of her home by a trick of our laws and a villain's meanness. I don't know

what in the world the poor creetur'll do. Polly, ain't Effie Good'in a comin' through the bars? Yes, bless her soul! The poor child wants something, I know."

"Howdy, Effie! Is the folks all well?"

"Very well, I thank you, but Mother is a little depressed in spirits."

"Well, la bless us! If yer mother hain't seed trouble enough to set the poor creetur' crazy afore now; an' jist as she gits lifted up like, an' begins to think she can live easy, here comes this blow on her head. I've hearn tell of a righteous God, but I guess he's asleep nowadays," and uttering this ejaculation, she passed her hand over her eyes and sighed, as if overcome by intensity of feeling, as she wiped the perspiration from her fat, full face. A face, alike expressive of good humor and sympathy.

"Why, Polly, who's a comin'? If it ain't 'Erbert Good'in as I'm alive."

"Good morning, Mrs. Gray, quite a pleasant day," said Herbert as he took a seat without noticing that his sister was present.

"Ye may well say it's pleasant, for prettier weather than this never looked out o' doors," and the old lady held a turkey-wing fan over her eyes, as if the bright sunshine caused them to be painful.

"My mother has met with a sad misfortune, Mrs. Gray. As we will have to stir in order to make a living, I thought I would call and see Farmer Gray about going to Oregon."

"Oregon! Well, if that don't beat me! Who'd a ever thought that as great a lady as Miss Good'in would a tried to go across the Plains? But I'm glad to hear it boy. No doubt my old man can strike a bargain with ye, for if ye want to go, of course ye ought. Don't ye see yer sister's here?

Herbert looked surprised, and turning, beheld Effie seated in a chair, almost behind him.

"Why, Effie! what are you doing two miles from home?"

"I came because mother thought after you went away, that we had better speak to Mr. Gray about renting an outhouse in his yard for the fall and winter. Immigration is pouring in all the time, and every house that is fit to live in will soon be occupied."

"That is well considered, for I had not thought of it at all. Strange, that I should have forgotten it, but Mother knows what she's about."

"Why the la me! Do ye spose ye need to ask for sich a little favor as that, honey? Yer mother might ha' moved right here and never asked a question. Joseph and Sally Gray ain't the folks to turn off feller creeturs in distress."

Farmer Gray was a tall, loose-jointed, slovenly looking personage, with jet black hair, and heavy, bristle-looking beard, of the same sable hue. The forehead was low, but well developed, the eyes black and sparkling, the nose and mouth large. His homely visage was lighted up by an honest, kind-looking gleam from the eyes, that relieved the otherwise forbidding expression of his features.

"Why, good mornin' children," he said cordially, as he extended a hand to each of his youthful visitors. A benevolent smile played over his rough, uncouth countenance, as he eyed them closely.

"Is there nothin' I can do to save yer mammy?"

Mrs. Gray interposed, and told him all she had learned from them in her own way.

After hearing their story and request, he pulled his slouched hat over his eyes for a few moments, that seemed to his anxious visitors like so many hours. In fact, it seemed to them that he did not intend to reply.

At length he raised his head, and looking at them with a deep, searching glance, he said slowly that they were welcome to live in the house, rent free, as long as they wished.

"And has yer mammy got any money to buy a wagon and team?"

"We have but little money, sir, but Mother has a costly gold watch which she will part with rather than give up the enterprise. We have some property that will bring cash, and we think we can raise the necessary funds without much difficulty."

"The right kind of grit, my boy; the right kind of grit. Ye'll be a man yit afore Polly, I'll be bound."

This caused them to turn their attention to Polly, whom they had scarcely noticed before. She had the flaxen hair and blue eyes of her mother. The action of the sun upon her naturally transparent skin, made her, as her father laughingly observed, "as speckled as a turkey's egg."

She wore an expression of sadness and anxiety about the eyes and mouth, which was discernible the moment good attention was paid to her looks.

Her form was short and stout, her dress plain, coarse and very clean. The sleeves, turned back at the wrists, showed that she was used to the mysteries of hard work.

"Come, Pop! ye'd better pick the geese or I'll turn 'em outside. Ye know mammy says if ye don't git that bed afore the geese has to be sold, ye'll never git it!"

Herbert and Effie looked in the direction of this new voice, and beheld the tangled hair and roguish eyes of a dirty-faced urchin, standing outside the wall, with his eyes placed far enough past the door facing to give him a chance to peep at the company.

As quick as the words were spoken, he darted away, with a hop and a jump, slapping his sides, and singing to the tune of "O, Susannah:"

"I jumped upon de telegraph,
And floated down de ribbah;
Electric fluid magnified,
And kill'd forty-nine dead nigga."

"I never could larn that child no manners," said Mrs. Gray, with a vexed look.

"Never mind, Sally, never mind. Jed's jist like I was when I was a boy, and ye think yerself that I'm some persimmons now, don't ye?"

The visitors had stayed their allotted time, and arose to take leave of their coarse but kind hearted neighbors, when Polly, who had left the room when Jed came to the door, returned with four large apples in her hands and requested them to take them home, as there was one for each member of the family. They thanked her for the present, and bade the family good morning.

They had walked half way to the bars, which were used instead of a gate, when Farmer Gray came to the door and said in a loud tone, "I say, young uns, tell the widow that I'll move her things for her a Thursday or Saturday, but I could'nt come a Friday no how, bekase Friday's an unlucky day."

Herbert choked down his risibles and replied gravely, that he would let him know which day they could move."

"Remember, I can't come a Friday."

"Certainly, said Herbert, as they made a parting bow and walked slowly homeward.

"Effie, did you notice how sad Polly looked? There must be something on her mind. I guess it's a love affair, for I heard Sam Green, who works with me, say that if Polly went to Oregon, old Gray would be smarter nor he was."

Effie could not help laughing at her brother's tone of imitation, but said that if Sam married Polly, she hoped he would go to Oregon, for she had taken quite a fancy to her.

"She's a mighty good creetur, that's a fact," said Herbert, still mischievously disposed to mock the language he had heard during their call.

"We must not talk this way before Mother, Herbert, for it would distress her."

"Now, you'll see if I don't make her laugh till her sides ache to-night. She'll curl her lip a little and say I'm rude, but she'll be pleased after all," he said, as he sprung nimbly from root to pebble and from pebble again, going through a variety of gymnastic manœuvers in the course of the next ten minutes.

A half hour's walk brought them to where the roads forked; Herbert took the one leading to the house of Farmer Green, for whom he was at work, while Effie pursued her solitary way through a dense forest of sugar maple, towards her dear little cottage home. She did not dare to think very deeply about their change of circumstances, lest she would look sad before her mother. Hurriedly gathering a handful of wild flowers and a bunch of blackberries for Willie, she hastened on, and reached home, just as the scent of certain savory dishes steaming on the stove, told her that dinner was about ready. She saw that her mother had been weeping during her absence.

"Come, Mamma, it's too late to cry now. I have all the good news imaginable to tell you of," she said cheerfully. Then throwing her sun bonnet upon the back of a chair, and speaking with childlike impatience, she proceeded to relate the result of the morning's adventure.

"What have you got for me, sissy?"

Willie climbed into her lap and put his arms lovingly around her neck. She patted his velvet cheeks, and showed him the bunch of flowers and cluster of berries she had gathered.

"I told you, Ma, that sis would bring me something nice," said the little fellow, dancing around the room, to the imminent danger of upsetting the table.

"Be quiet, darling; Mother's pet mustn't be rude in-doors."

"May I jump and play in the yard, Ma?"

"Certainly, my love."

He went into the back yard, where he capered around in a perfect glee until dinner was ready; when, at his mother's bidding, he came in quietly and made no further noise,

Effie despatched her dinner with an appetite such as many a possessor of millions may wish for but never realize.

O, ye effeminate creatures of fashion, who know nothing of the mysteries of healthful toil, who merely exist to be waited upon, whose imaginary wants increase and multiply each succeeding day; how little do you know of the pleasure of a healthful dinner, after a few hours of invigorating exercise!

Herbert returned at tea-time, and when Effie looked at him, she began to think that the remarks he had intended to make for his mother's amusement, had vanished into thin air. There was no roguish look about the mouth and eyes, such as she had anticipated, but he looked more serious than usual. He said but little until tea was half over. Then, with a peculiarly roguish curl of his under lip, he exclaimed, "Mother, you can't think how nearly we have approached to the edge of a frightful precipice without having the least idea of our danger."

"Why so?"

"Why, don't you think that the hot headed specimen of Young America which you are bringing up, was thinking of leaving his home on Friday! And he would have persisted in that extremely perilous undertaking, had he not been kindly warned of his danger by Farmer Gray."

Herbert saw that the right cord was touched, for his mother's eyes began to sparkle as if she was amused, and keeping the advantage over her, which he had gained, he said "Farmer Gray will 'move our things a Thursday or Saturday, but he couldn't do it a Friday *no* how, bekase Friday's an onlucky day.'"

Then, in an extremely ludicrous manner, he related all the morning's adventure and conversation very accurately.

When he came to speak of the urchin Jed, he arose from his chair, went outside of the door, peeped from behind the casing, as Jed had done, and in the child's voice and manner, exclaimed: "Come, Pop, ye'd better pick the geese or I'll turn 'em

outside. Ye know mammy says if ye don't git that bed afore the geese has to be sold, ye'll never git it."

Then, bounding away and slapping his sides, he sung Jed's words and tune. He then came in, seated himself in imitation of Mrs. Gray, looked vexed, and said: "I never could l'arn that child no manne s."

Then, taking another chair, he imitated Farmer Gray's words and manner. "'Never mind, Sally, never mind; Jed's jist like I was when I was a boy, and ye think yerself that I'm some persimmons now, don't ye?'"

His mother was so much amused by his comic actions and words, that long before he had finished, she was laughing to the extent of his ambition.

"O, Herbert, you are too rude," she said as quick as she could speak distinctly.

"Now, sister, am I not a prophet?"

I'll give you credit for success in all you undertake," laughed his sister.

"Herbert showed the apple he had carried in his pocket during the day. Willie clapped his hands at sight of the blushing fruit, and they were all in better spirits than they had been for forty-eight hours.

CHAPTER III.

THE REMOVAL.

THE WEEK passed rapidly away. Effie had been kept busy much of the time in gathering the seeds of flowers and vegetables. While engaged in this pleasant occupation she appeared happy and contented. But when a time for rest would come, she would shed many and bitter tears at the thought of leaving her childhood's home.

The morning appointed for the flitting was very pleasant but the rising sun was surrounded by gorgeous, gold-tinged clouds, indicating the approach of rain.

All hands were kept busy until about noon, when the last load was made ready for the road. Mrs. Goodwin and Willie mounted the bulky load of household articles, and rode away with Farmer Gray, leaving Herbert and Effie to drive the cow. The playful calf, as if conscious that they were going to take it from its home, was not willing to leave the pasture, and it was long before they could get it through the gate.

They had proceeded but a few rods from the house when they met Mr. Hammond, who tauntingly told them that if he could only prove that they were negroes and belonged to him, he would be just "in town."

Herbert turned ashy pale and bit his lips but said nothing, while the hot blood mounted to Effie's forehead and tinged her cheeks with its crimson tide.

Mr. Hammond could never forget that his father had been a wealthy citizen of Virginia. As he had been brought up among slaves he of course had a hatred for poor white folks, which his own poverty and debauchery had in no way diminished. He delighted to teaze even those who had been deeply wronged by his own misdeeds.

When young he had gloried in the appellation of "a fast young man," and kept the company of the idle and vicious, until he was foremost in almost every kind of wickedness. His father tried to expostulate with him about his conduct, but to no purpose, and his crowning act of recklessness was a marriage with a low ignorant woman whose habits were almost as bad as his own. His father died soon after this unhappy union, and the estate was transferred to the son, who was in no way qualified to take care of his property. He was at times so cruel to his slaves that they would run away by dozens, and finally, in a night of dissipation, he lost all his remaining

possessions, at the gaming table. His wife got intoxicated on the strength (not of his misfortune, but of bad whiskey), and would remain drunk for days, while Hammond would curse his stars and rave like a madman, after taking his usual potations.

From that time forward they were obliged to beg, to steal, and to take all kinds of advantages of their low associates, when moving from hut to hut in order to make a living. His family increased rapidly, until at the time of the opening of our story, he had seven children, all promising to make just such men and women as their parents were.

He had, by different changes, chances, losses and successes, contrived to find his way to Illinois, and obtaining in some manner, the deed of trust that called for Mrs. Goodwin's home, he seemed elated to a high pitch, not so much on account of his own good luck, as on account of the widow's misfortune.

The brother and sister had not proceeded far with their cow, before the sky became darkened and the dead silence which precedes a thunder storm, cast a spell upon their feelings that was indescribable.

The rain was falling in torrents when they reached the forest of maple trees, spoken of in the last chapter.

Sheets of lightning played in awful grandeur above their heads, lighting up the majestic tree tops with unearthly splendor. Peal after peal of deafening thunder echoed and re-echoed through the timber, while ever and anon, the crash of falling trees, served to make the din more awfully appaling. They were both used to thunder storms, and taking refuge under the gigantic trunk of an uprooted monarch of the forest they waited in silence for the storm to abate.

The cow and calf, as if looking to their guides for protection, came up to the place of refuge and crouched with them under the same shelter. The rain soon ceased to fall, and

hailstones of an enormous size bounded from the huge covering over their heads and rolled in piles at their feet. Effie nestled closely to her brother's side, and watched this war of elements with intense anxiety. Every few seconds a flash of lightning would cause every leaf and bough to glow as if made of burnished gold. At such times, Effie would look at her brother and feel astonished to see his radient face. He seemed as one in a trance. A sweet smile played over his glowing countenance, and as the conflict of elements became yet more terrible to Effie, he appeared actually to *drink pure delight.*

The noise of falling hailstones, the crashing of falling trees, and the sonorous sound of the deep-toned thunder, kept them for a full half hour from hearing each others voices. At last the clouds began to pass away, the lightning flashed but seldom, the thunder rolled at a greater distance, and the wind ceased to blow, except in gentle whirls and whispering eddies through the grand old trees.

As soon as the storm abated, they endeavored to proceed forward with their cow again before them.

They had gone but a short distance before they found the road completely blocked up by broken and uprooted trees, and it was with great difficulty that they could find openings in the forest, through which they could pass. Just as they were emerging from the wood they met Farmer Gray, mounted on a little mule.

"Hallo, young 'uns," he said in an excited voice, "I see yer alive yet, but I don't see how ye ever escaped."

He then halted in the road before them, and turning himself leisurely in the saddle, he added "Warn't ye a'most scar'd to death."

"Effie seemed frightened, but I never before felt so happy in my life, sir," said Herbert.

"I felt that we were in the hands of God, and I rejoiced to

see His power. My whole being was excited with a kind of unearthly joy, and I thanked the Almighty Ruler for having given me this opportunity to see His elements charged with destruction."

Reader, you should have seen this naturally gay and wild-spirited boy as he uttered these words. He seemed excited till his soul was speaking through his eyes. His voice was calm, but had a kind of unearthly sound, as if the mind was far above the body.

Farmer Gray looked at him for a few moments without speaking. At length he said—"Well boy, I must say, ye'r the greatest specimen of humanity for a fifteen year old that I ever did see. Who'd a ever thought that anybody o' your age would talk that way?"

"Was mamma uneasy about us?" Effie asked.

"Well yes. Yer mammy took on powerful, an' as quick as it quit stormin' I come after ye,—Effie ye'd better git on my mule an' go home as quick as you can. 'Erbart an' me 'll drive the cow."

Farmer Gray lifted Effie upon the mule, adjusted the stirrup to suit her foot, gave her a switch, and started the docile animal by giving him a rather unceremonious kick in the side. She rode on at a brisk trot and soon reached the house. Her mother was standing by the bars, looking anxiously down the road, and leaning against the bar post for support. A faint smile flitted over her features when she saw her daughter, who glad to relieve the anxiety which her sudden coming had not wholly expelled from her mother's heart, hurriedly told her that Herbert was safe, and would soon be in sight of the house. She then gave up the mule to Jed's care, and went into the house with her mother, who soon made her comfortable, by helping her to put on a complete suit of dry clothing. The air had become so suddenly cooled by the storm, that Mrs. Gray had built a roaring fire of hickory logs and maple

splinters, which was burning its liveliest when Effie was ready to enjoy its cheerful heat. She related the whole story of the storm with childlike artlessness.

"O, mamma, it was so terrible! You can't think how dreadful it was to be in the timber, hearing the groaning of the great maples, seeing the lightning's flashes, and hearing the awful thunder. And Herbert! O, mother, if you had seen him! I don't believe he's afraid of *anything*. He astonished Farmer Gray by his talk about the power of God in the elements."

Mrs. Goodwin burst into tears.

"Why, mother, what's the matter?"

"O, my child, the actions of Herbert in a storm, remind me so forcibly of your father's feelings at such a time, that it seems as if he *must* be living."

"Isn't pa with the angels now, ma?" asked Willie, earnestly.

"Yes, dear, your pa is much better off to-day than we are."

"I want to die ma; I want to go to Heaven and live with the angels where pa is."

Like any other child, Willie had his playful moods, though, *unlike* most other children of his age, he had many thoughtful moments. He had been told so much about his father, of whom he remembered but little, that he seemed to *realize* the truth of what his mother had often told him about his pa living with angels, while *her* feelings about the matter were only *ideal*. It seemed hard for her to really consider her husband as being in a happy land, while the impressible mind of her little boy, could easily feel and *know* the truth of his only parent's teachings. How hard it is for men and women to be, in the language of the Scriptures, "as a little child." We tell our children what we actually believe, but our *ideal belief* immediately becomes, in their impressive imaginations, *undoubtable reality*.

"Do you want to leave ma, and brother, and sister, darling?"

The little fellow climbed into his mother's lap, kissed her lovingly and answered, "No, ma, but we can both go to Heaven, and we will before long."

Herbert and Farmer Gray arrived at this moment. Herbert knew that if his mother were to see him in the state of mind the storm had caused, old remembrances would be awakened; and to Effie's great pleasure, he appeared merrier than usual. She had such an instinctive horror of anything but sunshine, flowers and good humor, that she had dreaded the effect of Herbert's arrival.

All soon forgot the words of little Willie upon the subject of death. Is there not sometimes a warning in the words of children? Are we not often reminded with startling force of something a little child has said, which at the time it was spoken, made but little impression upon our minds? But we must not anticipate.

Supper was announced in Mrs. Gray's kitchen, and they were soon seated at a table which was well loaded with salt pork, vegetables, johnny-cake, butter and buttermilk. The next day being Sunday, the Goodwin family were to remain in the house with their well meaning hostess, who seemed willing to do everything in her power to oblige them. When they awoke on the clear and lovely Sabbath morning, they were surprised to find that Mrs. Gray had been astir for an hour. A substantial breakfast was smoking invitingly upon the long, well loaded table, when they entered the kitchen to perform the morning's ablution at the family washing bowl. Polly came in with her face flushed by a morning walk in the bracing air. After breakfast she asked Effie to walk with her around the garden and orchard. Effie was anxious to know what was the cause of her melancholy expression of countenance, but did not like to ask her about it, because she dreaded to hear a sorrowful story.

"Why were you not at home yesterday?" she asked.

"I've been to daddy Green's a weavin' a carpet. Do yo know, Sam an' me's a goin' to be married in September, an' I want somethin' to begin house-keepin' on."

"Are you going to stay in Illinois and let your folks all go to Oregon?"

"That's what I dunno, an' I'm mightily cast down about it. Ye see Sam's under age, an' his daddy aint willin' for him to go off."

Effie knew of no consolation to offer, and soon changed the subject. When they returned to the house, Polly went to work clearing the breakfast table; and seeing Herbert standing in a meditating mood under a cottonwood by the fence, Effie ran to him and related the news concerning Polly's marriage.

"Why, sister, I have known that these three days. Sam told me about it and said that Polly would tell you. I told him that if Polly told you I would know it in ten minutes, for girls can't keep secrets," said Herbert roguishly. Effie felt a little piqued at her brother's rudeness, as she was pleased to call it, and told him she would "match him for it some day."

"You are not angry, are you sissy? I didn't mean to vex you."

He threw his arms around his sister's neck and gave her a half a dozen kisses before she could get away. She tried to pout, but concluded with a laugh, as she tripped away to the house, where they spent the day in reading and singing.

The next morning they all went to work in good earnest, and soon had the pleasure of seeing Farmer Gray's out-house assume a cheerful aspect. The room was eighteen feet square; a large, awkward, mud and stick chimney adorned one end of the building. There were two doors and two windows, each placed opposite to the other. Mrs. Goodwin made a kitchen of one corner, by placing the stove near the

fire-place, with an elbow in the pipe to conduct the smoke to the chimney flue. The cooking utensils, the little cupboard and kitchen table, all found a place in this corner. Two beds were placed in the back part of the building and a curtain hung between them, served as a partition for a dressing room. In this house, Mrs. Goodwin, who had always been used to refinement, though of late years in an humble way, was to spend the coming fall and winter. A flood of golden sunlight, the last beams of the departing day-Illuminator, peeped through the muslin curtains of the western window just as her last duty for the day was completed. She gazed upon the massive pillars of golden clouds in the horizon, and wondered at the peace of mind, the calm resignation she felt, when thinking of her altered circumstances. She opened the Bible:—"I have been young and now I am old, but I have never seen the righteous forsaken, or his seed begging bread," were the words of inspiration that met her trusting eyes.

CHAPTER IV.

POLLY GRAY'S WEDDING.

SIX WEEKS passed pleasantly away. The golden leaves of September began to fall in fantastical looking heaps in the forests and orchards. The merry, but warning "houk, houk" of wild geese was beginning to be frequently heard as they were taking their timely flight southward. Autumnal winds began to sigh around the dwellings of the rich and poor in melancholy music.

Farmer Gray was unusually busy with his fall work; each person seemed bent upon working at his particular vocation

with uncommon vigor. Effie was sitting one evening at the foot of a shock of fodder, watching a glorious sunset, when Polly came to her and informed her that she was to be married the ensuing Thursday, provided they could finish gathering corn, a business to which she had lent a helping hand for a fortnight.

"By what right does corn gathering interfere with your wedding, Polly?"

"Why, ye see, pap's mighty busy jist now, and so's Sam's folks. I guess they'll git through corn cuttin' by Tuesday night, then they'll have Wednesday to fix for the weddin'."

They were interupted by a loud call from Mrs. Gray. Polly told Effie that there would be meeting at the school house the next Sunday and left her to her own reflections. She sat for some minutes with a corn stalk in her hand, twisting the long, dry leaves around her fingers, and thinking of, she knew not what, when hearing a rustling among the stalks, she turned and beheld Herbert coming towards her. He took a seat on the stalks beside his sister and told her that he was going to church the next Sunday, adding that meeting was so seldom heard of in that neck of the woods, that the thought of attending church once more, excited him.

"I wish Sam Green would take Polly to Oregon if he marries her," said Effie. "She feels so badly about leaving her folks, that I hate to see her compelled to stay behind."

"It will all come right, Effie. 'Daddy Green,' as Polly calls him, is going to sell his farm and give half of the money as a wedding portion to Sam. Sam doesn't know it yet, for his father intends to surprise him. I got the news from the old gentleman himself, and he told me not to tell either Sam or Polly."

"But aren't you afraid to tell me, Herbert? You know girls can't keep secrets."

"Pshaw, sister! don't you suppose I know what I'm about?

I thought you had forgotten my old joke, but I see you don't forget so easily after all."

Sabbath morning came. A bright, balmy sunshine glittered through the branches of the half denuded trees. The sweet song and merry chatter of birds were heard as they collected in large companies to consult together about removing to a southern clime. All nature wore a sad yet pleasing air, rendered ten-fold more delightful than the autumn would otherwise have been, by the warblers of Heaven, which were chanting songs of praise to their Creator, who had blessed them with a charming summer, and was now permitting them to wander away in search of warmer regions. The path meandered through the woods to the school house, which was situated about half a mile distant from Farmer Gray's residence. They all walked in silence through the solitary, wild looking forest. The sound of footsteps among the rustling leaflets, the occasional warble of some solitary bird, that had not yet joined the thronging multitudes of its kind, with sometimes an exclamation of delight from Willie, were the only sounds that greeted the ears of those who were wending their thoughtful way towards the place of worship.

An excellent sermon was preached by a Congregationalist minister upon the subject of Death and Resurrection. The time and season was suited to the subject. Though the house was so crowded that most of the men were compelled to stand in order to make room for the ladies to be seated, yet all appeared sorry when the services was concluded.

After the neighborly congratulations, so common in a country meeting house, were exchanged, the congregation began slowly to disperse. Effie had stepped out of the door and was waiting for her mother to follow, when Polly came out, escorted by Will Black, who marched off with her, apparently quite proud of his prize, while Sam Green turned away looking the very picture of chagrin.

"I see," said Joe. Brown, turning to Sam with a roguish laugh, "that its hard tellin' whether the Gray's agoin' to be dyed Green or Black."

A loud laugh from the bystanders, heightened Sam's confusion, when Herbert Goodwin stepped up to Brown and exclaimed: "We can easily discover that she prefers both Green and Black before Brown."

"Durned if she ain't welcome to 'em for all o' me," said Joe.

"You didn't talk that way last Saturday night, *did* ye sonny?" said Farmer Gray, who had heard the conversation, and who felt a little proud of the attentions his daughter received from the rustic rivals. This of course turned the laugh upon Brown, who mounted his horse and rode rapidly away. Sam Green's younger brother, who gloried in the appellation of 'Jake,' offered to accompany Effie to her home. Mrs. Goodwin smiled:—"I appreciate your kind intention Jacob, but for the present I feel competent to chaperon my daughter without your help."

The boy bowed to the smiling lady, and retreated under cover of his profuse blushes.

As they walked slowly homeward, Mrs. Goodwin asked her children many questions concerning the sermon they had heard. They answered her questions so correctly, that Farmer Gray's attention was arrested. He listened for sometime in silence, and finally interrupted the widow's questions by asking her how it was possible for them to remember so much of the sermon.

"I always consider it to be my duty to pay good attention to preaching myself and in order to make my children do the same, I invariably catechise them closely."

"Why, *I* couldn't recollect enough about a sermon to ask the children questions, and Sally's the same way."

"I think that if we were to worship God more in secret, we

would not find it so hard to give our attention to His Word upon the Sabbath day. I fear that instead of the grace of God in our hearts, we too often take our worldly business, and we cannot then pay due attention to what we hear at church."

"Well, religion's a good thing in its place, but it always appears to me like somethin' so disagreeable, that I dread to have anything to do with it. Now that very preacher that we've hearn to-day would feel above me, 'cause I don't wear store clothes and talk like a gentleman. The most of folks I see that claim to be christians, act like they're above common folks."

"What you say is but too true with a great many, but the majority are not so. I think there is too much whole-souled piety in the churches for such feelings to be anything like universal among professors of Christianity."

"Religion 'll do for stiff, starchy folks, that belongs to the upper crust, but such as me had better put it off till I come to die; time enough then."

"Behold now is the accepted time and now is the day of salvation," said Mrs. Goodwin, in a voice husky with emotion.

At dinner, Mrs. Goodwin gently reproved Herbert for taking a part in a coarse jest upon the Sabbath.

"I really couldn't help it, mother. Brown insulted Sam and knew he deserved the joke. It would not have hurt him so badly, if he had not been interested."

During the week, great preparations were made for the wedding. The rustic neighbors for miles around, were invited, while Yankees, as they called all people of refinement, were slighted with impunity, because, as Jed said to Effie: "They think themselves a *heap* better nor their neighbors. Mammy says she's glad she know'd yer mother afore this, or she'd a' slighted her too. She thinks yer mammy's what daddy calls 'some persimmons.'"

"Effie," said Herbert on Wednesday evening, "do you know when this wedding is going to come off?"

"I have not inquired about it."

"Well, I'll tell you. The performance will take place to-morrow at two o'clock. Sam told me so this morning."

"Why, Herbert, you're behind the times! Polly told me all about it a week ago. I thought I would not say anything to you about, for Sam would tell you, and I would get to hear it the second time. Boy's can't keep secrets."

"I'll give you credit this time, sister. I really thought that you could not have kept that much of your mind from me for any consideration."

"Perhaps I could not have done so, but you showed me how, and I thought I could match you one time."

At ten o'clock on Thursday morning, the guests began to assemble, and long before two, the whole company was collected and waiting impatiently for the appearance of the bride and groom. A curtain which had been hung up in the back part of the best room to form a dressing closet, was at length drawn aside and Polly appeared, attired in a very neat barred jaconet dress, which she had been busy for two days in rejuvenating for the occasion. The sudden exposure of her countenance before the company, gave to her cheeks a ruddy hue that almost hid the freckles which usually shone so conspicuously as to hide all traces of beauty in her round, full face. Sam was dressed in a complete suit of homespun blue jeans. His features were tolerably handsome, and a certain air of drollery which was natural to him, gave him a tact of conversing agreeably among his associates, notwithstanding his extreme bashfulness, which he said had always been the plague of his life. The Esquire arose as they entered the apartment, and after a short ceremony, told the company

that "Now was the time to commence salutations." A regular "kissing bee" among "all hands" followed this announcement, and was only stopped by the stentorian voice of Farmer Gray proclaiming that dinner was ready. After partaking of a substantial feast, which, in Mrs. Gray's opinion, "put to shame the knicknackeries of the fashionables," the company went to the barn, which had been decorated with evergreens, and dancing began in good earnest. A fiddler was perched in the hay overhead, who performed in really good style. Mrs. Goodwin and her children watched the performance until it was no longer a novelty, and leaving Herbert to enjoy himself in the society of a very young lady who could dance superbly, they left the barn and went back to the house.

After the dance was concluded, the company all returned to the dwelling, where pies, cakes and fruit were passed round in baskets, waiters being a luxury they would not countenance because Yankees used such articles. Jokes innumerable were passed among different persons in the assembly, and were received, sometimes in a pleasant manner or answered with playful repartee, and sometimes with petulant replies and sharp retorts.

"I guess, Joe Brown, you see now what color the Gray's pitched on, don't you?" said Sam, in an exultant tone.

"If she's as green by nature as the Green she married, I'm afraid the cows will eat all the young Green's," retorted Joe.

"D'ye think Brown would have done any better?" said Will Black.

"Brown ain't fond of Gray no way, like Green and Black is," exclaimed Joe.

"Brown seemed to think that Gray would a' suited him mighty well about last Saturday night," laughed Farmer Gray, who enjoyed the joke as much as any one else.

A loud ha, ha, from all the listeners, followed these coarse jests, and Joe Brown and Will Black left the place amid the jeers of half a score of boys.

On Friday, a dinner was given at "daddy Green's," and with the exception of the marriage ceremony, everything passed off much the same as on the wedding day. Sam was agreeably surprised by the present of a round sum of gold from his father, and Polly's happiness was restored by the knowledge of the fact that she was to go with her parents to Oregon. The hoar frosts, the chilling blasts, the driving rains, and mantling snows of winter, came steadily on. Herbert, Effie and Jed attended the district school, where they enjoyed many advantages. Polly stayed for the winter at the house of her father-in-law, engaged in making patch-work quilts, weaving blankets, etc., for future house-keeping purposes..

We will now leave the present subjects of our story and go to another place, to describe another company, who are to fill an important part in the sequel of our narrative.

CHAPTER V.

THE WELDEN AND MANSFIELD FAMILIES.

Our next scene is situated in the outskirts of a little village in Ohio. A lady was seated on a sofa in the parlor, occupied with a late novel. A child of eighteen months was capering noisily over the carpet.

"Be still Lucy, dear, said Mrs. Welden to the little girl, who had a rattle box and toy bell, with which she was making a loud noise.

"O ma," said Celia and Howard, Mrs. Welden's two elder

children, who came running into the room and speaking almost together, "Mr. Mansfield's folks are coming with papa, they'll soon be here."

"Don't tell them so, children, they'll think you never saw any one coming before," said their mother in a suppressed voice. She hurriedly arranged a few scattered articles about the room, and was ready immediately to receive her guests, with dignity and composure.

"Well, Meg," said Mr. Welden to his wife, after a pleasant conversation had been carried on for some time, "we're going to Oregon that's a fact. As you need 'stirring up' on the subject, I thought I would invite my partner to come in with his wife and daughter to animate you a little about the matter."

"I think we're doing pretty well here; we ought to be contented. I shrink from the very thought of the journey, in spite of all I can do."

"Don't you suppose we can do whatever other folks can? Hundreds have already gone to Oregon and thousands will go next summer. This new Donation Law will cause thousands to go who would not otherwise undertake the journey. Six hundred and forty acres of land would be worth something to a poor man."

"I do not think we are so very poor. It is true we are not rich, but you are doing a thriving business. You told me not two months ago that we owed no man a dollar."

A deep shadow crossed the usually sunny face of Mr. Welden, as the thought crossed his mind for the hundredth time, that when the real state of his affairs was made known to his wife, a heavy quarrel, a sick headache, and a crying fit would follow as natural consequences. He lived on a neat forty acre farm joining the village and was equal partner with Mr. Mansfield in a store. A heavy speculation in which they had lately been engaged, suddenly failed, and the partners were aroused to the painful conviction that when arrearages were settled and creditors satisfied, they would be left without capital to go ahead with their business. A conviction which is too often the result of hazardous speculations risked by impatient fortune seekers.

Mr. Mansfield, who enjoyed the full trust and confidence of his wife and daughter, did not hesitate a moment about telling them of the true state of his affairs, but Welden dreaded to make known the fact of the failure to his wife, lest a scene quite too common with them, would follow his explanations.

Mrs. Welden had been brought up on a Carolina plantation. She had been the only daughter of an indulgent father, and during his life time she had never known want. Her father's estates, which at the time of his death were considered valuable, when settled by administrators, lawyers and harpies, were squandered and reduced to but little, and the proud and much petted Margaret Morrison was reduced to poverty. While visiting one day at the house of a friend, some two months after the settlement had been closed, she met Mr. Welden. He was attracted by her beauty and moved by her recent bereavement and misfortune. She was pleased by his easy manners and pleasant conversation always seasoned by an air of natural drollery. The acquaintance soon ripened into intimacy, and before the close of the year they were married. Mr. Welden took his bride to Ohio, where he had accumulated some property while employed as head clerk in a store. He went into partnership with Mr. Mansfield who had known him from boyhood and who had always felt a great interest in his welfare. They prospered for several years, but times grew dull, and Mrs. Welden had but little idea of the value of money. She made so many depredations upon her husband's purse, that he became impatient, and induced his rather reluctant partner to

enter with him into a speculation, which, as the reader has been informed, failed, leaving them with but little means of their own. The Oregon Land Law being then one of the leading topics of the day, arrested their attention, and soon both Mansfield and Welden resolved to engage in the enterprise of removing to the far, far West.

"How will you break the news to your wife, Mansfield?" Welden said to his friend after they had both decided what to do.

"Why I'll just go home and kiss her, tell her I'm broke and must go to a new country to begin again. She'll kiss me, say she's sorry I've been unfortunate, and then say she'll do anything that I think is for the best."

"I wish I could do as you say, but when I tell Meg, she'll pout and scold and say I'm always doing something silly. The like of that raises my Irish blood and I'm sure to say something sarcastic. I wish I had a better temper, or that Meg would not provoke me so often."

"The trait you speak of in your wife is a very unfortunate one, but I am half inclined to believe that the fault lies in yourself as much as in her. She was always petted and spoiled when a child, and the comparative adversity she has had to endure since her marriage, contrasted with the life of luxurious ease she led in her father's house, rather tends to make her unreasonable. You should exercise a great deal more forbearance with her. I have heard you tease her unmercifully when you considered it excellent fun."

"I rather think," said Welden ironically, "that she has as much of this world's goods now, as when I married her."

"Yes," replied his friend, "that is very true, but you should be careful never to allude to such a thing in her presence. I don't blame her or any *other* spirited person for not liking such allusions."

"I know that I often say unpleasant things, but I will try to be more guarded in future."

"Well, said Mansfield, "do as I tell you; go home, kiss your wife, and make some candid remarks about the state of our affairs; tell her of our misfortune, and then ask her advice about going to Oregon. Treat her as a rational being, and my word for it, you'll have no trouble. I would want no more pleasant occupation than managing such a woman so well that she would never annoy me."

The friends separated. Mansfield went home without a single misgiving about his wife's acquiescence in his plans, while Welden, with a clouded brow and heavy heart, beating time to bitter thoughts, walked slowly toward his dwelling.

Mansfield, as he had said, had no difficulty in persuading his wife to go with him in search of a new home.

"Certainly, my dear, if you think it best," was her smiling reply to his suggestions. He spoke of Mrs. Welden's way of treating her husband, and of his apprehensions concerning the disclosure of the business failure, adding that Mr. Welden had expressed a wish that Mrs. Mansfield would call upon his wife and exert her influence to awaken her to a sense of duty.

"That's just what we will do pa," said Ada, a gipsey-complected girl of seventeen summers, who was full enough of vivacity and excitement to be always ready to embrace any project provided it was new or strange.

"Very well, pet, we will do as you say," and Mr. Mansfield left his pleasant home to look after his business for the remainder of the forenoon. He reached the store just as Welden, who had been absent on a similar errand, entered the doorway.

"How did your wife receive the intelligence you went home to communicate?" Mansfield asked as soon as they were seated.

"The first thing she said after I stepped in the house was, that she must have a new sofa and carpet this very week. She was going to give a large New Year's party, and the parlor must be fitted up becomingly. This damped my spirits and I know I looked vexed. I could'nt help it. I told her that funds were scarce and I did not see how we were to give a party. She flared up at this, and said I was always making a poor mouth. I kept my temper remarkably well, and thinking it best to come to the point, I told her that I wanted to start to Oregon in the spring, and spoke of the advantages of securing a fortune in a new country, until she became interested, but I did not dare to speak of the business failure lest she'd *blow me sky high*," he added with a bitter laugh.

"Mrs. Mansfield and Ada are going to call upon Mrs. Welden this afternoon, and I promised to accompany them. I believe that if Ada were left to herself she would soon get your wife into a perfect fever to cross the Plains. She is so vivacious and enthusiastic that her animated talk will do more to reconcile her to our plans, than all our sage reasonings can accomplish. Call round and dine with us and we will go together to your house."

The interview with Welden and his wife had passed much as he had stated it to his friend. After her husband left the house she indulged in a fit of weeping for a half hour. Then taking up a late French novel, she buried her disordered thoughts in its contents. Welden usually dined at the tavern on business days, and Mrs. Welden always ate cold dinners. She had become so deeply interested in the novel that her dinner, as well as the morning's conversation between herself and husband was forgotten when her guests arrived.

Mrs. Welden was graceful and petite in figure. Her countenance, when in good humor was pleasing, almost fascinating. A haughty bearing of the beautiful head and elastic

frame, caused her to appear the very personification of pride and haughtiness. The worst thing that could be said of her was that no one *understood* her. Her control of her children was truly commendable. They all possessed the fun-loving, mischievous propensities of their father, who left the management of them entirely to his wife. She seldom spoke a cross word to them, but the reins of government in her hands were held so firmly that her children never thought of disobeying her commands. She was generally affable before company, and Welden always communicated unpleasant news to her when company was present, so that the effervesence of her ill humor might find a hidden vent through which to exhaust itself before they would be left alone. One peculiarity of her disposition was that she could not generally remain angry long at a time, a trait of her character with which her husband was well acquainted.

Mr. Welden's keen black eyes sparkled continually with merriment, unless he was angry or excited, and then the light from them beamed in successive flashes. Every person he met was in danger of his ready wit, but his sarcastic jokes were more frequently inflicted upon his wife than any one else. No doubt, as Mansfield had told him, these oft-repeated jokes at her expense was the main cause of the pettishness and ill humor she exhibited towards him.

Mr. Mansfield's well proportioned figure, pleasing countenance, and auburn curls, contrasted with the jetty braids, lustrous eyes, and stout, well rounded form of his wife, made him almost look girlish. He had stepped into the shady side of forty, but no one would have pronounced him past twenty-eight, at the farthest.

Ada loved to look proudly at her father, and tell of the times he had been mistaken for a beau of hers by her friends. She possessed the elastic figure of her father combined with the brunette complexion of her mother. "I

have known such things to happen" she began, "as husbands and fathers getting their business so enthralled that it has been necessary for them to break up and begin business in a new country. From what Pa said this morning, I believe he and Mr. Welden are in a tight place for money. If they could sell out, settle up, and have means enough left to take us to a new country, we could begin anew, choose our own locations, get rich, and some day surprise the rustic inhabitants of Rockville, by coming to see them with gold enough in our possession to buy the town."

"But our husbands are not enthralled in their business?"

Mrs. Welden cast a look of anxious inquiry towards her husband as the probable truth flashed across her mind.

He replied hesitatingly. "Yes, Meggie, the immense drove of hogs we sent to Baltimore, reached their place of destination just as the late thaw commenced. As thaws and freezes rule the price of pork, we did not get first cost on the hogs. The expense of transportation was so heavy that when all arrearages are paid, the store will go to "Davy Jones."

No matter how important Welden's conversation or communication was, he always ended with a ludicrous phrase as an offset to his previous sage expressions.

"Ah, well! if that's the way matters stand, we had better sell out and go," said his wife, now fully aroused to a sense of duty. She possessed a heart behind her practical selfishness, which when fully aroused and rightly moved was capable of developing sensible and wife-like actions.—

The consent of all parties being gained, the conversation was changed to conjectures respecting teams, waggons, provisions and other necessary articles connected with a long journey.

A gentleman was ushered into the parlor by a servant.

"Why, Maurice Stanton," Welden exclaimed, as he grasped his hand right cordially.

Maurice had a pleasant word for all, and soon a lively chat about the current news of the day, in which the ladies joined with interest, chased, for a time, all visions of journeyings from the mind of every one.

"What is the doctor driving at now?" Mansfield asked, as soon as he could find a long enough pause in the conversation to ask the question.

"Practicing medicine as usual."

"You have graduated, have you not?"

"Yes, but I never expect to practice as a physician."

"Why not?"

"I am going West to Oregon or California, where people don't die and then I'll be at liberty."

"What does your father think of such a scheme?"

"He thinks he can't help himself, I guess. Thanks to the twenty-two past years, I am my own man now. Though I am very sorry to disobey my father, yet I can't bear the thought of following in his wake and spending my life with a pair of saddle-bags in my hand, ready at any moment to run at every body's call. The doctor says I shall have no help from him if I go, but I am able to work. I'll drive somebody's team across the Plains, and work for money in the mines."

"I believe Providence has sent you here, if that is the case, for we were speaking just as you came in about getting some one to drive my ox team," said Welden.

"O, you are always joking so that no one knows when to believe you. Can you prove that by Mr. Mansfield? He is old and steady and never speaks in jest as you do," laughed Maurice.

"I have made up my mind to cease jesting and talk in

earnest for the rest of my life. I guess Meg won't be sorry if I stick to that resolution."

"Mr. Mansfield, is it a fact that Welden thinks of crossing the Plains?"

"Yes, and that is not all,—I'm going too."

"I'm just in town then, provided I can get a situation with either of you as ox driver."

"There is an Irishman at my house, who will drive my team. Welden's the man to talk to you."

An arrangement was soon agreed upon between the two, and Maurice, after an hour's pleasant conversation, left the house in company with Ada. Mr. and Mrs. Mansfield had gone home some time before. Ada promised to call in often, and left the house, feeling that she had done some good in helping to open the eyes of Mrs. Welden to a true state of their affairs.

Maurice Stanton's dark hair, hazel eyes, and thoughtful brow, were shown off to good advantage by a faultless mouth, that was always ready to break into a smile. His manly carriage, musical voice, and affability of manners, made him a general favorite with ladies who had perceptive faculties sufficient to enable them to discern his depth of intellect, while the numerous class of women, young and old, who could only be charmed by simpered compliments and silly nothings, soon tired of his company.

Dr. Stanton was an eminent physician of Cincinnati.—He wished his son to follow the same beaten path, and had educated him with that intention, but Maurice had not taste for the profession. He possessed an enthusiastic love for adventure, and had a strong desire to emigrate to the distant West, in search of hidden treasure, or, as he said, "after any thing in his line," which meant anything exciting or exhilarating. Welden observed to his wife, that "he always thought that those who needed help in match-making were

not worth the trouble for, but," said he, "I really believe that if Maurice Stanton and Ada Mansfield were to get married, it would be an advantage to them both."

"Not always, John. You have not known them always."

"Well; for a year or two past I've thought of it often," he replied.

Arrangements were made to suit both families for a removal in the spring. We will leave them to transact their business unmolested by us, while we pass over the next three or four months, to take a peep at the Goodwins, Grays, and Greens, and see them started on their long and wearisome journey.

CHAPTER VI.

A CALL AT MR. HAMMOND'S RESIDENCE.

WINTER had passed away. Balmy, dreamlike days succeeded the colds and snows of the past three weary months. Though the tempests, as if at times determined not to yield the conquest to mild zephyrs and genial sunshine, would break forth in angry howls, or deluge the moist earth with fresh showers of chilling rain, yet 'twas but winter's death struggle. It seemed as if the gay throng of returning birds were warbling forth the snow's last requiem, as they collected together in groups among the budding branches of maple, elm and locust trees.

By the first of April, all were ready to leave their native homes and undertake the toilsome pilgrimage over rolling prairies, mountainous wastes and desert sands, in search of a new home beyond the fastnesses of the Oregon mountains.

By disposing of her little property and the watch which was

not parted with without many tears, Mrs. Goodwin was enabled to fit up comfortably for the journey and have money left, with which to defray traveling expenses. The company had six waggons: two for farmer Gray, two for daddy Green, one for Sam and Polly, and one for Mrs. Goodwin's family.

A pleasant looking set of wagons were theirs, each with a "bran-new" cover, fitted neatly over the arching bows.—A happy looking line of fat cattle was attached to each vehicle, and as they walked lazily along chewing their cuds with perfect contentment, how little did they know of the many trials, strains, pulls and starvings that were in store for them during the coming six months. A half dozen cows were driven along by Jed, who rode the little mule. Jake and Billy, two boys of daddy Green's, who were younger than Sam, took charge of the baggage wagons. The road, for the first two miles after leaving Farmer Gray's homestead was described in a former chapter.

A continuous halloa of "Who-haw-Buck! Get along Bright! Gee Berry!" and the slow but steady tread of two dozen pairs of oxen, brought them at last in sight of Mrs. Goodwin's former home. She had heard that great changes had been made in the appearance of the cottage and grounds around it, but was not prepared to witness so complete a destruction of shrubbery. The sweet-briers, roses, lilacs and all the accompanying ornaments of the widow's delightful little home had been ruthlessly destroyed. No snowy curtains adorned the windows, no sweet scented vines climbed around the rude door-way.

A half dozen dirty, obstreperous boys were running here and there over the yard, apparently bent upon destroying the last vestige of the beauty of by-gone days.

The train halted when within a short distance of the gate,

and the company agreed to wait until Mrs. Goodwin and her children could make a call at the house.

"I'll not go in there, mother, to be insulted by Ike Hammond. You can do as you choose, but I prefer the company of the cattle," said Herbert.

"I'm not going in to see the folks," replied his mother, "but I want to see the inside of my dear little home once more. Come Effie and Willie, let's go."

As they passed through the open gate, the children stared at them as though the appearance of a stranger within their gates, was something very unusual.

"Good morning, Mrs. Hammond."

The object of humanity thus addressed, stared at them vacantly for half a minute, and offered them some rude seats, apologized for the disorderly arrangement of things in general, as such women always do, and seemed disposed to treat them with civility.

"We're mighty busy just now. Ike's a goin' to build a still house on the branch, an' it'll keep us a kickin' to git things ready afore harvest."

"Halloa, mother, it's time for us to be traveling," called Herbert, in a hurried tone.

Effie and Willie gave a hasty look at the well known objects around the yard and garden before going with their mother to the road. They were ready to get into the wagon, when Hammond came up, reeled around the foremost oxen, and came near to where Herbert was standing. He remarked with a sneer, that he hoped they'd had a pleasant call at his house.

"Madam, don't you think you ought to pay me for the use of my farm, during the four years you lived upon it?"

"I perceive that you have no shame whatever, for yourself, sir, but I assure you sir, I am very much ashamed of your conduct. I hope God will forgive you as freely as I do."

"God! Who's He? I'd like to know. You may talk as much about *God* as you please, but you'll have to show Him to me before you'll stuff that down this child."

"I say ye *scamp*!" said Farmer Gray, coming up to Hammond, with his shirt sleeves rolled to the elbows, "if ye don't let this lady alone, I'll beat yer brains out, in less 'an no time."

"I've nothing against the woman, but if that scapegrace of a boy was black, I'd buy him, if I had to barter my father's bones to make the first payment. Would'nt I like to make him bite the dirt?"

"Another word, sir, an' I'll *limb* ye! I'll allow no drunken wretch to abuse an unprotected woman an' children, when I am about;" and Farmer Gray cast a significant look at his son-in-law Sam, as much as to say, "you ought to show the same *pluck*," a word that he used to signify courage or resolution.

"Come, Herbert, drive on dear," said his mother, calmly. With loud cracks of the whips, combined with merry whistlings of the drivers as they walked through the mud, the train moved slowly on.

The first encampment was in an open prairie, between Peoria and Farmington. The novelty of getting supper in the open air; the frequent mistakes made by cooks in their first attempts at campers, and the dry jokes of Farmer Gray who was always ready and waiting for an opportunity to raise a laugh upon the most awkward, afforded a great deal of merriment.

The day's excitement kept Mrs. Goodwin awake until a late hour. She was surrounded by kind hearted, but coarse associates, whose highest ambition was to have plenty of cows and horses, farms and tobacco. What was there inviting in the prospect of having to mingle exclusively with such a class of persons? Would not her children form coarse tastes and imbibe merely practical habits and ideas?

It was her highest aim to bring forth the *ideal* of every thing in her children. While she was careful to instruct them in every practical branch of business which she imagined it necessary for them to know, the great purpose of her life was to teach them to consider the works of Nature as their great instructor, and to look from Nature up to the great Creator.

The dawn revealed a light fall of snow that covered the ground, but the air was pleasant, and after a hurried breakfast, all were ready for the day's travel. They were subjected to numerous and sometimes needless delays, and were fourteen days upon the road from Peoria to Quincy. Here, the wagons were stopped for a few hours in one of the principal streets of the city. When the necessary purchases were made, and boys' curiosity satisfied, they moved on to the banks of the Mississippi. The tents were spread upon some flat rocks near the water's edge, in a place overlooking the river, where the high bluffs presented a general view of the flourishing and beautiful city. The women and children were sitting in the shade, enjoying the cool river breeze, looking at the different floating objects of interest upon the river, and listening to the busy hum of city life, when a mammoth boat was seen moving majestically upon the placid bosom of the silvery stream. To our rustic Illinoisians, who had always been used to boats made to suit their river, this beautiful vessel, as she proudly plowed the waters, appeared like a floating, fairy castle. The shrill, annoying whistle which escaped her pipes, as she stopped alongside the wharf, almost deafened the listeners in the tents, all of whom, except Mrs. Goodwin had always been living in the interior of some one of the western states.

Among the numerous passengers who emerged from the vessel, was one company that attracted their particular attention. There were three grown ladies; two of them dressed

for travelling, in Bloomer style. They wore leghorn hats, trimmed in broad, green ribbons and heavy plumes. The third lady, whose short, stout figure would have looked ridiculous in Bloomers, was attired in a dark plaid travelling dress and *berage* sun bonnet. There were three rosy-cheeked, sprightly appearing young children, whose neatness and good behavior was attractive and pleasing. The ladies and children stepped upon the wharf, and as soon as the crowd dispersed a little, Mansfield and Welden came off the boat, each leading a span of large, fine mules, attached to comfortable and substantial family carriages. The travellers had scarcely time to glance around them before a half dozen runners, from as many different hotels, came up to them, each trying to out-talk the other.

"Good accommodations at the Union Hotel, sir; best in the city; you'd better go with me."

"*Ourn's* the best house in town! Board for three dollars a week! children half price!"

They were used to scenes of this kind and paid but little attention to the impertinent throng. Mrs. Gray, Mrs. Sam Green, and Mrs. Green looked on in astonishment.

"The la me!" said Mrs. Gray, getting excited, "I don't see why the gentlemen don't knock down the impudent rascals. My old man would *I* know." Mr. Welden knew by the appearance of the wagons belonging to the campers, that they were, like himself, bound for a trip over the Plains, and asked his companions to accompany him to their tents.

After a mutual introduction all round, Mrs. Goodwin offered them some low seats of trunks and boxes that were always taken from the wagons after halting, to serve the purpose of chairs.

"Well, Effie, I hope you'll find an agreeable associate in Ada," said Mansfield, glancing towards his daughter with fraternal pride and fondness, while he patted Effie's head as she was sitting beside him and his daughter.

"Whatever she can learn from your daughter, or from any of your company, that will be beneficial to her, will be thankfully received," said Mrs. Goodwin.

"I'm very glad, Madam, that we have fallen in company with you, and I doubt not but that we shall agree perfectly in most things, while we are travelling together."

When the men and boys who had been off for a few hours with the cattle returned, two other men were with them. Patrick O'Donaldson, Mansfield's ox driver, and Maurice Stanton, who performed that interesting service for Welden, were introduced to the uninitiated.

Effie offered Maurice the seat she had occupied by Ada's side upon a trunk, and the gleam of satisfaction that kindled in his eye, as he accepted the place, did not escape her observation.

The Illinoisians were well pleased with their new acquaintances. Welden amused by his wit, Maurice instructed by his conversation, Mansfield enlivened by his pleasant stories, and the Irishman, Pat O'Donaldson, made fun for all by his grotesque actions and comic remarks, spoken in the virgin dialect of the "Ould Counthry."

The ladies, excepting Mrs. Welden, proved equally agreeable. Her manner repelled all attempts at intimacy. Mrs. Gray remarked to Mrs. Green, that "the woman appears good lookin' enough to be shore, but she needn't feel so *stuck up* about it! Beauty's only skin deep." They all noticed that Celia, Howard and Lucy were perfect models of good behavior. They cared nothing for their father's commands, but a word or look from "ma," was all that was necessary to make them obedient.

"No wonder they mind her," said Farmer Gray, "she'd chill a fire-coal to an icicle by looking at it!"

When Mrs. Goodwin disposed herself upon her bed that lovely April night, it was with pleasant feelings that she contemplated the future. She felt that her prayers had been in a measure answered, for her children were to have some intelligent company through the weary six months' trial, she so much dreaded.

CHAPTER VII.

CAPTAIN GRAY.

THE COMPANY had lain by for two days at Quincy. On a bright, clear morning, when the rising sun shed his golden beams upon the city house-tops, and gilded the placid river with a transparent radience, they prepared to cross the peaceful surface of the Father of Waters. The rains and thaws of returning spring, had caused the river to overflow the low banks on the Missouri side, and Lagrange, seven miles from Quincy, was the nearest practicable landing place.

Farmer Gray had been elected Captain by a unanimous vote. The business of making the bargains devolved upon him; and certainly no better man could have been chosen for the office. They had got almost to Lagrange, when wishing to pay up and save time, he offered the boat captain the sum he had agreed before starting, to pay him for taking them over the river. A misunderstanding about the sum to be paid arose, and as Captain Gray was obstinate and certain that he only was right, saying that he knew better than any one else did about the exact sum, the boat captain gave orders to his men to go back and land them at Quincy. The boat began to back and turn about, and the ladies, who were

on the lookout from the cabin, were surprised to see Lagrange receding and the beautiful city of Quincy appearing nearer every moment. Mansfield and Welden urged their obstinate commander to give the required sum and let them go on, but he shook his head and said, "Old Gray knows what he's about. I wern't born yesterday, *I* wern't."

When they again came to Quincy, the owner of the boat was summoned, who decided that Captain Gray was right, and with a satisfactory chuckle, as he rubbed his hands together, he ordered the boat captain, who winced under his severe scrutiny, "to try it again an' see if ye can't act more like a gentleman the next heat."

"Now, sir, I'll charge ye five dollars for this detention. Ye see, we're so belated by yer greediness, that we won't be able to make the timber afore campin' time, an' there's no fun in havin' to turn in, on a raw night, without havin' a fire to warm our shins and cook our fodder."

The captain, who evidently began to think himself rather uncomfortably situated, exclaimed, "Well, now, that's too bad; for if you knew what kind of a man my boss is, you wouldn't blame I know."

"Why? what kind of a man is he? He acted the gentleman with Captain Gray, when you tried to act the rascal," said Mansfield involuntarily.

"By the Howly Murther! an' its no fault of his'n, if he didn't succade nayther," added Pat O'Donaldson.

"My boss would steal an acorn from a blind hog, if he thought he could sell it for a farthing."

"Ah, well," said Captain Gray, ironically, "ye can't prove that, an' ye'd as well fork over. Or stay, I'll take a cord of yer good split wood, if yer men'll toat it off the boat. I'm amazin' easy with ye, but as we won't be apt to meet again for awhile, I guess I'll let ye off."

The difficulty was thus settled, and with each family's

share of "night wood," projecting conspicuously from under the front bows of the wagons, they prepared to go through Lagrange. The women and children trudged along on foot, as Welden said to give the timber a chance to ride."

"I say, Meg, we're in for it now. Aren't you glad we've come? This is such fun," said he amusingly to his wife, who was toilsomely picking her way through the mud, in no very enviable humor. He was on his knees in the front part of the carriage, which had been filled with sundry bulky articles from the wagons, in order to make room for the annoying but necessary supply of fuel. Little Lucy was crowded into a small space beside her father, near the carriage dashboard. Mrs. Welden looked at her fun-loving husband, as he sat in the carriage with the lines and whip in his hands, and answered him petulenty.

"Just pass your compliments upon some one else if you please. Perhaps a person of intelligence would appreciate them more than I do."

"I don't know, I think my Meg wouldn't love me if I didn't do something to make myself interesting."

The provokingly mischievous husband brought down his heavy whip-lash with such force into a puddle which his wife was trying to avoid, that the dirty water was thrown into her face and over her dress, completely saturating her hat and clothing with the murky liquid.

"Never mind, wifey, I'll throw this naughty whip away, if it doesn't do better. It's a shame to see your clothes abused in that manner."

"I'll cut a pretty figure walking through town! I wish you had to flounder in such a puddle for a life time. Hogs *will* play in mud-holes," she retorted, as she shook her muddy Bloomer suit.

"O, well, you can just tell the folks that you're Mrs. Welden's darkie, that'll do," he replied, pretending not to notice her last retort.

His wife knew that when once fairly out upon the sea of fun and satire, no matter how she replied, he would get from bad to worse, until she could get out of his way, so she went back to where Ada was walking, and contrived to get out of the reach of his uncomfortable and practical jokes.

The teams halted in front of a hotel, and while the men were making purchases, which at every town appeared indispensable, the women and children paid a visit to some negro huts, where there were three ebony-colored women, each with an infant in her arms. Effie and Willie had never before seen a negro baby, and were much interested with their shining eyes and woolly heads. Tears came to Mrs. Welden's eyes.

"Hannah, do you know me."

"Wy, b'ess my soul, Miss Meggie! Po'r lamb, what be you doin' heah?"

The company looked on in astonishment. A large, muscular black woman, with protuberent lips, shining eyes, and ivory teeth, woolly head, salted over with flecks of grey, and a dress of blue drilling, worn into shreds, was certainly a not very inviting object to look upon; but Mrs. Welden flew to her embrace, and mingled her sobs and tears with the alternate groans and exclamations of delight of the black woman.

"Who brought you here, Hannah?"

"Massa Harris. He said the South didn't suit him, an' moved up heah. My dear, po'r lamb, whar have you been all dese yeahs?"

Mrs. Welden told the story with which the reader has become acquainted.

"O, if you could buy me! Dear chile, I'd sarve my life out at *anything* if you'd take me!"

"My poor nurse! if I had the means to purchase you, or could get the money in any honest way, you should never leave me again."

Mrs. Welden sobbed violently. She was in the arms of a servant who had been her mother's nurse, and taken the whole charge of her in childhood. After her father's death, Hannah had been sold to a trader, and Mrs. Welden had never heard from her since the sale. Memory rushed away at full speed, and brought in array before her the happy days of departed childhood, sweet visions of a gentle mother, whom she could just remember, and the fond face of an indulgent father, who had lived to see her grown.

"An' you couldn't buy me?"

"O, Hannah, its impossible."

"They're calling us at the wagon's, mamma," said Effie. Mrs. Welden tore herself away from the arms of her beloved old nurse, whose exclamations of sorrow thrilled the breasts of the listeners, and walked hurriedly towards the carriage.

"O, John, I've seen my old nurse! You can't think how badly I hate to leave her!"

"So you've been to see your ebony sisters and want to stay with them do you? You know you were to pass for Mrs. Welden's darkie in town. They were willing to claim you, eh?"

Mrs. Welden bridled up. "No, sir, they were not! They said that no 'spec'able man would keep his niggers lookin' that dirty, an' they wouldn't 'sociate with collud pussons what wur'nt 'spec'able."

"I guess yer wife's headed ye this time," laughed Sam Green, who, as his wagon was next in order to Welden's carriage, had heard all their conversation. A general laugh followed Sam's remark, and as they moved slowly on to the tune of half a score of whips, Maurice remarked that "the Lagrangians must be glad we're going."

Mrs. Welden was morose and sullen. Her husband's unkind thoughtlessness, at a time when she needed his sympathy so much, wounded her feelings. She felt that he had no right to make sport of her earnest joy in meeting with her old nurse. Her pride was wounded too, by his allusions to her "ebony sisters," and she determined to spite him by being cross and unreasonable in turn. Ada tried hard to engage her sympathy, but for several days, she repelled her sisterly advances with haughty dignity.

The first private opportunity that Mansfield could get to do so, he preached a severe homily to Welden about his unreasonable practical jokes, and reminded him of the promise he had made to give up such actions and words for the future. He acknowledged that he had done wrong, and secretly resolved to make amends for his misdemeanor by an humble apology.

"It's a regular form of abuse," continued Mansfield. "Don't come to me again with a pitiful story about what your wife says and does that is unreasonable. You are not to be pitied if she does sometimes give you trouble."

After leaving Lagrange, the train moved on for about a mile, and encamped close to a dancing, rippling little brook, whose gleesome waters contribute their mite towards swelling the current of the Mississippi.

"Ere the first gray streak of dawn,"

the Captain's trumpet aroused the sleeping travellers.—After the usual morning preparation and bustle, they took up the line of march and journeyed on, tediously through mud and sloughs, and over hills and rocks, through a barren and thinly populated portion of Missouri; occasionally passing through little towns, sometimes ferrying streams, now crossing lovely prairies, anon pursuing their toilsome way through dense forests and dismal thickets of underbrush, until the fourth of May, when they emerged from a wood

and found themselves in an open plain, in the outskirts of St. Josephs, where they began to prepare in good earnest for the journey that was scarcely yet begun. Provisions were packed; all heavy articles thrown away that could be dispensed with; mules were shod and wagons repaired, and on the tenth of May, they were ready to again march on.

They crossed the turbid waters of the Missouri, and moved on about six miles, to a pleasant camping ground. The scenery around the camp was lovely in the extreme. Successive ranges of rolling hills, covered with green verdure, stretched away as far as the eye could discern, towards the north and south. Groves of newly mantled timber here and there covered the gentlest eminences. Wild flowers serene in their calm beauty and loveliness, bloomed on the rolling plain, and loaded the air of the secluded dells with an alluring fragrance. Herds of noble horses, droves of cattle, and flocks of sheep, *corraled* by multitudes of attendants, were luxuriating upon the rich herbage of the beauteous spring time. Smoke from a hundred camp fires was wafted by gentle zephyrs from the exposed hill sides, and played and settled without disturbance in the sheltered dales. The sun, as if well pleased with the beauty of the scene, sank behind the horizon as though he longed for slumber.

The evening work was done. Those of Captain Gray's Company who were inclined to indulge in reverie, strolled out from camp for a season of quiet meditation. Ada and Effie climbed to the summit of one of the highest hills and took a farewell view of St. Josephs and the Missouri river. Effie tripped away to gather flowers, and Ada seated herself beneath a cluster of cottonwoods. She watched the various objects of beauty and interest with mingled emotions of pleasure and sadness. She was happy in viewing the works of the Creator in their regal splendor, and sad, when she thought of the home she had left, the absent friends she

loved, and the associations of childhood. Her's was no common nature. The mind, deep in its excellence, was often hidden by the sunny riffles that played over her features, and the wild, artless prattle of her general conversation. She was impulsive, agreeable, witty, and energetic; every body agreed to that; but prudes shook their heads, and cautious, hypocritical mammas charged their daughters to beware when in her company. She was *wild!* That awful stigma, upon which the character of many a young girl has been tossed, was attached by the envious to her name on all occasions. Because she would ape nobody's manners, was blithe and frank in her conversation with those of the opposite as well as her own sex, fearless in maintaining her own opinions, and somewhat excitable in temperament, many, who would gladly have possessed her tact and intellect, turned away, propheeying evil in her future pathway. Her heart, the well-spring of a maiden's existence, no one but her parents rightly judged; and the "deep within the deep," in the chambers of her spirit, *they* had never sounded.

She had been strangely agitated of late in more ways than one. Maurice, she had become convinced, was every day growing more attached to her. She felt that his manly affection was no trifling matter. They were both poor—that was the greatest trouble. Her parents were proud of her, and desired that in forming a matrimonial alliance, she would look for excellence and riches combined.

She sat gazing with an abstracted air upon the velvet turf and did not notice that the subject of her reverie was coming until he stood before her.

She invited him to sit upon the green sward.

"Ada, what makes you look so sad? Is not everything in nature charming enough to drive away dull melancholy?"

"I am not unhappy, Maurice. I was thinking very deeply, and I suppose my countenance betrayed the fact."

"Would you tell a friend what has been the subject of your meditations?"

It was a home question. She replied without looking up: "One thing that makes me feel sorrowful, is the thought of the home and friends I have left behind me. When I turn my eyes in the direction of my former home, a kind of indescribable melancholy takes possession of my being. I often wonder if other folks think and feel as I do about such things."

"This feeling is quite natural to those who have a good degree of ideality."

"I believe that I have more than my share of inhabitiveness."

"Tell me, Ada, is there not some image enshrined upon your heart that makes you sigh for the absent?"

"No," said she, decidedly. "It is not *one* friend, but *many*, whom I used to love, that I think of when alone."

"Has no one yet unclasped the love fountains of your heart?"

"What right have you to ask me?"

"Do you believe that I would ask you such a question, if I had no motive but curiosity?"

She raised her eyes, intending to throw out some witty remark, but when she met his earnest gaze, a tell-tale blush overspread her face, and she was silent.

Maurice grasped her hand.

"May I hope that I will one day win your regard and prove myself worthy of it?"

"When I get to Oregon, I will tell you," she replied.

It was growing dark and they arose to go to camp, when Effie came to them with a handful of blue-bells she had gathered in a shady grotto. Maurice talked and laughed with her as with a little child. Her prattle and glee amused him.

"*You'll* soon be old enough to be in love, my beauty," said he, in reply to an insinuation of hers about the tete-a-tete under the cottonwoods.

"Don't you believe it. I don't believe I've got any heart to love anything but birds and flowers and all such pretty things, always excepting my mother and brothers. Now men aren't pretty and I don't like them at all," she said, tossing a a wreath of grass and blue-bells into the air. She then danced away, to the music of her own light heart, towards the camping ground.

"No wonder everybody loves her," said Maurice; "she has a hidden nature, that if rightly developed, would make her an extraordinary woman."

The moon had arisen in her pale beauty, and the couple walked on, conversing in a quiet tone, when they overtook Effie, who had espied some rare flowers, radiating in the moonbeams. She was sitting upon the turf with a handful of wild primroses in her lap, and looking from their lovely petals towards the others that grew around her in luxuriant profusion.

"What now, birdie?" Ada asked.

"I was comparing these flowers in imagination, with those that bloomed a year ago in our garden."

A truce to old regrets, my beauty, and success to all new enterprises," said Maurice, patting her curly head.

Wishing to divert her mind from melancholy thoughts, he began to explain the different botanical properties of the primrose.

"I don't know why it is," she interrupted, "that I care so little for anything that is scientific. I often get ashamed of my dislike for science. I'd like to know everything, but I hate the trouble of learning."

"Time will work wonders with you, birdie," said Ada.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TRIUMPH.

On the dewy grass, out of sight and hearing of the numerous campers, knelt a fragile form. Now she would raise her voice in audible petitions to the great All Father; again her murmurs would sink to inaudible whispers, and anon convulsive sobs would shake her frame. She wrestled thus with the communings of her clouded spirit until *light*, as an unction from on High, pervaded her being. Subdued and tranquil, she arose from the posture of supplication, and gazed with beaming eyes, upon the myriads of stars that were floating in the vaulted heavens. Again, she knelt upon the turf, and prayed for wisdom, grace and guidance, from the bounteous Giver of needful blessings.

"Where is Meg? I wonder," said Welden to Mrs. Goodwin, who was holding little Lucy, and singing a soothing lullaby to the little innocent, who missed her mother and refused to be comforted.

"She asked me to see to Lucy while she was taking a walk. I have not seen her for half an hour."

"Which way did she go?"

"She crossed the rivulet and started towards yonder hillock. I believe she went beyond it."

Welden went in quest of his wife, and found her praying, with an eloquence that surprised—unmanned him. He went close enough to her to hear the deep breathings of her tried spirit; and as he listened to the supplications of the wife of his bosom, in behalf of himself and their children, how his heart smote him, as memory's panorama unrolled itself before him, picturing in glaring colors, the many times that he had vexed and abused that gentle woman, because he thought it *fun*. Still, upon the fragrant air, arose the plaintive supplications of the wounded, but now reviving spirit; and still,

as if afraid to break the hallowed influence of her petition, the conscience-stricken husband stood, and winced, and listened.

"O, Thou Searcher of hearts, and Trier of the reins of the children of men; I pray Thee, have mercy upon my husband! Thou hast led Thine erring child by a way she knew not, and hast brought her this night to feel the fullness of Thy salvation through great tribulation. And Oh, Heavenly Father, for the sake of Thy Son, who was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, grant to open the eyes of my dear husband to a sense of his situation as a sinner. O, Jesus, by the memory of Thy Temptation, subdue and save him!"

She arose, with Hope and Trust beaming from every feature.

"Meggie," said a husky voice, which was too deeply moved to articulate distinctly. Husband and wife clasped each other in a thrilling embrace and wept together in silence. The wife's tears were those of happiness; joy made all the brighter because she had passed through weary seasons of darkness. The husband's sobs were penitential in their deep bitterness.

"Forgive," was the only word he could utter. And in the limpid moonlight, while the shining hosts of stars rejoiced at the wanderer's return, that husband, who had made Religion a by-word, knelt in humility beside his long tried wife, and vowed eternal fealty to the King of kings. Happiness, such as Mrs. Welden never knew before, illumined her weary way.

In after years, when the iron heel of poverty had ground her ambition to dust, and she was left to wander unprotected through life, with

"Helpless, cowering little forms"

clinging trustingly to her for support, how her heart would bound at the remembrance of that happy, moonlight time!

They lingered long in the delightful, heaven canopied

bower, and when they returned to camp, the company was wrapped in slumber.

Early the next morning, Captain Gray's trumpet aroused the different cities and villages which dotted the diversified hill-sides, plains and dells. A Scottish bagpipe answered the loud summons of the trumpet, and a shrill bugle horn wound forth its musical peals, taking up the sound of trumpet and bagpipe, and sending the reverberation from hill-side to valley, and from valley to grove.

It was an exhilarating scene. Rising smokes from the renewed camp fires danced and curled, arose and united in the pleasant morning breeze. Busied throngs of men and boys were herding, yoking, and harnessing their obedient dumb servants. Groups of women and children were hurrying to and fro, preparing the morning repast.

The shrewd, calculating Yankee, bartered and bargained with the more practical Southerner. Merchant talked with fellow merchant about the probable chances for trade in the Western El Dorado, whither they were bound. English and American, Irish and German, French and Italian, high and low, rich and poor, were bound for the same alluring goal; each with the goddess Ambition whispering "success" in his delighted ears.

The Christian chanted the morning hymn of praise, and besought the Omnipotent to grant him further blessings. And O, how great the contrast! Brutal oaths, maledictions upon the defenceless oxen, were heard at intervals throughout the camping grounds.

A merry "huzzah!" from the first teamster who was ready to move ahead, as he cracked his long whip lash in the morning air, was a signal for a general stir of vehicles. And soon the moving mass of animate creation was jogging on, over the rolling plain.

Nothing of interest transpired during that first day's travel upon the undulating prairie, which was spread out before and around the adventurers like an extensive sea. At nightfall the multitude halted in a beautiful level valley. Indians, the first that many of the travellers had seen, came to the camp and appeared very friendly.

Herbert got a joke on his sister, that he declared was "worth all the trouble they had been to yet."

An Indian, superbly decorated with buckskin fringes, beads, and fancy mocassins, tried to purchase the curly-headed beauty. She humored his fancy for a while, not thinking him in earnest, until he offered her mother the pony he was riding, to keep until he could get five more from his band, the number he was willing to give for her. She became alarmed, and retreated to the wagon. The Indian, intent upon his purchase, followed her. She climbed into the wagon, closed the front curtain, and would not see him again. He loosed the mocassins from his feet, turned to Mrs. Goodwin with a disappointed air, gave them to her, and said, "for Curly Head," mounted his pony and disappeared.

Herbert teased his sister unmercifully about her "sentimental savage." He would laugh about the mocassins, which were certainly pretty, and nearly small enough for her handsome feet. She bore the jesting very well for a while, but soon got tired of his constant return to the subject of "Effie's first offer." She began to cry, when one of his pointed jokes wrung a merry laugh from half a dozen listeners, and Mrs. Goodwin forbid his mentioning the Indian again.

Mrs. Gray remarked to Mrs. Goodwin that she thought they had been too hasty in forming an opinion against Mrs. Welden. "She's been so haughty like, that we ain't seed the good that's in her, like we have in that other lady. I noticed to-day in some talk I had with her, that she's better than most of them that's against her. Polly seed her last

night when she thought she was alone and hearn her to pray. She says she's troubled an' she knows it."

"I have felt an attachment for Mrs. Welden, from the first moment of our acquaintance. The fact is, her disposition cannot tolerate rough jokes at her expense. Her husband, though a man of many good qualities, is satirical to a fault. He has discovered his wife's weak point and played upon it until he has well nigh lost her affection."

"Well; I thought mighty little of her at first, but I'll be her friend after this."

Mrs. Welden's children went to sleep early, and she walked away alone, as she had done the evening before. Mrs. Goodwin followed her, but kept out of her sight. She took a Bible from her pocket and read aloud, by the fast waning twilight, the inspired words of the Psalmist:—

"The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handi-work.

"Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge."

She cast a prolonged look upwards to the beauteous skies. Stars, twinkling in the gray twilight, were beginning to peep forth here and there in the crystal blue of the upper deep.

"Strange," she exclaimed, "that the beauty of these words was never before so plain to my senses. 'I will praise the Lord while I have my strength; I will sing praises unto our God while I have my being.'"

Then turning to the prayer of the prophet Habbakuk, she read in a voice that Mrs. Goodwin mentally compared to inspiration:—

"'O, Lord revive Thy work; in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known: In wrath remember mercy. God came from Teman and the Holy One from Mount Paran; Selah.

"His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of

His praise. Before Him went the pestilence and burning coals went forth at His feet. *He stood, and measured the earth; He beheld, and drove asunder the nations. And the everlasting mountains were scattered, and the perpetual hills did bow.*

"Truly," thought her enraptured listener, "truly has it been said that 'out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise.' This babe in Christ; this woman, who on a week ago was caviling sneeringly at the word of God, has now turned her mockery to praise, and is getting ahead of the oldest in the service, by her enthusiasm in solitude.

Mrs. Welden continued:—

"Was God displeased against the rivers? Was Thine anger against the rivers? Was Thy wrath against the sea, that Thou didst ride upon Thine horses and Thy chariots of salvation?

"Thy bow was made quite naked, according to the oaths of the tribes, even Thy word. Selah.

"Thou didst clear the earth with rivers: the mountains saw Thee and they trembled; the overflowing of the waters passed by; the deep uttered his voice and lift up his hands on high. *The sun and moon stood still in their habitations. At the light of Thine arrows they went, and at the shining of Thy glittering spear.*

"Thou didst march through the land in indignation, Thou didst thresh the heathen in anger.

Thou wentest forth for the salvation of Thy people, even for salvation with Thine Anointed."

The reader's voice faltered. She strained her eyes in the gathering darkness to read on. Again the full, deep accents of her soul broke forth audibly.:

"They came out as a whirlwind to scatter me."

Again, a pause:—

"My lips quivered at the voice," she continued. "Rottenness entered into my bones and I trembled in myself that might find rest in the day of trouble."

She raised her aching eyes to the studded heavens, and began in a sweet, melodious strain, to sing:—

"My gracious Redeemer I love;
His praises aloud I'll proclaim,
And join with the armies above
To shout His adorable name.
He freely redeemed with his blood,
My soul from the confines of hell,
To live on the smiles of my God,
And in His sweet presence to dwell."

The moonlight glimmered upon the pages of Inspiration. Again she read. "Although the fig tree shall not bloom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls;—yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will joy in the God of my salvation."

Mrs. Goodwin could keep still no longer. She rushed forward to meet the joyous convert, and threw herself into her arms.

"O, my dear Mrs. Welden; let me be your friend; let me participate in your joys. Here I have been a professing Christian for twenty years; and you have this evening put to shame my feeble services, by your enthusiasm in solitude, and your earnest, explicit reading of portions of a prayer that I never comprehended the deep beauty of before. O, why is it that I have so little fervor in the service of my God?"

"Those who have never passd through seasons of utter unbelief, do not need so striking a proof of the existence and mercy of the Redeemer, as they, who, like myself, have tried to ignore the existence of true Christianity. It was no ordinary teaching, but a miracle that made St. Paul believe."

"How long have you had such feelings as yon are now enjoying?"

"Since yesterday evening. You no doubt have noticed with the rest, since John vexed me so at Lagrange, that I had been sullen and ill natured. He wronged me by his unfeeling levity, when every tender emotion of my soul had been stirred by a meeting with my poor dear old Hannah. I thought to spite him by acting cross and having nothing pleasant to say to any one but my children. I kept it up one day, and the next no one seemed inclined to notice *me*. I felt that I was alone in the world, with none to love me but my little ones; and, I shuddered at the thought that they, too, would hate me when they should get old enough. John did not try to reconcile me, and I grew, O, so miserable! Yesterday, Ada came to where I was walking, and asked me if I would not let her love me. I would only answer in monysyllables, but her kindness unnerved me, and I began to weep. I tried to keep back the burning tears, but the anguish of my spirit had been so long pent up, that I could no longer keep my feelings smothered, and I sobbed aloud. Ada put her arm around me, and pointed to a passage in a testament she held in her left hand, and bade me read:—

"'Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,'" were the soothing words that met my eyes. I clasped the book with the energy of despair;—ready and eager to be comforted, no matter how. She gently disengaged her arm from my waist, yielded the book to my hand, and left me alone. I read on. My mother's Bible was in my trunk. 'Can it be,' I thought, 'that I have neglected that Book so long, when it contains such consolation as *this?*'

"I was ashamed for John to see my emotion, so I put the book in my pocket before getting into the carriage. I tried to shade my face with my hat and fan; but he saw that I had

been weeping, and I fancied that he looked troubled. When I left Lucy in your care, I went away where I could wrestle, unseen, with Israel's God and mine. Peace, serene as Heaven, took possession of my soul. While I was praying for John's conversion, he came to me, and before we left the hallowed spot, we, who had both laughed to scorn the religion of my mother, were rejoicing together, in the Hope that is stronger than death. If my mother had lived, I believe the better part of my nature would have been developed to some extent in childhood.

"She was taken from me when I was but six years of age, and my father would never allow me to be crossed or contradicted after her death. When my father died, and my property was gone, I began to have trouble in earnest. I became acquainted with Mr. Welden, and the friendship we began to cultivate, soon ripened into affection.

"If my temper had been good, we might have got along well together; but I was so irritable, and he so provoking that we had many quarrels. I was most to blame for minding what he would say, but I did not see my fault. My friends blamed me. I saw this, and grew worse, until my fountains of happiness were all cut off.

"Flattery and notice had been the food, and I may add, the bane of my existence during my girlhood, and I could not live contented without it. It is not my husband's disposition to flatter any one, and I would often irritate him. If it had not been for my children, I would have left him long ago. I never breathed this to mortal before, but I want to tell you all. I loved him no longer as I ought to have loved —and I felt that the dislike was mutual. O, if you knew the misery of such a feeling between those who in name are united, then you would know what I suffered, when my pride would allow me to consider my true situation. We

did not *understand* each other, and I would not be the first to attempt a reconciliation.

"But I thank Thee, O, Heavenly Parent, that the dark cloud has at length passed away. May the good work Thou hast begun in us, save us from future disagreements."

Mrs. Welden appeared to have forgotten that she had an earthly listener.

Mr. Welden was advancing towards them, and thinking it best to leave them alone, Mrs. Goodwin went to the camp.

"From every stormy wind that blows;
From every swelling tide of woes,
There is a calm, a sure retreat,
'Tis found beneath the Mercy Seat."

CHAPTER IX.

DEATH.

READER, let us take an occasional peep at Ada Mansfield's journal.

May 14th. "The Plains certainly wear a charm which I had not expected to see. The view from the road to day was not so grand as when we commenced our journeyings; but by going on horseback, some distance from the road, we could see a sight fit for the Angels to admire. The little hollows, that by looking directly across the plain cannot be discerned, were continually showing themselves at little distances from our feet. They are filled with flowers of the choicest varieties and most brilliant hues.

May 15th. We crossed the Big Nemeha, a lovely looking, but dangerous stream, and camped for the night upon its banks. Our Irishman, O'Donaldson, thought that the luck, good and bad had all fallen to him. In ascending the bank of the stream, which is very steep and sidelong, he became alarmed and called out "Gee! ye spalpeens," when he meant to have said "Haw." The cattle are very much afraid

of him, and turned to the right, almost upsetting the wagon. He jumped the tongue with commendable agility, and tried to turn them to the left, still crying "Gee!" at the top of his voice. His words and actions so crossed each other that the poor brutes, in trying to be obedient, became tangled together so that two yokes of them became disengaged from the others in the confusion.

Pat buzzed around, halloaed and cursed until the wagon was up the hill. The other vehicles had all been turned out from the road in camping order; and when his wagon was upon level ground, Pat exclaimed complacently, "Arrah, Pat; an' ye're a clever fellow now sure. It's certain I am an' no other chap in the company would have got safe out o' this, at all, at all."

"But where's your other cattle, Pat?' Pa asked.

"Well, if I ain't beat! It warn't me as had missed 'em, now sure.'

"Don't you see that two yokes of the oxen are missing?'

"Oxen be durn'd an' I do see it now, but by me faith, I'm at the first of it.'

"The detached cattle had stood for a moment upon the slippery hill side, when finding that no one noticed them, they turned away, and when discovered were quietly feeding among the timber that skirts the creek.

"'Ah! me, hearties, and ye know how to get yourselves out of a scrape, now dont't ye?'" said the amused Hiberian, e'er he patted the oxen caressingly.

May 16th. "It is well that we crossed the Nemeha last evening, for there was such a deluge of rain in the night that the stream has raised until those who are behind will have to remain there several days. The north wind blows very disagreeably, and is cold enough for November blasts.

We to day crossed the Little Nemeha. This stream is only about thirty feet in width and about two feet deep. It meanders among clusters of cottonwood, that grow upon the rolling bluffs, which are arrayed like ramparts on each side of this diminutive rvier.

We passed five newly made graves to-day. Alas! How easily is human ambition cut off! Rich and poor, high and low, are alike subject to attacks of sickness and not one of us knows that we will live to again behold inhabited regions."

* * * * * * * * *

Death, the king of terrors, had begun to make rapid invasions among the ranks of the ill-fated emigrants. The unusual

excitement and exercise of travelling and camping out, had given most of the adventurous company insatiable appetites. Most of the travellers had been used to fruits from infancy. But acting in accordance with the advice of those who had crossed the Plains, and published rules for future emigration to follow, all had ventured upon this perilous route, with at best a scanty supply of dried fruits and no vegetables, while the never failing "bacon," filled everybody's provision wagons to overflowing.

To those who may read these pages, we would say, do not consider the journey hazardous, so far as sickness and death are concerned, provided the right course is pursued. If you intend to undertake such a journey, leave hog's lard and bacon where it cannot trouble you, and provide fruit in its stead. Fruit can be hermetically sealed, and will keep an indefinite length of time in any climate. Vegetables can be prepared in the same manner. Butter will keep fresh and good by placing a solid roll of several pounds, around which a thoroughly salted cloth has been wrapped, in the middle of each fifty pound flour sack. Dried beef, venison, and well smoked hams, for those who *must* have salt meats, will keep in the hottest parts of the journey, and will be much more healthy than the obnoxious "side meat." Fresh meats can also be preserved by hermetical sealing. But we do not intend to give a lengthy dissertation upon eatables, and will dismiss the subject.

"I think some of us ought to go and see to that poor sick woman. A boy told me that his mother had the cholera. He said his father died with it and everybody was afraid to go about his mother's wagon, for fear of taking the disease," said Effie, one noon-time to her mother, as she pointed to a solitary wagon around which two little children of two and four years were playing, and a boy of ten was standing upon the wagon tongue, gazing sorrowfully into the vehicle.

A discussion arose among Captain Gray's Company about what must be done. The timid were anxious to keep aloof from contagion.

"I will go," said Ada. "We none of us know how soon we may need aid. I would feel afraid to face my Judge if called away, if I had proved myself too cowardly to face disease and death for the sake of suffering humanity."

"No, Ada," said Maurice, gazing tenderly into her beaming eyes, all aglow with deep pity and concern for the distressed; "you must not face the danger. I will go. Perhaps my knowledge of medicine will be of some use to the poor woman."

"I'll go if you do," she answered decidedly. "Let those stay behind who have families to care for. I am young and healthy and am not afraid to go. Besides, no husband or child would have to weep if I were gone."

"Let her go if she wants to," said her mother. "I would rather see her evince such a spirit, than to know that she was afraid of a duty. I will go too."

Ada assured her that she could tell if they were both needed, and begged her to wait until she could see how the woman appeared.

"Water," gasped the sufferer as she tossed herself about in agony. "O, to think of dying here, with no one to care for the children when I am gone!"

Tears came to Ada's eyes. Maurice never before looked so lovely to her as when bending over that dying woman, whose companions had left her to her fate because the disease was reported contagious. The woman looked at him with a vacant stare.

"Have you come to bury me? Tell me," she muttered in a guttural tone.

"No, my dear madam, we've come to save you," said Maurice, clasping the sufferer's hand. He felt the clammy sweat

of death upon her attenuated fingers, and knew that life was waning.

"Water!" she gasped again.

"Run my boy, and get your ma some water."

"They wouldn't let pa *have* any, sir, and I was afraid to give it to her for fear she'd die," said the child, while tears rolled down his cheeks and his lips quivered, betraying the deep anguish of his young heart.

"Well, never mind, run quick to that camp; they've got water there."

Ada had started when Maurice first spoke to the boy, and soon returned with a cup of the delicious beverage. The sufferer quaffed a long, deep draught, looked her thanks, raised her glassy eyes to Heaven, murmured, "God save my little ones," and expired.

The ministering couple cast a mournful look upon the dead, upon the children, and upon each other. Ada took up the youngest child, who called herself "Eda," and told her to look at her ma. The child's face and clothing were begrimmed with dirt, but the neat fit and faultless stitches of its brown Holland apron and delaine dress, so well suited to the journey, showed that its mother had been a woman of taste.

"Ma, ma, Eda's *so* hungry," said the child.

Ada led the other little girl, who gave her name as "Dilly," by the hand and carried the little one to her mother. The other women all went back with her to the wagon. The orphan boy was old enough to feel his loss, and was lying on the grass, sobbing in utter despair. Maurice had closed the eyes and straightened the form of the dead. He tried to console the boy and gain some information about the name of his parents, and the cause of their having been left alone. The child said his parents' name was Baker. His father was taken sick the morning before, and the company they were

with would not lie by for them. They had a teamster, who stayed with them till his father was dead, and got some men who were passing to help bury him. When everybody was gone, his mother was taken so sick that she could not go on. Andy, as the boy called him got afraid of the cholera, and left them alone. His ma was sick all night. He had told one man about it, but he cursed him, and he didn't tell any one else, until Effie asked him what made him look so bad. This was the substance of the boy's story, told in a broken manner. Their cattle, he said, were off about a mile in a southern direction.

The women began to prepare the remains for interment, and were engaged in hunting clothing from the trunks of the deceased in which to dress the body for burial, when Captain Gray and the other men, who had been off for an hour with the cattle, returned. Sam Green and his brothers, went immediately after the cattle that belonged to the orphans. A grave was made by Captain Gray and Daddy Green, while Mansfield and Welden constructed a box from the sides of the wagon bed to answer for a coffin.

The humane company collected around the grave which was ready to receive the dead, and a few sturdy voices joined in singing:

"Hark! from the tombs a doleful sound;
My ears attend the cry;
Ye living men come view the ground,
Where you must shortly lie.

* * * * * *

"Great God! is this *our* certain doom?
And are we still secure?
Still walking downwards to the tomb,
And yet prepared no more?

"Grant us the power of quickening grace,
To fit our souls to fly;
Then when we drop this dying flesh,
We'll rise above the sky."

The clods rattled mournfully upon the last narrow house of the sleeper; and soon all traces of that husband and wife's existence, were visible in the torn up wagon, and helpless, sorrowing little ones. Necessary clothing for the children was taken from the baggage, and the wagon was then burned, in order to prevent, if possible, the spreading of the disease, should it prove contagious. Mr. and Mrs. Mansfield took the children under their protection, and supplied all their wants.

"Earth to earth, and dust to dust;
Here the evil and the just,
Here the matron and the maid,
In one silent bed are laid;
Here the vassal and the king,
Side by side lie withering;
Here the sword and sceptre rust,
Earth to earth, and dust to dust!"

* * * *

"Here shall in the desert rise
Fruits of more than Paradise;
Earth by Angel feet be trod,
One great garden of her God!
'Till are dried the martyr's tears,
Through a thousand glorious years.
Now in hope of Him we trust,
Earth to earth, and dust to dust.'"

Rev. George Croly.

CHAPTER X.

MR. BAKER'S TRAVELLING COMPANY AND ANDY.

It is a singular fact that emigrants upon the Plains, are not affected long at a time by *anything*. The excitement of travelling, the constant intercourse with strangers, the varied scenery and constant unfolding of something new, makes

adventurers reckless, and many times fool-hardy; while the opposite extreme of sheer cowardice and depravity, is sometimes exhibited in a deplorable manner.

Jokes and repartee was the camping pastime with most of the emigrants, and with many of the "Gray crowd," were passed as freely as ever. The presence of the orphans, however, was a restraint upon some of them. Effie had questioned Johnny Baker about the name of his company. He told her that it was called Bald Hill Train, because their captain used to live on a Bald Hill in Wisconsin; and to distinguish him from his relatives of the name in his vicinity, they had dubbed him Bald Hill Smith.

Effie told Captain Gray, who vowed that if he could overtake him, "he'd give him a piece of his mind, if he got swung for it."

The next morning they started early as usual, and had proceeded about a mile, when they overtook a train that had not yet started. Ada, who was walking, as was her habit, in the morning air, stopped at the nearest wagon and asked the cause of the delay.

"Sickness and death," said a serious looking woman who was nursing a sick child in the shade of the wagon.

"Our captain says that those who are well must not lie by for the sick, or all will die."

Men were driving up the cattle and horses. The woman looked at her suffering babe and burst into tears.

"We'll have to go, Mary," said her husband, as he drove up his team and stooped to kis his wife, whose scalding tears were dropping upon the face of the feverish infant.

"If we were to stay here there is no telling what might happen. It is best to keep with our company while we can."

"But it does look so hard to think we can't *try* to save him. My precious, precious babe!"

It was the Bald Hill Train that had again been visited by

death. A woman had died during the night, and the delay had been occasioned by her burial.

Captain Gray drove up his team to where a man was standing, whom he judged was the commander of the train. His be-whiskered and sun-burnt countenance, expressive of impatience and ill-humor, and the muttered imprecations and overbearing air of the stalwart, half savage looking man, were so like what he had imagined of "Bald Hill Smith," that he felt certain that he was the veritable Captain for whom he was looking. Captain Gray surveyed him leisurely from head to foot. The fellow returned the gaze, and moving towards him with a swaggering air, he said, comically, "Don't you think I'm a darnation pretty man? Or is it my clothes that takes your eye? I haven't seen a fellow so stuck after my finery, for many a day;" and he glanced at his garments, which were anything but decent in appearance.

"Are you the Captain of this company?"

"Some of 'em call me Cap. sometimes, but I don't profess to be a regular commander."

"Well, if ye're Bald Hill Smith, I've got somethin' to tell ye. If ye die on these Plains while my head's above dirt, me nor my men won't bury ye! Any poor, dirty, good-for-nothin' wretch, that'll leave a sick woman to die, ought to swing! Depend upon it, *you* won't git turned under by any of my men!"

"I don't expect to want the favor. Nothing is further from my calculations than wanting to be buried. I started to *Oregon*, *I* did. Agreeing to wait sick folk's motions was no part of my bargain."

"Ye may need help yerself afore long, but if ye git yer deserts, ye'll fall a prey to buzzards, provided they'll eat ye. Where's the villain Andy, that left poor Baker's folks?"

If its Andy Billens, you're hunting for, that worthy gentleman is at your service," he replied.

A scowl of indignation overshadowed the Captain's face. Fire flashed from his eyes, as with muscular strength and hearty good will, he dealt two powerful blows with his heavy whip upon the fellows thinly covered shoulders. The coward did not dare to resist, but retreated a few paces and asked him what he meant by such actions.

"I don't want ye to *ask* me what I mean! Ye know as well as I do, that no man what's fit to live, would go off and leave a sick woman and helpless young'uns to the mercy of Injuns. Ye may well shake and turn pale, ye dirty vagabon'!"

"I guess my life is as dear to me as hers was, if not a little more so. I've no notion of lying by for the sake of *anybody*." The cowardly wretch walked away.

A stout looking individual in a butternut suit and home-made, oat-straw hat, rode up.

"Forward, march! Them as don't stir their stumps 'll be left behind in this race," vociferated Captain Smith, in full consciousness of his dignity as *Commander*.

"What's to be done with that 'are sick young'un?" demanded Captain Gray.

"Young'un be d—d!" said this "protector" of a collection of human beings, who had agreed to place themselves under his command for months.

"I say there's got to be somethin' done for that child; an' if ye don't wait a while, ye'll feel the cut of my whip a leetle stronger than yer companion, Andy had to feel it. If the rest o' ye had my pluck, we'd tar and feather this rascal,"

The Captain cast a look of contempt at his son-in-law, who evidently had no taste for the business that Captain Gray had been trained in youth to believe was manly.

"What right have you to stop my train?"

"Sure, an' its the rights of humanity we have; an' we'll show ye how to use 'em, if ye don't look shar-rp. I remember all about a shillalah; an' ye'll git the best lickin' that's been heard of in many a day, if yer persist in wakin' up the Irish that's in me," said O'Donaldson, with an ominous shake of his long whip-stock.

"Pat; ye're worth a score of milk-and-water folks," said Captain Gray.

Maurice was testing his skill as a physician upon the sick babe. The pulse throbbed violently. The tongue was parched and dry, and the eyes were rolled back so as to almost hide the bright blue orbs that had been his mother's delight.

"Give the child some water. He suffers from thirst."

"*What?*" exclaimed the astounded mother. "*Water* to a child so sick as this?"

"I can undertake the cure of no disease, unless the patient is permitted to have water in small quantities. Madam, your child is burning, consuming with fever. You have the power to give him a cooling draught, for the want of which he is dying. Will you refuse?"

"God save my darling!" she exclaimed, as she held a cup of water to its fevered mouth. The child was almost convulsive in its eagerness to drink.

"There!" said Maurice, when the babe had gulped nearly a half pint of the cooling drink. The child needs no medicine. He is teething, and if you will break the fever he will recover in a few days. I will lance his gums to relieve the pain and give the teeth a chance to appear."

"Have you got any calomel, Doctor? We have none, and can't do my baby any good without it."

"I guess we can subdue the fever without the aid of poison. You must bathe him in cold water."

"O, mercy! The train's going to start, and I can't bathe him while we're travelling!"

"A wet sheet will answer the purpose."

Ada spoke: "I will get a tin pail from pa's carriage, that has a closely fitting lid. With your permission, I will ride in your wagon to-day. The companies will probably keep pretty close together."

"It's just what I would have asked; but contagion has so rung in my ears ever since poor Baker was taken ill, that I hated to request you to stay with me."

Ada tripped away after the tin pail, filled it from a gurgling rivulet by the roadside, and seated herself among the kettles in the front of Mr. Thomson's wagon, as though she had never thought of riding in a covered chariot, where everything was *comme il faut.*

The child was soon encased in the dripping sheet. His little body quivered when the cold linen enshrouded him; and the frightened mother exclaimed:

"It will *kill* him! I thought it would from the first."

"Never fear, Mrs. Thomson. The shivering is a good symptom. The water is doing its work. Wrap him up snugly."

The tiny form was bundled in heavy blankets. In fifteen minutes they removed the sheet, which was steaming like a seething kettle. Ada tried the efficiency of friction upon his moistened body. As she had never before scarcely touched a sick infant, she was surprised at her own aptness in the art of nursing. The child, after being well rubbed, was placed in a dry sheet, and was soon sleeping as quietly as though nothing had been the matter.

The parents were fervent in the praises they lavished upon their benefactors; and when Maurice refused to accept a recompense for his professional advice, they were perfectly astonished. They had been brought up in a land of doctors who gave nauseons medicines, and "run up" unreasonable bills, and they looked upon the profession as a calling, the basis of which is *money.*

The child was considered out of danger at sunset. The two companies camped near each other, and it must be said to the credit of Capt. Smith, that during the remainder of the journey, he evinced considerable humanity in more than one instance. The example of Capt. Gray had taught him a lesson, which he saw plainly that it would not do to forget. He had incurred the displeasure of his company, and a spirit of rebellion showed itself so plainly, that he was frightened into humanity of action.

CHAPTER XI.

EXTRACTS FROM ADA'S JOURNAL.

May 28th. PLATTE RIVER rolls before me. We struck the river this evening for the first time. Opposite our camp is Grand Island, covered with timber and grass. The cattle were driven on to this Island, and the men waded to it and procured wood for cooking purposes.

"The water of the river is thick with sand, but we are compelled to use it, because we can get no better.

May 29th. "Traveled eight miles, to Fort Kearney, where we halted a while to write letters, look at curiosities, and divert ourselves in various other ways.

"The Fort contains two respectable dwellings, which to us, who had been journeying for three weeks without seeing anything like settled civilization, presented an appearance of a pleasing nature.

"After leaving the Fort we moved on for about eight miles, with the expectation of having to travel more than a hundred before finding a place to ford the river.

"But we saw teams crossing at this place, and concluded to try it with the rest, as health as well as facilities for wood and grass, are reported to be much better on the north than on the south side.

We are camped upon the banks of the Platte, without ordinary fuel, but we find plenty of Buffalo chips.

May 30th. Sabbath day. Intended to have lain by to-day, but after taking all matters into consideration, we thought it best to cross the river this morning. Last Sabbath we did not travel. Instead of each one indulging in private meditation, or engaging in public worship, there was more thoughtlessness exhibited than on any other day. The cattle, it is true, were permitted, to rest, but many of them got an overdose of alkali grass and were sick in consequence of their prolonged feast. Billy Green got into a fight with a boy from a neighboring camp, whose father was too religious to travel on Sunday; but who allowed his hopeful son to fight, as a mark of commendable chivalry. Our Captain, who possesses a kind of intuitive horse knowledge that makes us all respect him, said that if he were a Christian, "he wouldn't *mock* his Maker, by tryin' to lay by Sundays. Be hanged if it ain't an insult to your king, to offer him homage that does ye no credit."

The crossing of the river, proved more tedious than difficult.—The ford is about a mile and a half in width, and at this season of the year, three feet in depth, except in occasional hollows in the quicksand bottom, where the cattle would almost swim. The vehicles made a muffled noise in rolling over the sand, not unlike the noise a wagon makes in going through a snow-drift.

May 31st. We are journeying up the P'atte. The valley is generally level in appearance, but we sometimes come unexpectedly upon sloughs or creeks, which we can see but little trace of until we reach the banks.

These hollows, unlike the others we have seen, are not bordered with timber. They are fringed to the water's edge with grass and flowers, and most probably dry out in the latter part of of Summer.

Camped upon the margin of one of these gulches, where we get better water than that of the P atte. We are about a mile from the river. On the north, about three miles from us, though it does not appear to be half so far, the bluffs are ranged along in quite a romantic manner. They appear to be barren in the extreme; though their unsurpassed beauty atones for their apparent lack of worth.

We have no wood except the chips before mentioned, which in the absence of ordinary fuel, we do not mind to use, as they make an excellent fire.

June 1st. The weather is exceedingly hot, making going ahead a tedious and laborious occupation.

Effie Goodwin was attacked this morning by the Emigrant Cholera, and her mother and brothers are much distressed. Maurice has undertaken her case and we hope for the best.

We met a company to day who had started back to the States, on account of sickness and death. They buried one of their number yesterday and another this morning, and had come back about four miles when we met them. They abandoned one wagon because they could get no one to drive the team. They were from Springfield, Illinois.

We suffered much during the afternoon, on account of the great scarcity of good water. That of the Platte being so muddy and warm that it is impossible for civilized people to drink it.

June 2d. Another *insufferably* hot day. After we camped this evening, a west wind arose and blew a perfect gale for an hour. Its fury then partially abated, but we think a hard storm may be expected tonight, as black clouds darken the western horizon, and dance and loom up majestically towards the blue zenith. We have heard much about Platte River storms and are looking for one with mingled awe and curiosity.

June 3d. It came. The deep toned thunder boomed and howled, groaned and murmured, rumbled and trembled over our heads. Then, a dead, dark silence reigned throughout the valley for a moment. It was but a moment. The lightning's grand, alluring glare, lit up the hills and valley, and burnished the agitated river, till it sparkled like a rolling sea of diamonds. Blazes and streaks and streams and flashes of heaven charged artillery beamed and burned, advanced and retreated in the arching heavens. Anon a booming sound, the report and re-action of the expended aerial magazines, burst loud and terrific over the now blackened valley. Silence, the dread hush of expectation and suspense again ruled for a season. Then came a roaring sound like the "rushing of many waters," and the furious winds shook the tents, until each rope and pin and pulley of the stout marquees was straining and groaning in the tempest. The wagons rocked as if in agony.—Cattle stampeded, horses neighed, women and children shrieked at intervals, and all felt the Omnipotent only, had power to save or annihilate. Prayers from those who were ashamed to own them when the danger was past, ascended from fear-stricken souls.

I asked myself in the midst of this glorious confusion, why it was that so many felt afraid of the storm? When we are in the hands of God who rules the tempests, why can we not trust Him?

Heaven's batteries were reinforced and a second discharge of artillery, yet more grand than the first, because longer continued, brightened up the gloom, and another report, drowning the sound of roaring

winds, seemed to shake the valley from centre to circumference. Rock howled to rock, and echoes re-echoed through the distant hills. I tho't of the days when first this earth was formed, and wondered if, when the Omniscient 'spake and it was done; commanded and it stood fast,' there were such scenes such sounds, and such tremblings and throes of the earth as we were then experiencing?

The hail and rain, as if waiting for mortals to witness what lightning, thunder, and wind would do, unaided by their efforts, kept back for half an hour. And then the torrent descended with its might upon its luckless adventurers. Not a wagon cover or tent could be kept from leaking. Effie, who is still feeble, has appeared better since the storm abated, but she did not escape the general saturation.

This morning the sky was clear as if nothing had happened; but the whole valley was flooded. The long grass and weeds were lying on top of the water that everywhere stood several inches in depth. The stock which had stampeded in the night, were quietly feeding about a mile from camp The river, darker and muddier than ever, rolled on as though it had never lashed the shores in fury, or splashed its murky waters over the tents of emigrants.

A spice of fun seasons almost everything, and now that the danger is past, the boys consider that they have an excellent supply of ludicrous items. The mats forming their beds, had been placed on the ground in the tents, and of course were wet as water could make them. There was no chance to dry anything by fires, but happily for all of us the sun arose as though fair weather was all we had ever witnessed.

"Sure an' old Sol knows what he's about," said Pat, as he arranged his bedding on the outside of the wagon cover nearest the men.

"He wants to help us out o' a scrape, for nara bit does he like to see us sufferin'. Such storms as this don't come when Sol's awake."

"You d'd'nt feel so funny last night when you prayed so hard for the storm to cease," said Herbert Godwin.

"'Arrah! an' it was the echo of yer own hear-rt if ye hear-rd any prayin'."

"Why, Pat! will you deny it?"

"Of coorse an' it ain't me as denies it at all, at all. I think it's more'n likely that ye heard prayin', that is, when the stor-rm did'nt drown yer voice."

"Ill give it up. Pat," said Herbert, who saw that the boys were about to get a laugh at his expense. He turned the tide of fun in his own favor by pretending to acknowledge what Pat accused him of.

I walked with Herbert awhile to day. I never before conversed with a boy of fifteen who had such elevated ideas. If he lives, he'll make a sensation of importance in the world.

We camped this evening where we have to again use the river water; but we have learned enough to drive some distance from the banks and choose an elevated spot for the tents.

Maurice and I strolled along the river bank. Light clouds were floating overhead and in the west, and one of deep black covered the eastern horizon.

We were conversing in a low tone, and Herbert, who was out on a meditating excursion, was so deeply absorbed in reverie that he did not notice our near approach.

A delicious shower completely enveloped us. Maurice threw an oil cloth cloak over my head, but I shook it off and enjoyed the gentle rain as well as the birds and flowers did.

Suddenly the sun shone out in splendor, and the dark cloud in the east became illuminated by a rainbow, unequalled in effulgence by any that I had ever seen before. Herbert appeared wholly engrossed in this glorious scene. He stationed himself in an attitude worthy of an orator, and repeated Campbell's song of the Rainbow, that he had practiced upon at school until he could deliver it perfectly; changing the words enough to make it suit the time and occasion, apparently without the least effort:

"'The evening is glorious, and light through the trees,
Play the sunshine, the raindrops, the birds and the breeze;
The landscape outstretching, in loveliness lays
On the lap of the year, in such beauty as May's.

"'For the warm breath of Summer has passed down the vale;
Left deep green on the trees and sweet breath on the gale;
And the smile of her promise gives joy to the hours,
And flush in her foot-steps wave herbage and flowers.

"'The skies like a banner, in sunrise unroll'd,
O'er the East throw their splendor of azure and gold;
But one cloud in the zenith, has spread and increas'd,
And settled as night moth, over the East.

"'I gaze on the scenes, while around me they glow—
What, what is that vision more beauteous than snow,
Or sunlight, or shower, or mountain's grand view,
Or the moon that rolls nightly through star-light and blue.

"'Like a spirit it comes, but not to alarm,

For the eye and the heart, hail its beautiful form,
For it looks not severe, like an Angel of Wrath,
But its garments of brightness, illume its dark path.

"'In the hues of its grandeur, sublimely it stands,
O'er the river, the woodlands and wild prairie lands;
And river and woodlands, and prairies grow bright,
As conscious they give and afford us delight.

"'Tis the bow of Omnipotence, bent in His hand,
Whose grasp at Creation the Universe spanned;
'Tis the presence of God, in symbol sublime,
His vow from the flood, to the exit of time.

"'O! such is the Rainbow, this beautiful one,
Whose arch is refraction, its keystone the sun;
A pavilion it seems, by the Deity graced,
Which Justice and Mercy, have jointly embraced.

"'I gaze not alone on this source of my song,
To all who behold it, these verses belong;
Its presence to all, is the path of the Lord,
Who was, is, and will be forever adored.

"'Like a visit, or converse with friends, or a day;
This bow from my sight will soon pass away,
Like that visit, that converse, that day to my heart;
This bow from remembrance, can never depart.

"'Twill remain in my memory distinctly defined,
With the strong and imperishing colors of mind,
A part of my being, beyond my control;
Beheld on this cloud, but transcribed on my soul.

"'Not dreadful, as when in the whirlwind He pleads,
When storms are His chariots and lightning His steeds;
The black clouds His banner, in vengence unfurl'd,
And thunder His voice to a guilt-stricken world.

"'In the breath of His presence, when thousands expire,
When seas boil with fury and rocks burn with fire;
And the sword and the plague-spot, with death strew the plain,
And vultures and wolves are the graves of the slain.

"'But with halowed joy, deep, pure and sublime,
I'll regard thee, thou monitor, enduring as time,
A pledge of Jehovah's, this bow in the cloud,
Is well interwove with praise to our God.'"

CHAPTER XII.

RELIGION VERSUS NOVEL WRITING AND READING.

THE MORNING sun arose like a golden winged seraph upon Captain Gray's Company. Beads of azure-tinted spray illumined every leaf and flower, and dwarfy shrub. Gentle breezes swept at intervals over the turbid river, and kissed the cheeks of the adventurers, who were hurriedly preparing the morning meal, or engaged in driving and yoking the cattle. Birds of brilliant hues caroled forth their songs of gladness, from wild rose bush and hawthorn shrub. Buffaloes that had become wary in consequence of frequent attacks from emigrants, occasionally showed themselves upon the opposite side of the river; while the bounding antelope leaped gracefully over the hills, a few miles from the valley, and in sight of the wistful campers.

Breakfast was ready, but some of the teams were missing. The train could not go on until all were found; and Daddy Green and his boys consented to hunt the cattle, if some of the others would hunt an antelope. The men who were in good health mounted the mules belonging to Mansfield and Welden, and started in pursuit of a graceful animal that was bounding from crag to crag upon some rugged bluffs in sight of the camp.

A train overtook the waiting company, and a gentlemanly looking individual asked Mrs. Goodwin if a doctor belonged to their crowd. She told him of Maurice, who had gone with the hunters.

The gentleman requested one of his men who was mounted to ride after and overtake him. The train moved up alongside the waiting wagons, and halted. The sympathizing females of Captain Gray's Company had learned to shun no

sickness, and a common impulse moved them all to lend a helping hand.

Three persons were dangerously sick; a gentleman and two ladies, who had all been attacked by cholera during the previous night. The news of Dr. Stanton's success in curing Mrs. Thomson's baby had been circulated among a long line of emigrants, and hearing that his company was but a few miles ahead, Mr. Mays had started at dawn to overtake him, if possible.

Maurice soon returned and examined the sufferers. Two of them were past recovery. A lady of middle age, whose livid countenance still bore traces of the beauty of by-gone days, was supported by a fair young girl of eighteen, whose wine-colored merino dress, and pure white morning collar and wrist-bands, appeared in bold relief beside the soiled wagon cover, outside bed clothing, and dusty appearance generally, of everything around her. She gazed sorrowfully upon the face of the dying woman, and asked Maurice in a mournful voice, if there was hope. He replied that the weakness preceding death had come on. "If her constitution has been good, she may possibly rally for a short time, but her destiny is fixed."

The young physician turned away, sorrowful in heart, but unflinching in duty to the other sufferers, while the young lady bowed her head and let the scalding tear drops fall upon the unconscious face of the sleeper.

The next woman was in great pain of body and distress of mind; though all could see, by the strength she evinced in groaning, tossing from side to side, and uttering detached sentences, that there was some chance for life. She begged piteously for water. Maurice commanded them to let her have it.

"She's been taking calomel, sir, and we were afraid to give her water," said her husband in a tremulous voice.

"Let her have it; she'll die if she doesn't get it. Salivation will probably follow as a consequence, but it's the least of two evils."

The drink was given, and the poor woman who had been dosed with brandy, and was suffering under applications of mustard poultices and blisters that would have well nigh destroyed a healthy person, revived instantly, so that she could speak distinctly.

"These bed-clothes—throw them off, for mercy's sake! I'm burning up," she murmured.

Maurice consulted the pulse. Inward fever raged violently, but the surface of the skin was cold and clammy. Her misguided friends, in the hope of sending the unnatural heat from her vitals, had given her repeated doses of fourth-proof brandy, while they were endeavoring to *draw forth the fever* with cantharides and mustard.

"Did you treat the other lady in this manner?"

"Yes; we didn't know what else to do."

"No wonder she couldn't endure it. You or I would die under this treatment. For heaven's sake, remove these obnoxious blisters, and get a sponge and luke-warm water. She must be well bathed, and then friction will do more to restore her exhausted body than all the fiery potations or blistering inventions you can procure."

There was warm water at Mrs. Gray's camp-fire, and while the anxious friends and warm-hearted strangers were following the physician's directions, he proceeded to examine the dying man. Beads of cold perspiration stood on his broad, manly brow. He was a young husband, and the wife of his bosom stood calmly holding his hand, and striving to cheer her husband with hopeful words. Her face was calm and eyes tearless, but lines of sorrow were penciled around the mouth, betraying the anguish she was striving in vain to hide from the watchful eye of her dying consort. She

pressed the clay-cold hand and said, "My dear, the doctor's come. We'll have you well directly; cheer up, and hear what he has to say."

But the doctor could speak of no earthly hope, and strove while the sufferers senses remained, to point out to him the place of final refuge,

"I know in whom I have believed. Kiss me, Julia; I'm going Home. I little thought that I would have to leave you in this wild place, but I must go. My precious babe! O, teach its little lips to praise the Savior of its father, whose face the little one will never again behold in this world. You know how I want my child to be educated. All is left to you. The eternal hills of Paradise are before me, and I must haste away. Farewell to life."

Another hour passed, and another spirit was singing hallelujahs in the land of the blessed; another had triumphed over death, darkness, and the grave.

The dying woman was again visited by the kind-hearted women, Mrs. Goodwin remaining behind to comfort the bereaved widow, who, with an infant a few weeks old, was left to battle with the adverse winds and waves of adventure, in her lonely journeying to a distant land.

Tears were rolling down the cheeks of Martha Martin, the watchful nurse of the dying woman, but she was unconscious of her mourner's sorrow.

"Is this woman your aunt?" Ada asked, tenderly.

"No; but she has been my friend—my only one almost, for ten long years," and she bowed her head in a fresh shower of tears.

The sufferer died, and gave no sign, no expression of Christian faith; but when the form, beautiful in death, was arrayed for the tomb, a placid smile was stamped upon the features, that chased from the minds of the beholders the terror of the Fell Destroyer.

Mrs. Mays had known sorrow. The husband of her youth became a confirmed inebriate, ran away in a fit of madness, and for years she had had no knowledge of his whereabouts. The hope that he would one day return, a reformed and useful man, sustained the spirit of his wife for a while, but the heart-sickening reality of hope deferred, had finally crushed her spirit, and destroyed a constitution never robust. A brother of her husband, an honest, upright man, was going to Oregon with his family, and having no kindred ties to bind her to her Bay State home, she had consented to accompany him. It is said that persons disposed to be melancholy are most liable to attacks of disease. The cholera, from its first appearance, had taken deep hold upon her imagination, and her sister-in-law remarked, after her death, that it had been impossible to keep her from seeing every new made grave, and hearing of every new case of sickness for miles before and behind them.

The next morning was appointed for the burial. Captain Gray's ideas of generosity would not permit him to leave the sorrow-stricken company until the last sad rites were performed; and sending off the stock in the care of the boys, he prepared to remain in camp throughout the day. The dead were as neatly prepared for burial as circumstances would permit, and placed in the most capacious tent that could be procured, and a large fire was built in front of the tent for the benefit of those who were to observe the "wake."

"I begin to have faith in christianity," said Mansfield. "My wife was a professor and church member before I knew her, and I had no opportunity to test, from a change in her deportment, the principles of the faith which works by love. My daughter early embraced her mother's views. I considered this a free country, and never opposed their notions, though I confess, I thought they indulged a belief that would do them no good."

"The death of Mr. Graves is proof positive of an existence beyond the grave; which, however, I have never doubted. But the trust and confidence he displayed, when giving parting instructions to his wife, *must* have emanated from a Divine source."

"Well," said Captain Gray, "I always believed in religion, but I look on it as somethin' too high for poor folks in the Sucker State. All the Christians I knowed in Blue Creek Bottom, belonged to the starch and broad-cloth order; an' the preachers, if they spoke to me at all, acted as though they committed a mighty act of condescension. I've seen wonders on these Plains; that proud creetur', Miss Welden, that we was all so shy of at first, is so changed that a body can hardly think that she's the same woman. She has a smile for everybody, an' never speaks cross to poor Welden, who, if he did deserve it, used to git wretchedly snapped up by her sometimes. I believe he's changed as much as she is. He's funny as ever, but he don't torment his woman, nor anybody else like he did. It's singular what makes the difference. If it's the grace of God that's done it, it's a mighty invention, that's a fact. The hymn ye sung at the grave of poor Miss Baker, took powerful hold on my feelin's."

Ada spoke. "I *love* the dear old fashioned psalm and hymn tunes. There is something so peculiarly grand in their sublime, melodious strains, that I dwell upon them with enthusiasm. My grandfather, whose hoary locks, bleached in the frosts of ninety winters, sang a Doxology to the tune of Old Hundred, the last day of his earthly pilgrimage. There is one song of his, the name of the tune I have forgotten, that I often sing to ma', when she is sad, and it has many times revived my lagging faith, to sing it when alone:

"I feast on honey milk and wine,
I drink perpetual sweetness;
Mount Zion's glories round me shine,
While Christ unfolds His greatness.

I dive in pleasures deep and full,
In praises full of glory,
And feel my Savior in my soul,
And groan to tell the story.'"

Ada chanted, rather than sung these lines, and all eyes were turned upon her with interest.

"O, what a picture!" she continued; "what material for a useful romance, a well balanced mind could gather from the scenes of a pilgrimage over the plains! How *truth* in its positive beauty and emphatic worth could be shown up to many who disbelieve in the exalted faith of the gospel. How many heart-lessons might be treasured up and related for the benefit of those who never knew the realities of a journey like this. Kindred's ties, friendship's associations, and often love's holy bonds, are severed in the momentous parting hour. Then come travels, scenery, mirth, sorrow, sickness and death in successive and strange confusion. Refinement and depravity mingle together; quarrels, murder and enmity rage, and O, how great the difference; the Christian's hymn of praise, and the dying believer's triumph are daily represented. What a lesson for those who witness these scenes!"

"But," said Mrs. Mays, "you surely would not write a novel! Fictitious reading is an abomination to the Lord. Why not relate the simple facts as they occur, taking care to keep truth upon your side, if you write at all, and keep your conscience clear of the sin of novel-writing? Lord help the rising generation." she added complacently, drawing a deep sigh.

Ada smiled, and was about to reply, when Herbert interposed.

"Have you read Galliher's Pilgrimage of Adam and David?"

"Indeed I have not," she answered piously. My sister-in-law read it; but I am thankful that my conscience is clear

upon that point. My niece also read the book; but she thinks her aunt has no right to advise her. Time was when Martha Martin was glad to get assistance from me," and she cast a meaning glance at her niece, whose father had been her only brother, but who, like the husband of the deceased widow, had fallen a prey to drunkenness, and abandoned a wife and daughter to their fate. The wife did not long survive the separation, and Martha was left at a tender age, in the care of the aunt.

"I dare say, I know more about the history of David than you do," said Herbert. "I read Galliher's book until I got it at my tongue's end. I know that if I had read that same history a score of times, in the Bible, I would not have known it half so well."

"Just so with any descriptive novel," said Ada. "Our excitable natures grow weary of a simple recital of facts, and we soon lay aside such a book as dull; when a little imagination combined with reason, enables us to see into the spirit of the work, and we peruse it with an interest that every chapter increases."

"I don't see how anybody, who pretends to be religious, can countenance novel writing. The Scriptures command us not to lie, and when we write or speak something that is not strictly true, even if the foundation be a reality, what is it but a polished falsehood?"

"Our Savior talked in parables," said Mrs. Goodwin.

"When I get too religious to read a well written story of a pure nature, then I'll be too pious to read a story begining with, 'A certain sower went forth to sow,' or the equally romantic one of Lazarous at the rich man's gate. There is also on record, a vivid sketch of exalted imagination, which you can find in the Book of Revelations. After writing many endearing greetings to his Christian friends, John begins in this wise: 'I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day; and I

heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet, saying 'I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. *And what thou see'st write in a book*, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me.' The rest of what John, in the isle of Patmos recorded, you may find, as I said before, in the book of Revelations. Now, if John had been too pious to pen his gifted ideas and lofty conceptions, and transcribe the thoughts which have entranced their thousands, where would have been the Revelations which we as Christians so highly prize?"

"But John actually *saw* what he described."

"I admit it; but had you or I been standing there, we could not have seen the glories that were revealed to him."

"Do you consider fictitious writing an inspiration?"

"I consider John's writing a divine inspiration. But romances that are of the earth, though they do not emanate from Deity, certainly come from the inner spirit of the writer. Many have been influenced by John's imagination until belief in his writings has become a certainty to their minds."

"Don't *you* believe in the Revelations?"

"Most certainly, I do. I believe that John's inner being was so illumined by the power of God, that he *saw* what none of us since his day have been permitted to see upon the earth; unless, indeed a glimpse of the glory that awaits him is often granted to the dying Christian."

"I don't see what reference all this has to novel writing."

"I admit that I have wandered a little from the beaten path of argument, but will return to the point, lay aside all deviations, and I will tell you: A person of correct taste and pure imagination is possessed of a thought. His mind

runs upon the idea till fancies are multiplied, and new visions created, and he sees far down through the dim past, and into the shadowy future, visions of things past, of things present, of things to come. Others have not seen the light as he sees it; and with his pen, an instrument more powerful than the sword—an invention more mighty than steam, he controls the minds of many thousands. Heart scenes which thrill the minds of many of the tried and suffering of earth, he relates with exact precision. He exposes folly, subdues error, and exalts virtue as with a magic wand, and multitudes are blessed and enlivened by his visions.

"It particularly belongs to woman to portray the sufferings, hopes, and comforts of human nature. She is properly prevented by the rules of society from public speaking, or filling public stations. Her purest element is in her domestic affairs and peaceful retirement. When in the solitude of her chamber, or in the shades of the grand wood-land bower, she can meditate and pen her ideas; and when suitably arranged, she may send them forth to the world, as blessings to the tried and suffering of earth; as companions to the happy, or as messengers that speak of hope and mercy to the erring. When you or any one else can show me a command prohibiting as to use imagination, but enforcing the strictest display of reason—both of which are inestimable gifts of the Most High; then, and not till then, will I stand corrected."

"But the trash that floods our world in the form of passionate love and murder stories which inflame the passions and lead thoughtless persons astray: Do you uphold such reading as that?"

"I was not speaking of such reading. Of course, when the adversary found that folks would *read*, he did all in his power to poison books; but all the filthy trash that has been or will be set afloat, will not annihilate one pure thought

that a virtuous imagination has entrusted to the winds and waves of public opinion. They may overrun and obscure the upright genius for a while; but the more pure gold has been rubbed by chalk, the brighter it will shine. '*Pure* gold is indestructible.'"

"O, well," sighed Mrs. Mays, devoutly, "'Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone.' I've done what I could to suppress wickedness. I'm going to retire to rest. I tried to persuade Mr. Mays to go ahead this morning and leave the sick folks; I think its wicked to throw ourselves into danger, but he would stay, though we may lose our lives by it."

The self-righteous woman removed from the company with a motion that said, "I thank God that I am not as other folks are."

"O, that God, the gift would gi'e us,
To see ourselves as others see us,
'Twould from many a folly free us,
And foolish notion."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BURIAL.

Morning dawned in silvery brightness upon the level plain. Just as the golden sun-rays peeped over an eastern hill, Welden and O'Donaldson the antelope hunters returned. They had lost themselves the evening before, and could not find the way in, though but a few miles from camp. They had been successful in hunting, having dispatched two of the graceful animals, but they were imperfectly versed in mountain lore, and the time occupied in dressing the meat was so

protracted, that the shades of evening came upon them before they were ready to return. They became confused and could not find their way back through the darkness, and for the first time in their lives, they bivouaced upon the hills, without other covering than the clothes they wore. They had a faithful guide however, when the smoke from the morning camp-fires began to ascend from the valleys, and they soon reached the camp.

Mrs. Welden suffered much from anxiety during the night, but a hunt is an uncertain enterprise, and no one else thought seriously of their absence.

"Now, for a change in our *grub*," exclaimed the Captain. "I tell ye what it is, folks; if all of ye had been as used as I have, to greasin' yer stomachs with bacon, ye wouldn't cave in on this trip. Ye've eat so much fruit an' vegetables all yer lives, that good, wholesome food's too strong for yer sickly stomachs. Ye'll see if my folks don't make the riffle."

"If we had taken the precaution to prepare fruits and vegetables for this journey, we would be healthy here as elsewhere," said Maurice. "It is presuming upon the laws of nature to undertake a journey like this, in the hottest season of the year, depending wholly upon superfine flour, rusty bacon, and at best, a little dried fruit and rice. We might live through a winter upon such diet, but the idea of being healthy, under a burning summer's sky, with a regimen of this kind, is simply preposterous."

"*You* might be healthy without hog meat, but *I'd* run down without it, mighty quick."

"So does the drunkard or tobacco-chewer who gives up his long continued stimulants, but that doesn't prove that they are healthy."

"May-be not, to your fancy, as you don't use 'em; but I tell ye what, pies and gingerbread's poor livin' in my eye."

"And mine too, Captain Gray. I uphold the use of pure, and unfermented food. Especially should we be careful in summer to avoid bile-increasing luxuries. The nearer our stomachs become cleansed of improper food and drink, the nearer we approach the goal of good health, which our Creator desires us to enjoy."

"Well, may-be yer right, an' may-be ye aint. This is the wrong time to argue the matter, an' we'll dry up."

"We'll be compelled to eat something during the trip, and as bacon constitutes half our bill of fare, I expect to eat considerable scrofula this summer; but I shall not eat full allowance at any time."

Captain Gray and Maurice had been digging the graves, and a call to breakfast ended the conversation.

No coffins could be procured, but heavy bed-clothes were used in their stead. The clods descended with a muffled sound upon the quilted linings of the last resting places of the sleepers. Tears of heart-rending sorrow were shed by the bereaved widow, who so much needed her husband's affection in the new mother life in which she had been left, unaided, save by the hand of Him who is and will be a Father to the fatherless, a husband to the desolate widow. Sympathizing sobs escaped the breasts of the bystanders, who had so lately been thrown in the company of the mourners. The last sad rites were over, and Captain Gray's Company prepared for further journeyings.

The roads, which had been so good from the Missouri river thus far as to cause many to complain of the misrepresentations of earlier travellers, gradually became more hilly and sandy. The atmosphere was sultry and oppressive in the extreme. The water of the river was poor; that of the smaller streams every day grew worse. Sometimes a dozen fresh graves were passed in a single day. In many places

alkali covered the ground, and great care was necessary to keep the cattle from being poisoned.

On one of these discouraging days, Ada writes:

"Our weary way seems gloomy and forbidding, but amidst all the obstacles that arise in our path, one hope seems to inspire us all; that of one day reaching the place of our destination. Every day of fatigue and travel brings us nearer the haven of our fast cooling ambition. May Heaven protect and guide us. Where other folks have gone, we certainly can go; at any rate we think so, and having passed the rubicon, we must advance.

"June 12th. We see the wildest and most romantic scenery to-day that I have yet beheld. Columns above columns of sandstone bluffs, worn by the hard winds of this region, into fantastical appearances of images and massive buildings, are gazed upon in wonder and admiration. They appear like ruins of magnificent castles and palaces, around which many idols are stationed.

"This evening, a difference of opinion arose among some of the company about the distance to the foot of a bluff which did not appear to be more than a half mile from the road. Wishing to settle the dispute, which was waxing rather warm, and satisfy their curiosity, three of the men went to the bluff, and upon measuring the distance, it was found to be more than two miles. They carried some dry wood from the bluffs, which came to hand very opportunely, as no chips could be found.

"June 13th. At noon, we for the first time hailed a natural structure, known as Nebraska Court House. This massive pile of rock looks as if it might be the ruins of some collossal edifice. It is situated on the south side of the Platte, and rises up as if to mock the plainer scenery around it, with its bold front and majestic proportions. In the afternoon we came in sight of the long looked for Chimney Rock. It at first appeared as a tall spire in the blue distance, pointing towards the heavens. But as we approached nearer to it, the spire appeared to enlarge, and looked more like a chimney extending high above a dome shaped building. A writer very correctly describes it as appearing like a mammoth hay-stack, with an enormous pole projecting far above the top.

"A hard storm of wind and sand, reminding one of descriptions of the simoons of Sahara, came up about six o'clock. But little rain fell, and we had no thunder and lightning, but the wind rocked the wagons almost hard enough to upset them. A tent was blown over, and the

many laughs and jests occasioned by the predicament its inmates were left in, made us all forget for a time to regard the fury of the storm. Our Irishman, as usual, considered himself the most conspicuous man in the crowd. His exclamations of "Howly mother protect us! by me faith, an' we're in for it! och Moses, an' me hat's gone," and other, similar remarks, made the gravest laugh at him when the storm was over.

"June 14th. Travelled all day in sight of Chimney Rock. Our guides say that it is three hundred feet in height, though it does not appear to us to be half so high. We are encamped this evening near Scott's Bluffs, where tradition says a man was left by his companions to die, in compliance with his own request. His fellow travellers were without food, and knowing that he could not live, he begged them to abandon him to save their own lives. A party, when crossing the bluffs some time afterwards, found the bones of a man some distance from the place where the unfortunate traveller had last been seen. A light shower fell this afternoon and the evening is pleasant.

"June 15th. Journeyed all day in sight of Scott's Bluffs. Cedar groves are scattered over them, which in comparison with the sterile scenery every where else, gives them an enlivening appearance. Hailed Laramie's Peak to-day. About ten o'clock we passed Bald Hill Smith's company, who were consigning to the dust the body of a man who had been dead about two hours. They had buried his wife a few days before. Andy Billens was sick and begged them to lie by for him, but Captain Smith says he'll not wait for him, if he does die. He appeared much affected when he saw the Baker children. Captain Gray took the rather uncharitable pains to say, so that Andy could hear him, "that there was no need of hauling along a dog like him," though he said afterwards, that if he had known how sick he was, he would not have said it. The poor fellow is frightened and we do not think he will recover. Maurice says that he may live a month. He is dreadfully salivated. I do wonder that folks will continue to tamper with so dangerous a drug. His face and mouth are badly swollen, and the exhalations from his putrid gums and throat, proved too disagreeable even for me to bear, and I am accused by many of having neither nerves or stomach. Captain Smith says that spirits of turpentine has no perceptible effect upon his mouth. He can take his mouth full of it with an agreeable sensation.* He talks some but with great difficulty. Mrs. Welden, in the true spirit of a Christian, took advantage of the few

* A fact demonstrated in more than one instance of salivation.

moments she spent in his presence, to impress his mind with the necessity of repentance. He cursed, a bitter oath that made my blood curdle! Poor fellow! Why is he so hardened?

"June 18th. As we ascend the Platte valley, the scenery grows more beautiful than any we have beheld for days. We have seen no timber worth mentioning for the last two hundred miles, until to-day. We now have an eye-feast of a dense forest that skirts the river bank for miles.

"June 19th. We passed Fort Laramie to-day. I am almost ashamed to confess it, but I crept in the wagon and went to sleep and did not see the Fort. It is on the south side of the river. We see but few Indians, but the few that come to our wagons are very friendly. They are anxious to purchase old clothing, and a present of some common article of wearing apparel, transports them into ecstacies. Poor creatures! They are so degraded that my native philanthropy struggles hard with a desire to do them good. An Indian agent, who belongs to the Fort, says it's casting pearls before swine, to try to teach or civilize them, but I can't satisfy philanthrophy with that argument. Query. Wouldn't it be well for our missionaries to look more to the welfare of these benighted sons and daughters of America, instead of crossing the seas to find Heathenism?"

CHAPTER XIV.

MOURNING.

Mrs. Goodwin seldom displayed such eloquent enthusiasm as she evinced upon that long to be remembered night of the "wake." As soon as Ada could find her alone, she thanked her from the fulness of her heart, for the stand she had taken in behalf of pure imagination. They were sitting together in front of Mrs. Goodwin's wagon, one evening, several days after the burial. A subdued and tranquil light beamed from the widow's eyes. She was watching alternately, the clear, liquid blue of the zenith, and the white and golden clouds of the western horizon.

"I don't know why it is," she murmured, in a musical tone, "that I feel so calm, so completely happy of late. Those clouds appear to me like so many stepping-stones to the Eternal world. I feel a kind of peaceful bliss that I never felt before. Can it be that eternity is near me? Last night in my dreams, my husband came to me, and oh! the joy that his coming inspired in my heart! It was indescribable. His presence has been with me all day, and I almost fancy that I can see him smiling from yonder cloud."

"Are you ill? O, mercy! Mrs. Goodwin, what *is* the matter?" said Ada. A sudden pallor had overspread the widow's face, and a stifled groan escaped her. She trembled a moment and sank back in convulsive crampings upon the bed in her wagon.

Throughout the night, the many friends of the beloved woman, stood around and ministered to her sufferings. So completely had she won their regard, that there was not a person in the company, who would not have risked life itself for her sake.

Morning dawned, and still she suffered terribly. Everything that love could prompt was done for her, but the disease had been doing its hidden work of destruction for days. Her constitution gave way under the terrible struggle, and life waned rapidly. The organs of speech had been locked for hours. The naturally thin face grew livid, the pale blue eyes were turned heavenwards, and a partly transparent film covered the sightless orbs. Pain at last left her body, and the weakness that precedes a death by cholera, took possession of her exhausted frame. The tongue was loosed and in a whisper that sunk deep into the hearts of her sorrowing children, she spoke of Hope, of Heaven, of Rest.

"Ma! oh ma!" said Willie, bending over his mother's head, as Ada held him up, "don't you love Willie, ma!"

The dying woman motioned for a kiss. The little fellow kissed her lovingly, and turning round to Ada with a satisfied air, he exclaimed, "Mother *loves* me, and I *loves* her."

"*Bless his little life,*" and the pure minded woman spoke no more. A gleam of hope overspread her face and lit up the glassy eyes. She extended her hands to Herbert and Effie. A gentle, prolonged pressure of the cold, skeleton fingers, upon the full, warm palms of her children, a radiant smile, an inaudible whisper, and the mother left her dependent ones to the care of Him who has said in His Word, "When thy father and thy mother forsake thee, then the Lord will take thee up."

"Her troubled head was at rest,
Its aching and thinking were o'er,
Her quiet immovable breast,
Was heaved by affliction no more."

Herbert went alone to where the open grave stood ready to receive its dead; and in the waning twilight, he traced his chastened thoughts upon the leaves of his private journal:

"June 20th. We little thought when the last Sabbath's pleasant sun shed upon us his congenial rays, that when the next blest day should come, we would be mourning the sickness and death of a beloved mother! But it has been even so. She was attacked last evening by the pestilence that shadows our journeyings. This afternoon between four and five o'clock, her wearied spirit took its flight, and then we realized that we were bereft indeed. How like a poisoned dagger in my breast, burns the remembrance of by-gone scenes. O! if a life of usefulness, a life of upright dealing before God and man, could expiate the follies of my youth, could atone for one thoughtless act of mine, towards that best of mothers, how gladly would I make restitution for the past!

"'Tis evening and I sit alone:
The offspring of the dead.
Tomorrow dark dust will be thrown
Upon her last, low bed.

"Sister and brother near me sleep,
But in their rest oft moan,
I would, but oh! I cannot weep:
I feel that I'm alone.

"The world is full of life and light,
But ah! how sad am I:
Where once was joy, serenely bright,
Is now a gloomy sky.

I gaze upon the tearful face,
Of my poor sister dear;
Her sorrows found a gushing place
Would *I* could shed a tear!"

"June 21st. What a deep stillness ruled our camping-ground this morning! Men and women moved with stealthy footsteps over the beaten turf, as if fearful of breaking the silence of the hallowed place. We this morning paid the last tribute of respect to the remains of my loved, lamented mother. The place of her interment is a romantic one, that seems an appropriate resting place for the remains of a lover of rural scenery, The grave is situated upon an eminence, overlooking a basin of several acres in extent, dotted over with groves of dwarf pine and cedar trees. In the center of this basin is a spring of icy coldness, clear as crystal. Numerous wild rose bushes, that load the air with delicious perfumes, add beauty to the scene. And on an eminence, where all this can be viewed at a single glance, reposes the last earthly remains of my mother."

There are hurried movements and terror-stricken voices again in the Gray camp. What is the matter? Why are those anxious persons crowding around a covered carriage, that has this moment halted? Now we can see. Do your utmost, ye ill-fated adventurers, for Death, on the pale horse is abroad, and his glance is terrible! Woe to those whose account with their final Judge is still unreckoned; for the pestilence that walketh in darkness and wasteth at noon-day has entered your ranks, and there are few families in which there shall not be one dead!

"His days are numbered," said Maurice, in a solemn voice. "My dear Mrs. Welden, your husband is past recovery.

"Nerve yourself to bear this severe trial for the sake of your little ones."

"O, if I could look back with pleasure upon the years of our married life! O, can I not beg his pardon for the trouble I have given him?"

"See, he revives," said Ada.

"O, John!"

"Meggie?"

"Light of my existence, must you go?"

"Look."

The sufferer raised his finger toward Heaven. Fleecy clouds of diamond whiteness, set in gold and blue, were piled in floating, gorgeous heaps upon the upper air. One little cerulean spot, directly over the head of the dying man, was unobscured by clouds.

"Look, Meggie, It's pleasant to die at such a time as this. Don't weep for me. Where's Papa's Lucy?"

He patted the dimpled cheeks and smoothed the glossy curls of his darling. A shade of darkness crossed his face, but was instantly dispelled.

"I trust."

"'*When thy father and thy mother forsake thee, then the Lord will take thee up*,'" said Herbert to Celia and Howard, remembering his mother's often quoted text.

"Thank God," said the sufferer, fervently.

"O, John, can you forgive the many errors of the past? Do tell me that you love me!"

"Meggie," his words were uttered in broken sentences, "I do forgive; can you?"

"Yes, dear; but I can't forget how cross I've been with you."

"Look ahead, Meggie."

A severe and prolonged struggle between life and death, a pointing of the bony finger toward the clear spot in the sky, a stifled moan, and all was still.

Another had read the Mystery.

"O, tell me, is this death?"

Mrs. Welden yielded for a time to the passionate impulses of her nature, and refused to be comforted. Ada prevailed upon her to go with her away from the bustle and confusion of the camping-ground. They proceeded through the tangled mats of prickly pears and thorny grease-wood, to a distant cluster of rose bushes, that gave out delicious odors upon the desert air. The bereaved woman sat down upon the ground and looked heavenwards. Fleecy, gorgeous clouds were crowding upon and overwrapping each other, and while she gazed, one light veil of azure tint closed up the only bright blue opening that had been visible in the zenith for an hour.

"What a vision!" said Ada. "What a theme for contemplation can be drawn from the observance of this simple circumstance! Simple, because so often seen, but important now, in leading the chastened imagination to blissful theories."

A meadow lark settled upon a rose bush near them. A flood of song, pure, delicious, enchanting, was poured from its happy, swelling breast, into the hearts of the mourner and comforter. Both listened in silence, unwilling to break the pleasing carol of the inspired songster. The dulcet vespers arose upon the evening air for a few moments, and then the warbler, as if well pleased with his attempt and success as comforter, flitted away. They watched his receding flight in silence, until his tiny form disappeared in the distance. Mrs. Welden looked at Ada with beaming, tearless eyes, Ada grasped the mourner's hand, but felt so deeply awed by the stillness that mantled them, that she could not trust herself to speak. Each read the other's thoughts, and feared

to break the hallowed stillness, lest the inner vision would be obscured. At length Mrs. Welden spoke:

"Oh! Ada, it is selfish to desire the return of those who are happy in the realms of bliss, but, oh! how the carnal nature clings to inanimate clay! Must the form of my dear husband be laid beneath the sod? My Father—God of my husband—God of my mother—sustain me, or I perish!"

Ada pointed to the thirteenth verse of the fourteenth chapter of Revelations. The mourner read:

"'And I heard a voice from Heaven, saying unto me, write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord. * * Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors and their works do follow them.

"'And I looked and behold a white cloud; and upon the cloud one sat, like unto the Son of Man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

"'And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice, Thrust in thy sickle and reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.'"

Another listener, unobserved by Ada or Mrs. Welden, had treasured up, and stereotyped upon her soul, every word of their conversation, and each syllable of Divine Inspiration. Effie, who, since her mother's death had been silent and thoughtful, and had lost all the childish glee of her artless disposition, had been reclining for an hour, not far from the chosen seat of Ada and Mrs. Welden, under the shade of a large sage bush. Not wishing to disturb them, she had said nothing until Mrs. Welden stopped reading. She then rushed forward, threw herself into her arms and sobbed as if her heart were breaking. Ada spoke words of comfort to both, little dreaming that bitter trials were in store for her. Trials of the *heart*, such as, thank Heaven, few, save those who can *endure*, have ever experienced.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SEPARATION.

MR. AND MRS. MANSFIELD had retired to the shades of thickly growing sage brush to consider an important matter, out of the reach of listeners.

"I believe," said Mansfield, "that Maurice and Ada have become attached to each other. I must acknowledge that I have great esteem for Maurice. He is well informed and respectably connected, but he is poor. Ada ought to know that we cannot countenance their union. I fear to mention it to her, for opposition is the stimulant of affection. Had we not better leave the company and travel alone? She would then be away from him entirely, and would not know that we had a motive in separating them. We can tell the Captain what is true; that we can travel faster alone, and he will not suspect another motive. I would not willingly do violence to Ada's feelings; but the education and accomplishments we have lavished upon her, will seem to be labor lost, if she marries a poor man. Love won't feed and clothe her."

"Would it be right for us to intrigue against them, Henry? Ada is reasonable, and if we talk to her candidly about the matter, she will do as we request. Be careful, or you will treat her as injudiciously as Welden used to treat his wife."

"But every-day life and ideal attachment are different. She is impulsive, and it would all be owing to the state of her feelings in the matter now, whether such a talk would have the desired effect or not. I prefer leaving the train and getting her out of Maurice's company. If she doesn't see him again, she'll soon forget him."

Mrs. Mansfield did not oppose her husband further. He seldom differed with her in opinion, and when he did, she would give up the disputed point with but feeble resistance or argument. Neither of them knew of the depth of the "great deep" of their daughter's heart. They had been married when young; had had no opposition in the current of their affection, and because they had never been *tried*, they knew nothing of the tenacity with which the shooting and growing tendrils of loving hearts will cling to, and intertwine with each other, no matter how strongly adverse waves may strive to part them. Marriage with them was a matter of business and policy. If their daughter could choose a man of wealth and worth, all would be well; but upon no other condition could they countenance a matrimonial alliance.

It was O'Donaldson's turn to go ahead with his wagon. The carriages kept no regular place, because, as the mules could out-travel the oxen, Mansfield and Welden would drive ahead and wait for the wagons, while the mules were grazing. Mrs. Welden had been a widow three days and had been compelled to be her own driver. Ada had driven for her part of the time, and the two were much together. Mansfield's teams were ready, but some of Daddy Green's cattle could not be easily caught.

"I am sorry to leave you, Captain; but I am confident that we can move faster by going in smaller companies. As my teams are ready to go ahead, if you have no objection, I will travel alone."

"Very well. I don't solicit nobody's company; never asked ye to travel with me, no how."

Captain Gray was secretly disappointed, but the Kentucky blood was hot in his veins, and as he expressed to his wife, he was "independent as a hog on ice."

"Can't I be in Ada's company any more?" Effie asked.

"O, Yes, you'll see each other every few days," said Mansfield, who nevertheless, had secretly determined to get ahead and keep ahead. To say that he felt awkward, embarrassed and guilty, would be saying no more than the truth. Deception was out of his line of business, and it was no easy matter for him to practice it successfully, Action and conscience alike betrayed him, and all saw in a twinkling the true cause of his desire to get away from them.

"Pa, we influenced Mrs. Welden to undertake this journey. Her husband has been taken from her. Will it be right for us to leave her now, when she has had such severe affliction?"

"If Maurice is the man we hope he is, *he* will take care of her."

"But I thought to help her drive her team. You know that there is no one to drive her mules. Suppose she gets sick, what will become of her?"

"It does look too bad, Henry," interposed his wife.

"My stakes are set!" he answered sternly. "Come! get in the carriage, we must go on."

Ada took affectionate leave of her friends, in whose bereavement she had proved so great a comforter. Tears were in her eyes when she kissed Effie with a murmured "good bye." Mrs. Welden wept. Ada's own heart was beating a loud tattoo of mingled strugglings, but forgetful of her own misery, she strove to comfort her friends.

"Good bye, Maurice." Her voice was husky and eyes humid. Since the first evening of their journeying west of the Missouri River, they had not spoken of their feelings towards each other, but each had read the other's heart, and built up cherished fancies of the misty future. He looked at her with a searching glance, as though he longed for words of hers to strengthen his hope. She read deep tenderness and undying affection in his thrilling look and gave him her hand. He did not speak, but pressed it to his heart. She

cast a meaning look of bitter triumph towards her father, who appeared oblivious to everything but his mules.

"I'll have to leave *you* behind, will I?" he said at length. Her father had never spoken so sternly to her before.

"Read the sixteenth and seventeenth verses of the first chapter of Ruth," said Ada, as she left the side of her betrothed. Affianced they were, not in word, but in heart and soul. Each felt the hallowed force of this affinity, and it was binding as if the vow had been sealed by a legal ceremony.

Mansfield felt ill at ease. His wife knew that she had committed a wrong against her daughter, though the depth of the suffering she had helped to inflict she could not discern.

Ada was pale, but cheerful, and strove to perform her duty towards her parents and the orphan children, the same as before. She did not talk, walk, or read, as had been her habit, but would sit in the carriage for hours, gazing upon the changing scenery as they rolled along, and often would not speak until she had been repeatedly addressed.

Her parents noticed her altered mien with vexation and sorrow. Her last words to Maurice had set them to thinking and planning deliberately about what course to pursue. Ada saw that they read her inward sighings and did not try to work upon their feelings one way or another. She trusted in her lover and felt certain that all would come right in due time. She would gladly have shared her new and holy emotions of spirit with her parents, but she saw that this was impossible. And thus she learned her first lesson of deceit. If they had been kind to her as formerly, her draught of bitterness would have been more easily quaffed; but she saw that they blamed her for the course she had taken, although she felt conscious of having done no wrong. While she rejoiced in her newly awakened sensations, a load of sorrow tugged hourly at her heart, because of her parents censure.

Maurice was sorely tried. Most of his companions laughed at him about losing his mate, or plied him with impertinent inuendoes. He enjoyed Herbert's confidence and when camping time arrived, the first evening after the separation, they went together to a grassy nook—to herd the cattle.

"Have you read the sixteenth and seventeenth verses of the first chapter of Ruth?" Herbert asked.

"I have had no opportunity to do so yet, but I recollect their import."

Herbert took a small Bible from his pocket and turned to the place.

"Entreat me not to leave thee, nor turn from following after thee. Where thou goest will I go, and where thou lodgest will I lodge. Thy people shall be my people, and thy God, my God.

"The Lord do so to me and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

"I glory in her spunk," said Herbert. "It does me good to see her so spirited this morning. If I had known what was to be found in the passage of Scripture to which she alluded, I think I would have been compelled to ejaculate 'bravo!' Mr. Mansfield's a pretty smart man, but a boy who may never be half as old as he is, can tell him that it's no use to try to compel that girl to do wrong."

"Do you think she would be doing wrong to give me up?"

"Most certainly, I do. Do you suppose she'll think it's right to sever holy bonds, after they've been woven in Heaven?"

"Why, Herbert, I believe you have a man's head upon your shoulders. I'd rather go to you for counsel than to any of the so-called *wise men* who would crush into dust the holiest yearnings of our inner lives. It looks hardly possible that you could speak as you do, without having experience

in matters of the heart. I could not have talked so a year ago."

"Observation will teach much. My mother trained me aright. Had she lived, and I ever have known your sentiments taken home to myself, I would have consulted her before any one else. What a blessed influence such a mother can exert over her children!"

"If I live to be a man, her precepts and example, shall guide me in all I undertake."

"Observe that resolution, Herbert, and you will be a man among men."

Mansfield had conjectured rightly about the chances for expeditious traveling, being on the side of small companies. The large train come to a bad portion of road, and when one wagon gets through, it has to halt until the number, perhaps a dozen or more, are safely over. The lone wagon can move on after crossing all such places, and the advantage gained by this alone, is remarkable, in a few weeks travel.

Then, we have known a whole company delayed for hours in the morning, by the disappearance of some body's ox or horse. But this is a digression.

Ada writes under date of June 25th:—

"We have a very grand view to-day of a range of bluffs on the south side of the river. They have the appearance of dome-shaped dwellings, churches and every variety of public buildings, seeming as if surrounded by an impenetrable fortress. As we travel on, the illusion is partly dispelled, but the bluffs still wear the same appearance, although not altogether so picturesque and complete.

"It is rumored that gold mines of value have been found on the south side of the Platte, on a stream called Deer Creek, and that more than three hundred men have stopped and are digging for the precious ore.

"A tragedy was related at our camp this morning, which made my blood run cold. Some men, we did not learn their names, informed us that they had found the body of a man about a hundred miles back, who had been murdered by the roadside. There were two pistol shots and several cuts upon his body inflicted with a bowie-knife. The men

say that they had no spade with which to dig a grave, so they straightened the body upon the ground and threw earth and sand over him. No clue has been found as to his identity, or the perpetrators of the deed, though many strongly suspect the men who told us the story to be the guilty parties.

"We encamped near a tributary of the Platte, in a lovely cluster of bitter cottonwoods.

"June 27th. We travelled along the river until near noon, when the road turned abruptly to the right and we left the Platte forever. The river water was so much better than when we first became acquainted with the stream, the bed had narrowed and the current become more rapid, and the general appearance of the country had improved so much, that we felt a little sorry to leave the Platte, notwithstanding the complaints often made against it.

"It is very lonely travelling without my former associates, but my parents have willed it, and I must submit. They'll feel their error some day. Perhaps, after all, the Lord will overrule this matter for my good. 'Man proposes, but God disposes.'

"We are camped opposite the Red Buttes. They are about three hundred feet high, and the color of well burnt brick. They are lovely, almost grand in appearance, but the musquitoes are so annoying that we have no patience to observe the beauties of nature.

"We heard this evening that two men were drowned to-day, when trying to swim the Platte where we last saw it. The current is so rapid, and the water so deep and cold, that I wonder that any one will be 'fool-hardy' enough to run such a risk. Three other men who entered the stream at the same time, landed safely upon this side. They brought with them some specimens of mica, and from the best conclusions they could form, they believe that gold could be found in abundance along Deer Creek, if the mines could be properly worked.

"June 28th. We have journeyed over an uninterrupted sage plain all day. In the morning it was sage, at noon sage brush, and this evening it is sage brush trees, or brush about ten feet high, having every appearance of old, gnarled, knotty trees.

"Alkali abounds to a great extent, and it requires great vigilance to keep the cattle from drinking standing or slowly running water. We saw beds of saleratus on our right in many places. The marshes where alka abounds emit a very disagreeable odor, but we can pass over such a place in one or two minutes, and are not troubled again till we come to another one. We passed a dozen or more of such marshes to-day.

We were favored with a light shower this afternoon, and the evening is pleasant.

"June 29th. We struck Sweet Water River to-day and enjoyed a splendid view of Independence Rock. Fanny Waters, a young lady from a neighboring train tried with me to climb the Rock, but we had not ascended more than thirty feet before a hail storm drove us back. When I reached the river, the carriage was across, and O'Donaldson was just driving his cattle to the water's edge. I rode across in the wagon. Pa said he intended to let me wade it, to teach me to keep up with the carriage. He never was cross to me until lately. What can it mean? Does he expect me to break an attachment over which I have no control, by unkind words and bitter fault-findings? I almost rebel against this first iron band that has ever bound me, but I will try to endure it longer if possible.

"We encamped near the Devil's Gate, an opening in the everlasting mountains of rock, through which the Sweet Water passes. Ma and I paid this Gate a visit in company with many others, who have encamped here for the night, to hear Highland music reverberating through these massive cliffs.

"A bagpipe and bugle were the instruments used and I thought that no wonder William Wallace could fire his men with love for freedon, when he sent such music as this through the bold-browed mountains and wild ravines of their romantic mountain home. How I wish Maurice could be here with his flute. But I dare not breathe such a wish to my parents, who, of all others, ought to receive the full confessions of my longing heart. Is it any wonder that young folks are deceitful, when fathers and mothers will not accept their confidence?

"June 30th. We travelled all day up the Sweet Water, between two towering ranges of mountain rocks. We noticed a grave to-day, bearing the inscription: Henry Norton, murdered June 28th. The murderer lies in the next grave. Another bears the inscription: 'Wilson Winters, hung July 29th, 18'. Only yesterday, this tragedy was consummated! What a warning to the living! Two souls hurried by the hand of violence into the presence of the awful Judge! 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!'

"Quarrels, strife, dissensions, blasphemies, evil-speaking and tyranny, seem to have been turned loose upon those that the pestilence has left.

"The scenery, grand enough to enchant anybody but a soul-tried emigrant, elevates no one. Every person is tired and fatigued beyond limit of human endurance; and the least spark ignites our combustible frames, so that we go off in a paroxysm of fury. It is hard to tell who has the least patience—pa, ma, O'Donaldson, or myself. I heard a man say to-day that the Plains were a testing place for folks' tempers. He said that he could find out just what kind of a man his neighbor was, by taking a trip like this. I told him that his theory was wrong; because persons are *worse* upon these Plains than they are at home. A few stupid people get along well enough, but it's because they haven't energy enough to do otherwise.

"The children, Johnny, Dilly and Eda, are capable of teaching us a lesson of forbearance, but we heed their example too little. No wonder murders occur among fighting folks, when those who were never ill-tempered before, are now so pettish and excitable.

"July 2nd. Some of the Sweet Water Mountains are covered with snow, though they do not look high enough to be above the snow-line. A chain of the Wind River Mountains are visible ahead of us. Their lofty peaks are crowned with snow, sparkling and glittering in the sunlight, like mountain crowns of opals and topazzes, reflecting amber shades upon the more unpretending hill-tops, and tinging the far off valleys with a hue of gold. The wind blows very disagreeably and the air is cold enough for frost.

"July 3rd. We took a 'cut off' this forenoon, and managed to get ahead of about fifty teams, who had been sending the annoying, never-failing dust into our faces all the morning.

The feet of our cattle are badly worn. The roads are rocky, and in many places the stones are like sharpened flints. We pass a great many lame and worn out cattle. The air is literally filled with the stench arising from dead oxen.

July 4th. While our numerous friends in the States are enjoying the anniversary of our glorious Independence, we are progressing, slowly but steadily upon our weary way. The weather is cold enough for snow. Pat says it's too cold for the feathery flakes to fall. "Don't ye see, Miss Ada, that they're fruz above us?"

The grey dull sky, indeed, has that appearance.

July 5th. Last night we were visited by a violent hurricane, which upset the tent and rocked the vehicles from side to side. Many cattle and horses stampeded from the different coralls, and some have not been found.

"I believe I grow more anxious and miserable every day. Pa and ma do not see it, but if this state of things continue, I shall have to give up in despair. I thought everything in life so beautiful, but now,

darkness insufferable is my companion, and I cannot dispel gloomy forebodings of approaching trouble.

"I know not why, or whence, or wherefore come,
These strange forebodings. But my heart is dumb
With grief; and gives no echo to the tones
Of gladsome hope, but uttereth only moans.

"I told ma so, and she laughed it off; saying that 'puppy love' was my phantom. God grant that it be nothing worse, for I am persuaded that no harm is coming from that source,

"I wonder where Captain Gray's Company is to-day."

CHAPTER XVI.

SUCH IS LIFE.

WEARY days passed away; weary emigrants moved on, worn out cattle died, and others became unfit for service;—but Captain Gray's Company jogged slowly on, conquering every obstacle; amid sickness and death upon every hand; lending a helping hand wherever it was needed. Many were they, who learned to bless the name of Dr. Stanton, whose untiring energy and boundless compassion for the suffering, was only equaled by his skill in managing diseases. Many, it is true, were lost, but with few exceptions, those whose constitutions were good, were rescued from the jaws of death and were convalescent in a few days, under his judicious management.

His utter abhorrence of poisonous drugs, caused many to shun his advice, but his success, compared with that of other physicians, gradually won the cofidence of the people.—Camping hours were his only times for practice, as he could not leave Mrs. Welden's ox wagon during the day. He had calls to visit squalid poverty in its most filthy and dis-

gusting appearance, and frequent invitations to visit those in the higher walks of life, whose refinement, contrasted with the beastliness of their fellow travellers, reminded him of the same phases of existence in the populous cities.

"What a fellow can't help he has to make the most of," he said to Herbert, when he alluded to his former dislike of the physician's calling.

Captain Gray, in spite of his boasted healthy food, grew dangerously ill. When an iron constitution once becomes overpowered by disease, life hangs upon a thread,—convalescence begins, the improvement is not generally so rapid as in more delicate persons, because the action of disease has been so violent, that nature has a great work to do when restoration commences. For many weeks, the Captain had to lie upon a bed of languishing, and when at last he began to recover, he looked like a shadow of his former self. His wife was compelled to walk and drive his team for weeks. She said that she could endure more than he could, and until their journey was ended, she walked half of the time with the ox-whip upon her shoulder, after the most approved style.

She awoke Maurice one night, just as he got into the first sleep he had been permitted to indulge in for thirty-six hours.

"Jeddy's got to crampin' and seems mighty bad off. I hate to 'wake ye, but if there ain't somethin' done for him, he can't stand it long."

The boy was indeed suffering terribly. He had been attacked by cholera in its most malignant form. Mrs. Gray examined the victuals which had been set away after supper. His sickness was no mystery. A plate of rusty bacon and a dish of green, wild currants, that Polly had gathered to make pies, had disappeared. It was the first fruit the boy had seen for so long, that he had arisen from his bed when the rest were asleep, to eat the green berries unseen. The

quart of berries disappeared, but his insatiate appetite was only whetted. The fried bacon and a cold biscuit were devoured next, and then, fearful of being seen, he crept to the tent. He acknowledged this to his mother, in an easy interval, an hour after his attack. His nature battled with the destroyer to no purpose, and when the weary contest was ended, death had gained the victory.

Maurice looked long and steadily at the straightened form of the dead. The sun-burnt face was sunken, the lips purple and eyes half closed. The hair, which during life was always intricately tangled, was now composed in smooth waves about the childish brow. He never looked handsome before, but now that the usually dirty face was clean, and the habitually soiled garments exchanged for the snowy shroud, he looked spiritually beautiful.

"'It is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes,'" exclaimed a voice.

The weeping mother of the departed boy looked up. Mrs. Mays, whom she had not seen since the time when death had visited her own camp, stood before her.

"Do you really believe that the Lord wills that those whom He has created in His image, shall be cut off in the prime of life?" said Maurice.

"He takes away our friends and children because we sin against him." was the reply.

"But, are not the sins we commit, often perpetrated against those very friends and children who are taken from us? God has laid down rules for us to follow. We violate those rules with impunity, and sickness and death follow as natural consequences.

"I am not a Jew, neither am I remotely connected with the descendants of Abraham by any kindred ties of which I am cognizant, but I am ready to prove the fact, that one law of their established ritual should be followed by both Jew and

Gentile. Why did Jehovah forbid the Israelites to eat swine, if such abomination is good for food? Thinking that we know better than our Maker does, what is good for us, we do not profit by His advice to His chosen people; but contract diseases by the use of food which he has expressly forbidden."

"But He did not command the Gentiles to abstain from pork."

"Neither did he command us to abstain from *vultures!* We would think vultures as great a luxury as hogs or tobacco, if we'd only learn to eat them."

"The Almighty did not make hogs for nothing."

"Very true. Every family can keep a hog fat upon the dirty refuse of the kitchen. The lard is good for soap, candles, and machinery oil. That certainly is enough, but to be economical, we must eat the hog after he has been fatted upon the dirtiest leavings of our sinks and swill-tubs. Buzzard-meat is equally clean."

"I suppose you lay the foundation of all diseases upon the hog."

"I lay the *aggravation* of many diseases upon him."

"You say nothing about the quart of currants this boy devoured."

"Because *you* blame the currants enough, without my help. Of course, green, uncooked fruit is very destructive to health, but I hold that if that child's stomach had been healthy, the currants would have made him sleep uneasily, and probably have given him a light attack of cholera morbus; but he would have recovered."

"I said, when folks first began to die on this road, they would have stood it better if they'd been used to bacon. May-be they would, but I've had an over-dose this summer. Hog meat ain't what it's cracked up to be," said Captain Gray, as he drew a deep sigh.

"O, mercy me!" said Mrs. Gray. "If I don't wish these Plains had'nt never been thought of! My poor Jeddy!"

"We can't die till our time comes," said Mrs. Mays.

"'The number of days allotted to man are three score years and ten,'" said Maurice, decidedly. "This is poor comfort, Mrs. Gray. But you surely do not think the Lord would cut us off in the prime of life if we did not violate His laws, when He has said that our days are three score years and ten, unless if by reason of strength they may be four score years. He does not say one thing and mean another, although we often misinterpret His words."

"Its mighty mysterious to me," said Mrs Gray.

"And will be, so long as the laws of nature are daily violated, and you study none of the first, great principles of Hygiene. Too little attention is paid to this matter. I would not speak of this now, but impressions are more apt to be retained when the causes which give them weight are before us, as examples."

"When I think of my poor boy, now, I wonder that I didn't make him be more careful about his diet. Poor child! I thought he could stand anything. He always had sich a *dreadful* appetite." Maurice left them and Mrs. Mays comforted them by continuing to blame the Giver of Life.

She afterwards asked him how he could explain away the words of Inspiration, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

"I don't explain it away, Madam. Indeed, the name of the Most High is thrice blessed, if when He has witnessed our disregard of what is right, he removes the innocent objects of our shortcomings, and transplants them to a higher sphere, where everything is under His more immediate control. If you have read your Bible much, you know that David's child was the offspring of sin; he knew that God's laws had been violated and submitted manfully to the punishment."

"I'd like to know what's to become of religion, if folks are going to explain away the mysteries of early death."

"I tell you Madam, the day is coming when not one child's death will be recorded without it can be traced to causes perfectly plain. To accident—to which all are liable—to improper diet and habits, the culpable neglect of parents or the use of poisonous medicines. With our knowledge of the cause, will come the developement of the cure."

Mrs. Mays' usual retreat under difficult argument, was her self-complacent shield, "Lord help the rising generation. I've done what I could to suppress wickedness," and she withdrew to her own quarters.

The burial was conducted after the fashion of all the others, though the sadly thinned ranks of the company, spread additional gloom over the hearts of the sorrowful mourners.

The deceased boy's place was vacant. His post had been as useful as that of the ablest ox driver in the train, and the mule, which he had abused and caressed alternately, was without a friend or persecutor. Somebody must be hired to drive the rapidly increasiug band of cattle unfit for service, and Mr. Mays permitted a boy of his, about twelve years of age to travel with them and occupy the post that Jeddy had so lately filled with constant vigilance, and all went on as before. The sad void, left in the hearts of parents and sister, was invisible to the common travelling throng and,

"As a name upon the strand,
Written in the changing sand,"
Soon goes from sight away;
No vestige now was left of one
Whose race had been so early run
The victim of decay.

CHAPTER XVII.

EXTRACTS FROM HERBERT'S JOURNAL.

JULY 12TH.. GREEN RIVER rolls before us. A beautiful stream to look at, but the crossing is very difficult unless skillfully managed. There was a good ferry boat in readiness and we were taken across with but little delay. The cattle were made to swim, an occupation which does not appear to suit them, as we often have trouble in forcing them to take water.

"There is a trading post near the ferry, where sickly looking vegetables are sold at ruinous prices. A world in miniature is here. Folks are swearing and gambling at one encampment; music and dancing is the pastime at another; and a third, a collection of emigrants are holding a prayer meeting.

"Indians of the Shoshonee tribe are encamped near us. They are loathsome objects of degraded humanity, being clothed in bear and buffalo skins that are alive with vermin. They appear to have no more sense or energy than infants a few weeks old. Some of the squaws are very aged and infirm. They are well treated by the younger squaws in everything but clothing, and that is as good as the most of them can afford for themselves.

"This is a dreadful world, or rather the degradation and misery of our mundane sphere are terrible. The moon and stars above us look delightful; the roaring river is inspiring; the mountain crag, and valley scenery is surpassingly lovely,—but humanity, wretched and wicked, into what depths of vice and ignorance will it not blindly plunge!

"July 14th. We have jolted over rocky hills, from sunrise to sunset We passed several beautiful springs. I noticed in particular a small stream that rises in a mountain near the road. It measures thirteen inches in both width and depth, has a pebbly bottom and runs very swiftly. The banks are not more than eighteen inches apart at the top, and are five feet high, adorned with hedges of sage, rose bushes and greasewood. We encamped on the west side of Ham's Fork of Green River. This is a clear, swift, fordable stream, with a gravelly bottom.

"July 15th. The country is very mountainous. The Devil's Back Bone—they have uncouth names for beautiful scenery upon these

Plains—was the first difficulty to be surmounted. This Bone is a mountain of sand and rocks, and is destitute of vegetation, unless stinted sage brush deserves the name. Upon the summit, we found a quantity of white limestone and some specimens of quartz. After descending the Back Bone, we struck a comparatively level country, over which we travelled for a few miles, when we again encountered mountains and did not leave them until night.

"We passed through a lovely grove of firs, upon the summit of a lofty peak, which inspired us with renewed animation, as forest trees had become to us as vague remembrances of the things that were. In the afternoon we descended a long, steep and rocky ridge of the Bear River Mountains, from whose summit we viewed, according to our guides, Bear River Valley Creek. The written name looks like a long one, but nothing could be more comprehensive or appropriate than these four little words. The Bear River Valley, though beautiful, looks wild enough to be the lurking place of animals of the name; and the Creek, running swiftly in its meandering course through the Valley, dividing it into halves, breaking through rough defiles of rock, and dashing through mountain gorges, above and below the Valley, has an appearance decidedly 'Bearish.'

"We travelled ten miles without unlocking the wagon wheels. Effie and Willie each walked the ten miles, because they were afraid to ride.

"Poor Mrs. Welden had a hard time with her carriage. Mrs. Sam Green took care of the two children. The mules were unmanageable, and their intrepid driver journeyed all day in imminent peril. She bears her unfortunate bereavement with the calmness of despair and the fortitude of a heroine.

"When I feel disposed to murmur at my own trials, I look at her and feel resigned. Maurice is very attentive and kind, but one team is all he can manage, and she is compelled to drive her carriage over the most dangerous roads, without assistance. We were visited in the evening by a violent hail-storm. It came upon us just as we reached the Creek, and we tied up the cattle and mules, who like ourselves, had to go supperless to sleep, after a tedious day of unremitting toil.

"July 16th. Eleven miles brought us to Smith's Fork of Bear River, where we have halted to rest a few days, as grass is good, and our poor, patient animals are much in need of rest. There are plenty of Indians around us. They are very troublesome, for, unless closely watched, they will steal whatever they can lay their hands upon. There are mountains all around us. Bunches of willows so completely matted

together that nothing can get through them, are growing close to the camp. There are more than fifty vehicles in sight of our camp, they having halted to give the exhausted cattle and horses a good feed in this charming oasis. Our miniature city has been thrown into excitement by a trial for murder in a neighboring camp, and our Captain and Maurice were among the jurymen.

"Daniel Olmstead was owner of a team and wagon. Five men were travelling with him as boarders; they having agreed, when the bargain was made, to help about the cooking and other necessary camp duty. The men had boasted among fellow travellers, that they had their 'boss under the thumb, and intended to keep him there.'

"Olmstead went out with his cattle in the morning, telling Sherman Dunmore to kindle a fire and put on the teakettle, so they could have some breakfast. When he returned, his boarders had finished their repast, and he asked where his breakfast was, and was told to cook his own fodder. Much abusive language followed upon both sides. Olmstead prepared his breakfast himself; Dunmore threatening in the most abusive manner to Lynch him.

"'If you undertake it, you will not live long to brag of it,' Olmstead replied. He then went into the tent and began to eat, using for the purpose, a small carving knife. Dunmore followed, jumped upon him and beat him severely. Olmstead called upon the bystanders to take him off, saying that he had a knife. No one interfered and he stabbed him in the lower part of the chest. He fell, and in twenty minutes was a corpse. The jury, after an impartial investigation of the tragical affray, brought in the following verdict:

"'The wound inflicted by the knife of Olmstead caused the death of Dunmore, but the same was inflicted by the aforesaid Olmstead, in self-defence.'

"Olmstead addressed the jury after his acquittal, in an impressive if not eloquent speech. His pale countenance, steady eye, and calm deportment, won the confidence of strangers, and restored order among his men, who found that they had not rightly reckoned the firmness of their host, when they meditated mutiny.

"July 18th. To-day we met an Indian funeral procession. The dead body was wrapped in a blanket, securely fastened with ropes of deer-skin. The body was thrown across the shoulders of a pony, and an Indian was riding behind it, to hold it in its place. As they passed us, they pointed to the dead, and began a solemn, heart-thrilling wail. It is said that they suspend their dead from the tree-tops in the Bear River Mountains. The squaw of the deceased, in practical expression of her grief, had inflicted severe wounds upon her face, from which the blood was trickling, and dropping in large beads upon her tattered garments.

"July 19th. We travelled all day in the Bear River Valley. The valley is covered with grass, and the mountain tops are clothed with splendid groves of fir, making the ever varying scenery delightful.

"When the earth shall have become one great settled garden of civilization, how great will be the attraction of Bear River Mountain and Valley scenery, to those who delight in the picturesque and sublime.

"July 20th. We reached Bear River to-day. A small, clear stream, whose waters overflow the banks in winter and early spring, causing vegetation to grow luxuriantly,

"July 21st. The first view we obtained of Soda Springs, was two large mounds of soda stone, from the summits of which the water was bubbling up The water runs down the sides of these mounds, evaporating slowly but steadily, and every day increasing the size of the great ramparts which enclose them. The most palatable soda was obtained from a walled spring on the margin of a stream of pure water. Tartaric acid and sugar added to the soda water, makes a drink equal to the 'prepared soda' of the States. When we get a railroad through here, Soda Springs will be far ahead of Saratoga or Newport, as resorts for wealthy invalids.

"A little farther west, we found two other springs walled in the same manner as the first, but with very small openings at the tops. The water of these is of a reddish hue, but tastes much the same as that of the others. We visited another mound, where the water boils up from the very highest peak and what does not evaporate in the sultry, scorching, summer sunshine, runs down the side of the mound, forming a rippling streamlet. There are many other diminutive springs in less conspicuous places, upon this dome-shaped rock. The water of some is red, while that of others, a few feet from them, is black as tar.

"The Steamboat Spring is another wonderful curiosity of nature. The water puffs at intervels from a reservoir in the rock, with a sound like that emitted from steamboat pipes. The *'escape pipe,'* is about three feet from the spring. Mrs. Mays, who thinks it is *wicked* to account for this phenomenon by philosophical rules, is sorely puzzled. She cannot see how the Creator, who has done all things well, has permitted scientific men to understand His rules. She says 'it's the work of the devil and nothing else.'

"The wild scenery around us would impress anybody but an emigrant with awe. We are used to 'sight seeing' and the earnest, matter-of-fact business of going ahead, is the most important thing to us.

"Soda Pool boils up in a large reservoir, where most of the water stands till it evaporates. Some distance from the pool is a hollow crater whose fires have been extinguished perhaps for ages; but the blackened rocks which cover the ground, plainly show that this has once been the scene of violent volcanic eruptions.

"July 22d. The scenery of Bear River Valley every day becomes more beautiful. The weather pleasant and roads excellent, with the exception of a few mud-holes that are very difficult to get through. Our cattle drank of the poisonous alkali water of one of these marshes. A mountaineer recommended a dose of vinegar. We gave each ox a pint of Mrs. Gray's best, and none of them died, though they are very weak from the effects of the poison.

"We encamped in a grassy vale near the river. The water of the river is palatable but rather warm. We obtained a fine supper of mountain trout by a half hour's steady fishing.

"July 23d. We travelled four miles through the valley, when the road struck the mountains. They are not formidable as those we journeyed over some days ago. The mountains are barren, producing nothing but stinted sage, aspens and weeds. Snow is visible upon the heights, a few miles from the road. Encamped near a large and beautiful spring, which breaks out at the foot of a mountain by the roadside. The spring forms a lovely stream, large and rapid enough to propel a great amount of machinery; but whose uninterrupted waters dash grandly on, losing themselves at last in the broad channel of Snake or Lewis River. We obtained a splendid view of the Three Tetons northeast of us, whose snow-crowned heads arose in majesty above the lesser heights, and in the south, the Three Buttes, vied with their neighbor Tetons in striking grandeur.

"July 25th. To-day, we reached Fort Hall. Its walls are composed of sun-burnt brick 'adobes.' It is a shabby concern, but in case of an attack from without, the inmates would be tolerably well protected. In the bastions of the outside walls, are port holes, through which to fire at an enemy. This Fort is now in the possession of traders, who sell flour for thirty dollars per hundred weight. This price makes us thankful that we are not in need of this necessary article of food.

"After we left the Fort, we obtained the first view of Snake River. We in the evening crossed the stream whose source is the spring where we encamped on the 23d. It had received numerous tributaries, and where we crossed it was over fifty feet wide and four feet deep.

"Musquitoes are so annoying that we can scarcely exist, except in dense smokes of sage brush.

"July 26th. About nine miles travel brought us to the Portneth; a clear, swiftly running stream, about one hundred yards wide and five feet deep. We raised the wagon beds about ten inches and forded it without accident. Maurice hired an emigrant to drive Mrs. Welden's mules through the river, but he was so awkward that she took the lines when they had proceeded but a few paces. The fellow got a joking about his verdancy that he'll be apt to remember for awhile.

"The road, after leaving the Portneth, in addition to the deep sand and annoying dust, is hilly and rocky in the extreme. A man died of mountain fever, in a train near our camp, this evening. They buried him in less than an hour after his death. There are five persons sick of the same disease in the train. The weather is excessively hot.

"July 30th. We, to-day, passed American Falls of Snake River. Tradition says that years ago, a party of three Americans were swimming in the river, and not being aware of their proximity to the Falls, swam on until they were overpowered by the current and precipitated over the foaming cataract.

"July 31st. We travelled until after dark to get to water, and when we had unyoked the cattle, we found that we had encamped between two dead oxen whose putrid carcasses drove away from us, the last vestige of appetite. A bystander who had no olfactories, would have considered us a grumbling set.

"August 2d. The roads this afternoon were very rough and rocky. Sam Green broke his wagon tongue, and we stopped earlier than usual to repair it. Our cattle are failing fast and we are gratified this evening with the sight of excellent grass.

"I am now seated near the river-bank upon a ledge of rocks that form a natural sofa. The river here runs through a rocky *canon*. The current is remarkably swift. The water rushes angrily over the bold-browed crags, and leaps fearfully from rock to chasm, with a roaring sound. The scenery is of the wildest possible description. Huge masses of basaltic rock arise in bold array around me, with cedars nodding at many of their tops, where one would think vegetation could not possibly exist. In the northeast is a seemingly endless sage plans, and the view from every other point of the compass, is broken by crag-

gy bluffs and rocky mountains. I look with admiration upon this wild array of massive rocks and desert wastes; but when I reflect that far, far away, is the last resting place of my mother, and still farther away is the home of my childhood, a feeling of indescribable sadness arises in my breast.

"Night had closed his sable curtains and we were about to retire to rest, when who should come to our camp but Captain Bald Hill Smith. His story is a sad one. So many members of his family and company have died, that half of the wagons have been abandoned. His wife and two eldest children died a few days ago, leaving him with a dependent family of seven little ones, who are unable to wait upon each other. Many of his oxen have died; his provisions are getting short, and take it all together, his is the most pitiable story that I have heard. Poor Andy Billens died cursing his company for not saving his life. Captain Gray's sympathetic heart was moved by his lamentable story, and he gave him a supply of bacon and tobacco, which Maurice says, 'we are perfectly willing to spare.'

"August 4th. This morning our cattle and Captain Smith's were driven to the river to drink. One of them plunged into the stream and swam across, the others soon followed, and the current was so swift that we could not surround them. Cattle are averse to swimming facing the sun, but the sun this time was behind them, and they reached the opposite side of the river in an incredibly short time.

Sam Green and Captain Smith went back eight miles up the river, to a wide, placid place in the stream, where they intended to swim across with mules. Captain Gray and John McDonald tried to swim across the river at the *canon*. The Captain is an expert swimmer, and gained the opposite bank with ease, but McDonald, when fairly out in the current, became alarmed and tried to turn back. The poor fellow was carried over the rocks by the rushing waters and drowned! It was impossible to render him the least assistance, as he was hurried among the rocks, almost before we were aware of his danger. Poor fellow! He was much beloved by us all. Captain Smith will miss him sadly. He has gone to render up his final account to the Great Judge of quick and dead. When the deep gives up the dead that are therein, he will arise from the long sleep of death, let us hope, to go to a better world. How forcibly comes my mother's favorite text to mind just now, 'Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not'—O, my Father, *help* us to be *ready!* His untimely death has cast a gloom over every countenance.

"Captain Gray could not compel the cattle to re-swim the river facing the blinding sun rays. Sam Green and Captain Smith tried to swim across upon the mules, but they were too weak to stem the current, and poor Jed's 'Muley' was drowned, and came floating down the river past the camp, long before his rider returned.

"We hired two men from another train to go across, for the sum of thirty dollars. They wore life-preservers, and went over with ease; but they, with the help of Captain Gray, were not able to drive the cattle into swimming water. They must have been frightened when they swam across, for they appear determined not to try it again. Other men were hired to swim over, to whom we gave sixty-five dollars out of the common purse, for the service. Their united efforts were not sufficient to compel the cattle to swim. The Captain had been all this time upon the other side without clothing. The severe heat of the sun had blistered his body, and as he could endure it no longer, he swam the river, donned his clothes and returned to camp.

"August 5th. This morning the Captain, who is wiser than most folks in knowing just how to grasp the right horn of a dilemma, went to work and with the help of 'all hands,' corked a wagon bed, lashed tightly corked water casks to the sides and ends, constructed oars and rudder, went above to where the stream was calm, and took over two boat loads of men and boys in short order. The cattle were overpowered by numbers, compelled to swim the river, and at midnight were all driven to camp and tied to wagon wheels.

"August 6th. Five of the cattle were dead this morning. My team is now reduced to two yokes of oxen and the cow, which is compelled to perform duty one-third of the time.

August 25th. The wearisome duties devolving upon me are so fatiguing, that I sometimes neglect my journal and leave it unthought of for days. This time weeks have passed since I last took notes of travel.

"We are now opposite Fort Boise. It is fashioned something like Fort Hall, but is not so durably constructed. It was built by the Hudson's Bay Company, and was intended more for a trading post, than a Fort. That company have now abandoned it, but it is in possession of other traders. We drove our cattle on an island above the Fort, where grass is plenty. While there we remarked a very disagreeable odor, arising from a thicket near the water's edge. We searched the thicket and found a half dozen dead Indians. Maurice examined the bodies, and pronounced them poisoned by

strychnine. He inquired about the matter at the Fort, and was informed that some emigrants had poisoned some dead oxen in order to prove a disputed point about whether or not the Indians would *eat* cattle left dead by travellers! The result proved the experimenter's argument, for nearly twenty Indians were poisoned.

"August 31st. Five miles travel from our last encampment, brought us to a rocky canyon on 'Snake,' which is the last place we shall see the river. Three miles further brought us to Burnt River, a beautiful stream about twenty feet wide, and two feet deep. The mountains are covered with dry bunch grass, which the cattle eat greedily.

"Effie and myself have been thrown into a state of indescribable anguish, on account of the sudden illness of Willie. Effie says that he said before we left the States that mother and him would soon go to Heaven, where pa is. I feel as though it is superstitious to dwell upon his childish words, yet, I am very anxious. Maurice says that his disease is cholera infantum.

"September 1st. In spite of sickness we are compelled to move on. Dear little Willie has been unconscious for hours.

"September 2d. Two months and ten days this morning since our beloved mother was taken from us, and the insatiate monster Death, not yet content, has again entered our fold and borne away the treasure of our hearts! Last night our darling Willie was called from earth to vie with angels around the throne of God. He was buried to-day upon a mountain side, one hundred feet above the level of the plain, where his peaceful remains will sleep in undisturbed repose, until the trump of God shall awake the sleeping millions of our little world. A beautiful cedar waves its wide-spread branches over his tomb, and here, beneath its shade, I have wandered to be alone with Willie and his God.

"Our treasure has been removed to the skies, to a higher sphere, a more perfect existence, and we must not murmur at our loss when he has gained so much. The bud has been nipped; its beauties hidden from our sight, but in a more genial soil, it will bring forth a full grown flower of surpassing loveliness. He possessed a precocious intellect, and in our haste to expand it into fuller bloom, we had forgotten that the promising bud could die! Effie watched alone with him last night for an hour. This morning she gave me a piece of poetry, saying that she had written it during her midnight vigil. I will insert it here, so that we may have it for reference in after years:

"Far away, over deserts and mountains so wild,
In our wearisome journey we've strayed;
Toward a far distant land, a bright home in the West,
Where many fond hopes had been laid.

"The journey has been one of anguish and woe,
With occasional gladness and mirth;
Yet we little thought, when started to go,—
We would lay our loved ones in the earth.

"Yet He who assigneth to children of men,
Their pleasure, their grief and their woe;
Has seen fit in His wisdom to enter our fold,
And choose one of our number to go.

"A bright little darling, near five years of age,
By affliction's rude hand has been laid,
On a couch of deep suf'ring, and he must soon go,
Where all grief will be ever allayed.

"I am watching him now, in the deep midnight hour;
All nature is sunk in repose;
No sound can be heard save the rivulets fall,
And the wind, which most mournfully blows.

"We're in Burnt River Mountains, a beauteous range,
Of these natural beauties of earth;
Their tops decked with cedar, their sides with tall grass,
Add alike to their grandeur and worth.

"The wind whistles through them with a sad mournful howl,
And the bright silver moon's shining clear;
Causing shadows of bushes to assume frightful forms,
That have caused me to startle with fear.

"For in this wild retreat, far away from our home,
I am watching a brother most dear,
Whose eye-balls are painfully rolling in death,
Whose forehead looks glistening and clear!

"Some ten weeks ago, our mother was called
To bid her dear children farewell,
And Willie will meet her beyond yon bright stars,
And together in Heaven they'll dwell."

"Maurice says that the poem displays some poetical genius, and advises Effie to continue to write."

CHAPTER XVIII.

ADA'S DREAM.

MANSFIELD had proceeded steadily on with but few delays from accident or sickness; every day widening the distance between him and Captain Gray's Company. On the evening of the third of September, he encamped on an elevated table-land, in a dense pine forest of the Blue Mountains. Mountain fever had usurped the cholera and was laying many low, though the disease was not so generally fatal as the early pestilence had been.

Mrs. Mansfield had been for several days complaining of giddiness and slight fever, but the symptoms, she thought, were not alarming. After Ada had completed the necessary evening work, she strolled away into the dark, pine forest, took a seat upon the smooth, round surface of a fallen trunk that time had long before stripped of its bark, and looked toward the dark tree tops, with an expression of chastened sadness.

Shadows darkened in the mountain gorges; the wind moaned dismally through the swaying pines, and a solitary raven croaked forth its ominous notes from a bough directly over her head. The distant reverberations of loud calls to cattle, and the echoes of cracking whiplashes, added wildness to the romantic spot.

"What do I dread?"

A deep sigh from the hidden caverns of her spirit, arose upon the air; and she thought that when it reached the tree tops, they caught up the sound, passed the watchword to the neighboring pines, and with one accord they joined in chanting the lamentations to which she had become accustomed.—Still she sat and mused, and still the tall old pines kept up

their ceaseless sighing, sighing. She leaned against a standing tree that served as a back to the seat she had chosen.

"I am weary; heart sick. Jesus, protect the loved and absent!"

She sleeps. Her dormant inward nature, that saw so little light during the dark, day cloud of suffering, hidden anguish of spirit, such as the *tried only* can imagine, is now unveiled, and what does she see?

Day after day, the dark pine forest, seems to afford rest for her wearied body. Ghostly, phantom forms flit by, whispering unearthly bickerings into her sinking soul. Death, on his pale horse, is riding past her, slaying to the right and left, with an awful scourge.

He comes close to her; breathes a foul breath of sickening odor into her very nostrils. A fierce battle ensues. She is almost overpowered by a grim, arch-fiend, who is about to strike a killing blow. She gasps, she pants, she struggles.

"Hark!"

Upon the moaning air, while the grim monster is yet striving at his deadly work, a welcome sound is coming. And the swaying pines join in a song of rejoicing.

"What do I see?"

The roaring winds strike a different key. Wild exclamations of delight, meetings, embraces, tears. Silence reigns a moment and the grand old trees break forth in chanting a mournful requieum.

An angel form bends over her.

"Sleep, maiden, sleep! For the time is coming when thy powers of body and spirit will be overtaxed in ways thou dost not now imagine!"

"Look!"

A form,—does she not recognize, in the raven locks and shining, death-beaded brow, the form of a beloved mother prostrated upon a bed of suffering!

"Duty calls thee!"

She tries to rise. Powers invisible restrain her and she is kept crouching before the phantom, whose hisses madden her.

Again, she hears a sound of rejoicing. A still, calm peace within her soul, which for months she has not known or felt, overpowers her.

She smiles. Baffled phantoms vanish and a strong arm and steady hand support her exhausted frame.

"Miss Mansfield! Ada! Sure, yer father's nearly scared to death about ye, an' yer mother 's well nigh dead! Wake up? Let's go to camp, if ye want to see yer Ma again."

"O' Pat! I have had such an awful dream!"

"No wonder, when yer head was twisted half off yer body and yer arms throwed back, as if ye meant this sleep to be yer last."

"Did you say Ma was sick?"

"Sick ain't the word ma'am. Yer Ma's well nigh dead for the fright o' ye."

"Let's go to camp Pat; I did'nt intend to stay so long."

"It's past midnight an' we've been a huntin' ye an' shoutin' an' holerin' enough to wake the dead; an' here ye've been a snorin' an' dreamin' yerself into a fit a' delirium an' the Virgin knows what all. "*Whoop!* WHOOP! HURRAH!"

"Why Pat! are you crazy?"

"Divil the bit o' crazy am I. Sure an' we was to give this signal if ye were found; and I've done me best."

A cheerful shout was heard in answer to O'Donaldson's wild whoop, as he guided Ada through the darkness to the camp.

"O, Ma!"

The thought of her dreadful dream, like an awful forboding of coming sorrow, darted through her soul. Mrs. Mansfield had joined for hours in the frantic search. When

she saw that Ada was safe, the reaction of hidden disease overcame her, and she sank powerless to the ground.

Four days passed away and Mrs. Mansfield had given no sign of returning reason. At intervals, she would break forth in incoherent sentences, and what Ada could glean from these outbursts of her mother's hidden being, would agitate her severely.

Her mother, since the separation of themselves from their company, had not been happy. She felt that she had wronged her daughter, and conscience had given her no peace.

The fifth morning of her serious illness had dawned. Her husband and daughter were kneeling beside the rudely made couch which Pat's ingenuity had devised for the benefit of the sufferer. She opened her eyes and cast a steady, rational glance at her daughter.

"Ada!"

"Do you know me, Ma?"

"Yes, dear."

"Are you suffering much?"

"'My soul is indeed sorrowful, even unto death;' but I suffer no bodily pain. Do you know what my trouble is and has been?"

Ada could not reply. She had gathered enough from her mother's incoherent ravings to know what was the trouble, but when she would have spoken, her tongue refused to articulate.

Mrs. Mansfield gave one hand to her daughter. Her husband grasped the other and pressed it to his lips, while the scalding tears fell upon the attenuated hand.

"Ada can you forgive me for the suffering I have caused you to bear? If you knew the interest and sorrow with which I have marked your saddened countenance, you surely would be willing to pardon my unkind disregard of your affections. Bring me your Journal, dear. Here darling, I

read the secret emotions of your wrestling spirit—in these pages, which you thought were for no eye but yours. I would have talked with you about it last evening, but you were gone, I knew not where."

"Not last evening, Jane. You have lain here almost a week."

"Have I?"

Her voice was failing, but she nerved herself to unburden her troubled mind.

"Time is short with me. Promise me, Henry, that if Ada and Maurice live to meet again, you will not oppose their union when I am gone."

"Certainly, dear, I'll promise, if you desire it, but oh, I cannot give you up."

"But you and I would have separated those whose bosom fires burn hotter than ours ever have, because they have been forbidden to blaze. Oh! Henry, let us make restitution and I will die in peace."

"*Captain Gray's Company!*" Pat shouted, at the top of his voice.

Ada turned pale and trembled. Her father started and a look expressive of baffled ambition which he could not suppress, crossed his features for a moment.

"Go Henry; meet Maurice and ask him to come here, for I must see him."

Maurice was already at the door of the tent.

"Ada!"

"Maurice?"

Regardless of what opposing parents would do or say, he rushed forward and clasped her in his arms.

"God is merciful! Is the dead alive? I thought I saw your name at the head of a grave, six weeks ago."

"Indeed?"

"Yes; Ada M. was the name, and I did not think it possible that it could be any one else."

"I am yet alive, as you see, but oh! Maurice, to think we should meet like this!" she replied, as she pointed to her mother, who was too deeply moved to speak. Self was instantly forgotten, in her earnest desire to know if her mother could recover.

The invalid raised her eyes and gave him her hand. "Will I get well, Maurice?"

Fever had well nigh dried the life blood from her body and was sending what remained, at a fearful rate, through the burning arteries. He hesitated.

"Don't be afraid to speak your mind. If I am past recovery, I, of all others, ought to know the truth."

"To be candid with you then, I think it is impossible for you to recover."

She looked lovingly at the youthful pair, who were bending over her with such deep concern, took Ada's hand, placed it in Maurice's and said, "May you be happy."

Mrs. Welden desired admission. Her pale, subdued expression, struck the dying woman with remorse. She knew that they had done wrong in leaving her when death had left her house-shrine so desolate; and the resigned, though sorrowful features of the bereaved widow smote her with anguish.

"Mrs. Welden, will you forgive us for leaving you? We were influenced by none but selfish motives and don't deserve it, but I cannot die in peace without your pardon."

"I have nothing to forgive, Mrs. Mansfield; don't let such fancies trouble you. It was your privilege to go ahead and I never blamed you for doing what you considered best."

When the last doubt was cleared away, the excitement which had nerved her, relaxed and she sunk back upon the couch in a deep, tranquil sleep.

Mrs. Gray, Mrs. Green, Mrs. Sam Green and Effie, next came to her side, but the sleeper was unconscious of their visit. Effie and Mrs. Welden embraced Ada and mingled their tears with hers. Her joy was mixed with a cup of bitterness. She was excited with different and conflicting emotions, and longed to be alone.

She had not cared to visit the scene of her strange dream, since that memorable night, but now a strange feeling impelled her to seek that spot again.

The winds were sighing, in the same melancholy strains through the rustling pine boughs, when she again sat down upon the fallen tree. Flashes of alternate heat and cold burned and chilled her agitated frame. The loud beating of her heart as it fluttered wildly against its prison walls, kept time to the rushing tumult of her conflicting thoughts.

She heard the fall of footsteps. Instinct told her who it was that sought her.

"O, Maurice! To think that the joy of our meeting must be damped by this great sorrow, is too much!"

A strong arm, upon which she had a right to lean, encircled her waist and a passionate kiss—the first the lovers had indulged—sent the thrilling life blood faster to the maiden's heart. He spoke of hope, of happiness beyond the grave, of meetings above, and their own happiness in each other.—She lay in his arms, silently, as if a delicious trance filled her soul. Her father came towards them and, as he looked upon the trusting, blushing face of his daughter, who realized a joy, he had in years of business and activity almost forgotten, his heart smote him with the remembrance of the trouble he must have caused her, when no other motive than "false pride," could possibly be given as an excuse for the course he had pursued.

Another thought troubled him. No medical aid could be procured for his wife when she was first attacked and he

could not banish the idea that if Maurice had been there in time, he might have saved her life.

He advanced to where Maurice and Ada were sitting and took his daughter's hand.

"Will you forgive us, Pa?"

He kissed her in reply and without uttering one word that he meant to have said, he left the lovers alone.

"We had better return to camp, Maurice. Poor Ma! If she could live, my cup of happiness would now be full."

The invalid slept for many hours and awoke the next morning with some appearance of convalesance. But alas! it was but the last flashes of her earthly existence; the ray that a flickering blaze will emit just before it expires.

"O Ma, you look so much better this morning."

Mrs. Mansfield attempted to speak but her tongue was paralyzed. She beckoned to Maurice who approached the couch with an inquiring look.

Mr. Mansfield, Ada and Maurice all paid earnest attention to her attempts to speak.

She took Ada's hand, placed it in Maurice's as she had done the morning before and made them understand that she wished to see them married.

Ada trembled with sorrow and agitation and made no reply. She turned deadly pale and would have fallen, had not Maurice caught her in his arms. "There is a clergyman in a train just passing and we can get him to perform the ceremony, if you desire it," said her father, who was anxious to do whatever his wife requested.

The train was stopped and the Rev. Mr. Marshall soon approached the dying, who looked at him and pointed upwards. Her request was made known to the minister, and without further time for thought or preparation, he bade them kneel and exchange the marriage vows. Beads of death

dew glistened upon the mother's brow and the face assumed the ghastly look of death.

"Must my bridal day be one of mourning?"

Mrs. Mansfield pressed her daughter's hand, smiled—a peaceful smile of Love and Hope, looked at her husband and again the thin hand was raised toward Heaven.

"Would you like to have a funeral sermon?" Maurice asked, as he looked from the minister's benevolent face into the eyes of his weeping bride. "Perhaps," he continued, "your Ma would like to give us a text of her own choice, as a foundation for a sermon."

"'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord,' is one of her favorite funeral texts for suitable occasions. Ma is this text your choice?"

Her mother smiled approvingly and closed her eyes. So peaceful was the transition from a mortal state to immortality, that for some moments, none but Maurice knew that the spirit had departed.

The funeral was attended by all the emigrants who had been passing, and a solemn and instructive discourse was listened to with marked decorum; a matter worth mentioning, when we consider that half of the congregation at least, openly denounced the reality of the Christian religion. Mr. Marshall, who had no time to lose, as his family provisions were getting low, hurried on, after service and was not seen by the company again.

Captain Gray gave the mourners all the assistance in his power, though he confessed to his wife that if it had not been for Ada, Mansfield might have finished his journey alone.

"I think it ain't right to leave 'em, now they're in trouble; besides, Miss Welden 'll have to leave if Maurice does," said Mrs. Gray.

"Well, Mansfield's l'arnt somethin'—that's a fact. If he'll act right hereafter, I guess I won't say nothin' against him goin' with us."

For two days, Ada's life was despaired of by her anxious friends and loving husband. The anguish mixed with her sudden cup of joy, shook her healthy constitution and well nigh destroyed her life. She kept up until her mother was buried; and then, the tumultuous feelings about the great attachment of her inner being had subsided, excitement gave way, and she was left powerless.

Maurice knew that rest of mind was what she most needed. She would not consent for them to be idle on her account and the morning after her mother's decease, they prepared to journey on. The dull stupor which had benumbed her faculties, did not deprive her of reason, but she lay in a kind of dreamy consciousness, unwilling to be disturbed.

Maurice, in travelling hours, was compelled to remain at his post as ox driver, while Ada remained in the carriage with her father. The seats had been taken from the vehicle, and the Barouche form of the carriage bed, had been made level by an array of pillows, over which a mattrass was laid. No haughty queen, in a gilded chamber, surrounded by hangings of crimson and gold, with Maids of Honor attendant upon her most trivial wants, ever enjoyed more hallowed peace, or better opportunity for delicious repose, than did this young wayfarer, as she dreamed the flitting hours away.

The third morning after her marriage had dawned. The rough and perilous mountain gorges and more level tablelands had been safely passed, and the company had halted upon the banks of the Umatilla River, for camping time had once more rolled around.

Maurice, with the true devotion of a loving Benedict, was untiring in his efforts to make her comfortable. As soon as he had attended to the pressing business of the evening, he

went to the carriage where "lay in state," as Effie said, the bride of a few days.

"You feel better this evening, dear?"

"Yes, Maurice. I believe I shall be able to cook Pa's breakfast for him in the mornig."

"Don't be uneasy about our Pa. He's Mrs. Welden's boarder, and I assure you he fares well. You shall keep free from care of any kind, until the roses bloom again upon your cheeks. My wife has got to have a chance to be a healthy woman. 'An ounce of preventive is worth a pound of cure.' When you are able to work you'll have enough to do, without undermining your constitution by toiling when you can hardly stand alone. You may take exercise anywhere but over the fire. I protest against your attempting to bend over the smoking ovens and boiling teakettles until you can run two hundred yards with ease. Let every woman live up to that rule, and we'll see more rosy faces."

"I will feel as well in a few days as Mrs. Welden does, and she never thinks of rest."

"No; *she* doesn't but *I* do. She has enough of fatigue and anxiety through the day without having to worry herself to death at camping hours, to fix up eatables for men folks. I do the laborious part of the work and let her do the polishing."

"I begin to think I'll live easily, when *I* get to housekeeping. I am certain I shall, if you live up to such principles as these."

She was sitting up in the carriage, supported by his arm. A smile, half roguish, half loving, such as Maurice thought could only emenate from her lips and eyes, rippled her pale features; and a blush, as he answered her look with an ardent kiss, made her look spiritually beautiful.

"Life may not prove all sunshine. There will come
Dark hours for all. But when the weary years
Of life's unfolding mysteries, glide swiftly on; * * *
Will ye look calmly on on the altered brow
And love as fondly, faithfully as now?"

CHAPTER XIX.

THE MOTHERS-IN-LAW.

"I DECLARE," said Mrs. Gray, "if Ady did'nt git a man to take care o' her, then I'm no judge o' such things! If Sam was half as careful o' my Polly, I'd think we was in a streak o' luck when she got him. Though he's good as most of the men, if he does expect her to carry the water and dig a place to fix the fire, while he's a loungin' under the wagon, a smokin his pipe. Joseph Gray ain't no better. It's a blessed fine thing that we're able to stand it, that's some consolation."

"It always looks to me like imposin' on a man, for a woman to put as much on 'em as you like to have 'em do," said Mrs. Green. "I've seen more 'n one man, that the minute he come in, would have to hold the children, or bring in water, or maybe go an' milk the cows. I wonder how any man of common sense can stand it. Daddy would'nt."

"If Polly 'll have to learn such lessons as that, I hope she won't have to live close to you when we git settled. It does very well for girls to do milkin' an' carry water an' chop wood an' sich like, bekase it makes 'em hearty like. But when a woman has a family of children, an' always a baby to fret her life out, a man o'rt to be ashamed to let her do hard work. The way a feller begins is the way he'll be mighty apt to hold out."

"My boys was raised to see women work, an' they'll have to do it, if they live with 'em."

"*I* know one, that I won't let work so hard much longer, if she is y'er son's wife."

"She's got her head in the noose an' she can't help herself," retorted Mrs. Green, getting very much excited.

"O, if yer goin' to git huffy, I'll hush, but I'll see after this, whose girl Polly is," said Mrs. Gray.

"An' I'll see whose boy Sam is," was the reply.

Mrs. Gray would not agitate the matter, when she thought a quarrel was brewing, and she went to her work, muttering to herself, "If there ever was a curse, a mother-in-law, over a girl that won't take her own part, is one, I know. If Sam was *mine* an' Polly *her'n*, there'd be different talk in that woman's mouth."

Morning came, and Mrs. Sam Green was a mother. A red, fat mass of "incipient humanity," enclosed in red flannel wrappings, which the youthful father delighted in calling "Pappy's Boy," seemed determined to attract notice by his annoying cries.

The young mother smiled and blushed, as Ada—who pronounced herself able to walk,—came to her wagon, praised the baby, and desired the privilege of giving the "emigrant" a name.

"Sam says we'll call him Toby, an' I guess it's settled," she replied.

Everything passed off harmoniously, until Mrs. Sam's convalescence, when as usual, Sam took no further notice of camp work. He had applied himself with such laudable zeal to the camp duties for a few days, that Mrs. Gray began to hope there would be no need of her interference.

Toby was a week old, and the active, healthy constitution of his youthful mother had gained the ascendency over effects of recent snffering, so that she again began to assume the task of preparing food, and performing the "thousand-and-one" other camp duties, not the least of which was minding the baby, who though very good when the "wagon was going," objected to necessary halts, and asserted his right to notice by infantile vociferations that certainly reflected no discredit upon the stentorian lungs of his Grandpa Gray.

"Polly," said Mrs. Green, "ye've been able to walk a half mile to-day, an' I don't see any use in havin' Sam to

milk an' carry water anymore. He has to drive oxen all day, an' he's had a pretty hard time of it for a week. I think it's nothin' more'n right for him to rest a while."

Polly did as her mother-in-law requested, though she said to herself, "If Sam needs rest, I wonder what she thinks *I* need?"

When the wagons halted, she took the "piggin,"—one her father had manufactured—from its place in the wagon, and proceeded to milk the cow. She thought Sam would have objected, but he said nothing. As it was not "his turn" to go off with the cattle, he prepared a hook and line to go fishing, not heeding the cries of the baby, who had been left alone in the wagon, where he was fighting the air and squalling ferociously. Mrs. Gray was angry. She was one of those persons who are hard to arouse, but when once started she would carry her point or die.

"Sam Green! when I give ye my girl, I didn't think ye'd let her work when she wan't able! Now, do ye jist put up that fish hook, an' go an' git wood an' water for yer wife an' let her take the baby. If ye don't take care o' her ye shan't git to keep her, if she is your wife!"

Sam was astonished. He had not meant to be unkind but was thoughtless. When Polly went to milking, he took it for granted, that his chores about camp were at an end. Poor fellow! He had little idea of the trouble in store for those who set out to rear a family of fac-similes of themselves.

He did not reply, but took the water pail and started off. Polly had almost given out in her exertions over the milk pail—or piggin—and was glad to get into the wagon, when she soon succeeded in hushing the baby's cries. She certainly looked as if a prolonged rest was necessary to completely restore her strength.

Catching cold was Mrs. Green's only dread, and Polly had not been permitted to doff her nightcap, for fear of such a

calamity. The color had all departed from her round face and the yellow hair escaped from the ample cap and hung in uncouth braids about her shoulders. The dark and numerous freckles, somewhat bleached by the week's lying in the shade were still remarkably prominent about the nose and forehead; dark spots in the white ground-work of her inexpressive features.

"I never was used to seein' women waited on after the first week," said Mrs. Green. Woman's industry was her hobby, and she was highly displeased at Mrs. Gray's interference—in Polly's behalf. "She's not over industrious no'way, an' her mammy's advice won't help the matter much."

Mrs. Gray took no notice of her dissatisfaction. It was enough for her to know that her daughter could get rest when it was needed, and Sam, like a dutiful son, done his best to oblige his mother-in-law.

Mrs. Green contented herself with side thrusts at Polly, who was so sensitive that, rather than have received the censure of her mother-in-law, she would have worked like a galley slave. But Mrs. Gray laid down rules and stood ready to defend her when it was necessary.

"I tell ye, Polly, if ye give up to that woman, ye'll live like a slave a few years and then die an' leave a raft o' children. Ye ain't stout no way, like Mammy Green an' its no use a talkin', ye can't stand it." The mothers-in-law, who were such firm friends in their life as neighbors, could not agree as relatives and each learned to almost despise the other.

Maurice and Ada watched the conflict with curiosity.

"Aren't you glad," said Herbert "that you are away from kin folks, so that you can do as you please? Here's two women almost ready to pull hair about their son and daughter, who if left to themselves would do well enough. When I marry, I am going to eschew such a nuisance as a mother-in-law. Mrs. Stanton, you have chosen a mate without that

troublesome accompaniament. When I marry I am going to follow your example."

"You talk as if you mean to marry before many days.—One would think the stakes were set, and you all ready for the fatal step," laughed Maurice.

"No, I'm not that far gone; but I saw a pair of black eyes, some raven curls and a bewitching mouth, the other day that set me to thinking. I will soon be sixteen years old, and you told me yourself, that you thought more about marrying at that age than you ever have since that time."

"But I would'nt have owned it, then."

"And I *will* you see; that makes the difference. 'Open confession is good for the soul.'"

"Where is your brunette beauty?"

"In Captain Willard's Company."

"Her name?"

"You're very inquisitive, but as I began it, I guess I'll tell you. Florence Willard has caged my heart. Whether I have caged hers or not, is, as yet a matter of speculation. I did'nt speak to her; that is, not exactly; but I *saw* her! My stars! if she is'nt beautiful! Why, if I had tried to speak, I would have choked. I don't know but Ada would be half as handsome, if she only had the curls."

"I prophesy that when you are twenty-one, you'll go into raphsodies about somebody with eyes almost white and hair like Flaxy's mane," said Ada, laughing gaily at his boyish earnestness.

Flaxy was an Indian pony which her father had purchased and given her, as a bridal present. His name designated his color.

"I won't dispute it, because *you* said so. All that I have to say is, *you'll see!*"

Florence Willard was indeed, all that Herbert described. The Willard train had halted but a short distance from Cap-

tain Gray's Company, and Effie and Ada decided upon a call at their camp.

The young lady in question, was an orphan girl, abont Effie's age. She had been adopted by a bachelor uncle, who was taking her with him to a new country.

The call was an interesting one and Ada afterwards expressed to Maurice as her opinion, that "though Herbert and Florence had both better be thinking of books than Cupid, I don't believe either of them will ever find so congenial a companion in any one else."

Florence Willard was seen daily for a week, and then left behind, and years had passed before Herbert again met or heard of his lost ideal.

Daddy Green's great desire in all his dealings with his fellow man, was *peace*. Many times had his good nature been imposed upon; many a dollar had he lost, rather than dispute with a neighbor; and many times had he suffered injustice upon himself and family, by his determination to give offence to no one. His wife had little sympathy with him in his notions and one great worry of her nervous existence was that Sam, her eldest boy, in whom she had prided more than all the other members of her family, was what she called "as poor a stick as his daddy."

Mrs. Gray had no trouble with Sam after the "ice was once broken" about his duties as a husband and father, but the hostility between the two mothers became so marked that Daddy Green resolved to settle it.

"Don't ye think neighbor," he said to Captain Gray, "that it would be better for all of us, if the women would let Sam and Polly alone? Polly ought to know her own strength and business best, an' I don't see why our women should fret about it as they do."

"Let 'em *fight it out*, Daddy. I'd give a long bit, myself, to see 'em pull hair," replied the Captain with a grin.

"It worries me to see 'em quarrelin'. If it goes on this way, the young folks 'll git mad an' go off,—I'm sure I would'nt blame 'em for it—an' we'd never see 'em again.—I've talked to Sam about it an' he says if Miss Gray won't meddle any more he'll do his best to make Polly comfortable. I don't b'lieve you'd like to see 'em go clear away from us, any better 'an I would. I thought I'd speak to ye in time, for I do hate to have a fuss. There's no understandin' young people. They might be jist ready to tear each other's eyes out, an' let you or me step up to part 'em an' they'll both turn an' give us *blixen* for our pains. I say, let young folks alone."

The captain related the conversation to his wife, who exclaimed, "Well, if ther'd a been no medlin' in the first place, I'd a never said a word! But what does Miss Green do, but jest as Polly gits able to go alone, she must tell her that Sam's waited on her long enough, an' she must go to work like a nigger. I'll see Miss Green an' make a bargain with her. If she don't walk the chalk, *I'll find it out!*"

Mrs. Gray embraced the earliest opportunity to set matters to rights, and Mrs. Green, who was tired of a business in which she did not well succeed, agreed to meddle no more with her daughter-in-law's affairs. The contention was thus settled, as Captain Gray said, "without the least show for a petticoat fight."

We are getting ahead of our story, and must now leave the private affairs of the company and copy some further extracts of Herbert's Journal, which should perhaps have been given in a previous chapter.

CHAPTER XX.

GRAND RONDE AND BLUE MOUNTAINS.

"SEPTEMBER 5th. We reached Powder River this afternoon. This is a lovely fordable stream, about thirty feet wide at this season of the year. The valley has a fertile appearance and looks as if it might be well adapted to raising wheat.

"September 6th. Our road in the afternoon was over the first ranges of the Blue Mountains. It was near dark when we reached the brow of a mountain, overlooking Grand Ronde Valley. Here was a view of unsurpassed beauty. Before and above us, in the blue-tinged distance, lay the principal ranges of the Blue Mountains, and below, a valley of ten square miles in extent, green with summer grass and foliage, and looking to us, who, wearied with constant toil, and chastened by the rod of affliction, gazed upon this charming oasis, like a realization of Paradise.

"The descent from the mountain-top into the valley, is the most dangerous piece of road that we have yet encountered. There was a gentle breeze which blew the dust in clouds into our faces, darkening the roads and hiding the teams and wagons from our sight, sometimes for moments together. At such times we would have to stop and wait for a contrary breath of wind to waft the light dust away. Mrs. Welden displayed the most heroic fortitude during this hour of trial. Added to our other difficulties, night was coming on, so there was no time to be lost. We furnished Mrs. Welden with some log-chains, with which we rough-locked her carriage wheels, and giving up her children to the care of Effie and Mrs. Sam Green who could walk with them away from the road, she seated herself firmly in the carriage, which had been stationed behind the Captain's wagon, and drove down the mountain side without accident. The Captain says that 'there ain't another woman on top o' dirt, as could do it!'

"Grand Ronde River runs through the western part of the valley. It is like the other rivers of this region, small, clear, rapid and cold. Its banks are adorned with trees of birch, willow, bitter cottonwood, wild cherry, and alder in the valley; and pine, fir, cedar, birch and larch, where it rushes through the mountains.

"The Indians of the valley—the Cayuses—are very wealthy. They possess numerous herds of horses and cattle, and have many of the luxuries of life in abundance. The squaws are many of them good-looking, and if they were properly educated and dressed, their beauty would be a passport to the best American society.

"Some white traders here, offer flour for sale at forty dollars per cwt. Hundreds of emigrants are destitute, and many have parted with their last dollar for flour to keep themselves and families from starvation.

"September 7th. We left the Grand Ronde and travelled about eleven miles over the mountains. The delightful and inspiriting scenery, makes us almost forget the fatigue of the journey, but our teams are failing very fast. Effie says she don't see how we are to cross the Cascade Mountains, but I tell her that I guess we'd better not climb a mountain before we get to it. 'Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.'

"We intended to remain at the Grand Ronde River in the mountains, where the above entry was made, but when we had rested an hour, we moved on three miles further, having journeyed through heavy timber almost all day. I omitted to mention the descent of a mountain to the river, which was worse, if possible, than that of the mountain leading into the Grand Ronde from the east. This is our first encampment in a forest since we left 'Hundred and Two,' east of St. Josephs.

"'Darkie,' my favorite wheel ox is dead. He held back so hard in descending a mountain slope that he severed an important artery. He held back until the wagon was out of danger, and then staggered and fell dead in the road, looking at me with a speaking stare as he breathed his last. Mr. Thurston once said that, "If there is an animal below man who has a soul, it certainly is the ox.' No wonder that he said so, if an ox ever looked at him as 'Darkie' did at me.

"September 7th. We had moved on about a mile this morning, when whom should we see but our travelling companion, Mr. Mansfield. Sickness has visited his family, and Mrs. Mansfield cannot live but a short time. Poor Mr. Mansfield! He looks ten years older than he did when I last saw him but little more than two months ago. Though we cannot believe that he does not deserve trouble, yet we can't turn away from him and Ada when they are in such deep distress of mind.

"Effie and I think a marriage is brewing.

"September 8th. This morning Maurice and Ada were married in compliance with her mother's dying request. We heard a solemn funeral discourse this afternoon, and to-morrow we will move on.

"Ada looks like a shadow. I am afraid she will have a hard attack of sickness.

"September 9th. We journeyed all day in the mountains. At noon

we halted in an opening in the timber, in a range of mountains heading to the north. We encamped at night in heavy timber where water is good but grass is poor. My sadly weakened team has been reinforced by a yoke of cattle from Mr. Baker's team. O'Donaldson deserves credit for his manner of taking care of those oxen. But one of them have died.

September 10th. We travelled ten miles through the timber, and five miles over the last descent of the Blue Mountains, when we struck the Umatilla Valley. Before we descended the last mountains, we obtained a glorious view of the Cascade range. Mt. Hood reared his snow-capped summit, in surpassing grandeur, high above the other mountains, appearing as a stationary white cloud set in a casing of amber and gold. The valley below presented an appearance not unlike the view of the Grand Ronde from the eastern mountains, only upon a much more extensive scale. As far as the eye could penetrate in the north and south, was seen a rolling prairie covered with waving grass. No timber was visible, except that growing along the banks of the Umatilla River. We found this river quite low, being about fifteen feet wide and not over six inches deep. Its banks are adorned by bitter cottonwood, choke-cherry, birch and thorn-apple trees. Pheasants are as numerous in this valley as prairie chickens are in the prairies of Illinois. The Indians here are stupid and filthy. They have made some attempts to cultivate the soil, but are too indolent to effect much by their effeminate exertions.

"We travelled near the river for about five miles, when the road turned to the left over a rolling, grassy, dusty plain. Six miles further brought us again to the Umatilla, where we crossed it twice, to avoid difficult angles in the road. Had a dish of pheasants for supper. Encamped near the river.

"September 11th. This morning the road again left the river, and we turned to the right over a sandy plain. We ascended a long ridge and again came in sight of Mt. Hood, while off to the north-east, we viewed Mt. St. Helens. We travelled over this plain for seventeen miles without water, when we again struck the river Umatilla and encamped. Dry bunch grass was plenty and good.

September 12th. Four miles brought us to the Indian Agency, now unoccupied, except by traders from the Willamette Valley. Here is a new looking frame house, the sight of which reminded us of 'home and civilization; we left the Umatilla for the last time at this place

and journeyed on, over a sandy plain for a distance of ten miles, when we came to Alder Creek and encamped.

"September 13th. The roads are hilly but solid. We begin to half-way realize our journey ended. Many are out of provisions. There is flour and beef for sale at different trading posts, but the prices demanded are so exorbitant, that it is almost impossible for poor folks to purchase food.

"September 18th. Four miles' travel brought us to Deshutes or Falls River, which is perhaps one hundred and fifty yards wide at the mouth, where the ford is situated, a short distance below a handsome cascade. This stream courses on its rapid way, through mountain defiles and rocky cannons, forming numerous cataracts, until it reaches the Columbia River, into which it empties. We got an Indian to pilot the wagons across, and another one to take the females over in a canoe, for which service they taxed us five dollars. After crossing we ascended a long, steep and rocky hill, from whose summit we again viewed the Columbia River, adorned upon either side with majestic bluffs of basaltic rock. We this afternoon viewed Mt. Jefferson, Mts. Hood and St. Helens were also in plain view at the same time.

After crossing Five Mile Creek, we directed our course over a rolling plain and camped at night near a sulphur spring, having travelled to-day about ten miles.

"September 19th. Travelled eighteen miles and encamped near Five Mile Creek, which we crossed yesterday afternoon, and left we thought forever. Sister and I have sent our wagon to the Dalles of the Columbia, to be forwarded to Oregon City by water. I will take the charge of Mrs. Welden's ox-team, in crossing the Cascade Mountains, so that Maurice can drive her mules.

"September 22d. We are encamped near Barlow's Gate. Clouds are gathering thick and fast in the mountains, and a strong south wind warns us of an approaching storm. We are afraid to venture into the mountains unless the sky is clear.

"September 23d. This morning our apprehensions of a mountain storm could no longer be a matter of conjecture. At nine, A. M., the rain commenced falling slowly, and continued to descend at intervals until noon. Our shelter at the foot of the mountains kept us from the fury of the storm; which was very severe upon the exposed heights. After noon the clouds passed away and a steady but gentle north wind caused us to feel once more at ease. I strolled out in the afternoon to the open ground not far from camp, and watched the fleecy clouds play

ing around and receding from Mt. Hood. A fresh fall of snow upon its broad and lofty summit, had given it the appearance of dazzling whiteness which contrasted strangely with the dark green, gloomy, heavy timbered heights beneath it. While I gazed, the sun suddenly poured a golden flood upon its crested top, and reflected amber gleams from the mountain's hoary head, upon the grassy plain below, with dazzling effulgence.

"September 24th. This morning we took up the line of march and began our journey through the Cascade range. Ten miles from Barlow's Gate brought us to the Little Deshutes, a very cold, rapid, turbid stream, about thirty feet wide and eighteen inches deep. The mountain passes are darkened by heavy timber. Among the varieties, are pine, cedar, poplar, fir, scrubby white-oak and bitter cottonwood.

"September 25th. We travelled about fifteen miles over an extremely rough and difficult road, which has been made through very heavy timber, and is only wide enough in most places for us to clear the wagon axles by careful driving. We encamped below the Summit Hill, near a marshy prairie of several miles in extent, covered with a kind of coarse swamp grass. The day has been very cold. My oxen are all dead. Bad luck seems to pursue us, but it is a long lane which has no turn. Mt. Hood is in plain view, some five or six miles north-east of our camp. A small stream of seemingly more than icy coldness, rushes from the mountain's side and tumbles through a defile near us. Nothing but its rapid fall prevents it from freezing. The cutting wind blows steadily from the snow crowned summit of the exposed mountain, and when compelled to face the north-easter, we cover our noses involuntarily.

"September 26th. Those of us who in Platte River valley said so much about the road being 'better than was represented,' gave up our favorite theory when we had descended Laurel Hill. 'The half has not been told,' burst involuntarily from the lips of more than one of us. Our last provisions were consumed this morning, and after a most fatiguing day's travel, we are compelled to go supperless to rest. Instead of repining, we have much amusement about our 'Laurel Hill supper.' Protracted travelling has hardened our frames until our powers of endurance are astonishing.

"September 27th. We broke a king-bolt and wagon tongue to-day, Mrs. Welden's mules both died this afternoon, we suppose from having eaten some poisonous herbs. Only two yoke of her cattle are living. We were compelled to leave her wagon, which is not so valuable as

the carriage, and what we most highly prize of her effects and my mother's have been placed in the wagons of our obliging friends, whose teams are so reduced that they are poorly able to bear the additional burden. We have been without a particle of food for two days, but contrary to our apprehensions, we have suffered but little from hunger. The Baker children and Mrs. Welden's little Lucy complained of hunger, but Effie and Mrs. Stanton found a friendly patch of salal berries, and gathered enough to satisfy them. We have prepared Mrs. Welden's carriage for working oxen, and her two yoke of cattle can draw it with ease.

"September 28th. We paid twenty-eight dollars this morning for enough of sour, musty flour for breakfast for all hands. I ate almost enough for two men before I took time to notice the disagreeable flavor of Bald Hill Smith's *ox-feed*. He had bought this damaged flour at the Dalles for his oxen, but was moved by our money to give us a breakfast. We encamped at night upon the *Zigzag*.

"September 29th. Eighteen miles' travel brought us to Mr. Foster's residence, at the western base of the Cascade Mountains. The sight of a white house, neat garden, loaded fruit trees, and waving corn-stalks, animated us all. Captain Gray, who had been told by a trader that corn could not be raised in Oregon, gave three hearty cheers, suggestive of future 'corn dodgers,' which he says are the makin' of *everybody*.' Dozens of wagons, hundreds of immigrants, and herds of poor cattle and horses are around us. Almost six months ago we started upon our journey, and now that the goal is reached. how we look! Dirty, sallow and ragged; our poor beasts are walking skeletons, our wagons and their covers travel-soiled; our ranks sadly thinned, and many of our hopes laid low! But such is life. 'All eternity is yet to be,' and we will look ahead.

"September 30th. OREGON CITY, the imigrant's haven is before us, and what do we see? I confess to being disappointed with its appearance. Instead of the green valley, 'sloping gradually toward the river's edge' which we had imagined as the city site, huge piles of basaltic rock,—reminding us of the views of Snake and Columbia river bluffs,—among which the houses are scattered with but little regard to taste or beauty; and at the base of these towering cliffs, a dense array of dwellings, stores and shops, extending for a mile along the banks of the Willamette river, meets our anxious and curious gaze; and this is OREGON CITY. But this city will some day rival many more handsome locations, in wealth and manufactories. The Willamette Falls, instead of

being allowed to tumble on in a roaring cataract, will soon be employed by capitalists, as power to turn mighty machineries for the benefit of this remote region.

But here we are, Effie and I, without a dollar, dependant upon our own exertions for a living, and my Journal will henceforth be laid aside, to review when times are good and memory has failed to portray the realities of what is past."

CHAPTER XXI.

HIRING OUT.

"BROTHER, what *must* we do? Here we are alone and penniless. You can't support me unless I do my part. I met a lady a few moments ago, who told me that she would give me twenty-five dollars per month to wait upon her little boy."

"Are you *willing* to go out to service, sister, mine?"

"I am both willing and anxious to do anything for a livelihood that is *honest*."

Herbert and Effie placed what few effects that remained of their outfit for the journey, in the store of an accommodating merchant, who agreed to take care of them until they could know where to remove them. They called to see the lady who had offered to take Effie into her service, whose pleasant face won the regard of the brother and sister, the moment they glanced into her deep blue eyes.

Mrs. Clinton was equally pleased with Effie, and the sum of twenty-five dollars, to be paid on the last Saturday of every month, was to be her portion for the winter. Her duties were constant but light, and Mrs. Clinton's little Jamie, reminded her so forcibly of the lost and loved Willie, that

he soon became as dear to her as her own brother had been.

The monotonous duties of her treadmill existence, so different from the free and easy life of her earlier days, told upon her spirits, but her home for six months at Mrs. Clinton's, was so near a paradise, contrasted with an after residence of twelve months at another house, that she afterwards thought of her first term of servitude, as a season of complete happiness.

Herbert procured work during the winter, at the house of a farmer near the City, at reasonable wages. The wagon they had sent to the Dalles was never afterwards heard of. What they could earn was their only show for an education and support.

Of all the members of Captain Gray's Company, Mrs. Welden was the most severely tried. Two yoke of lean, worn-out cattle, and a carriage, much the worse for wear, were her only remaining worldly possessions. These she sold for three hundred dollars. She rented a small house and purchased necessary fuel, house-keeping utensils and provisions for the winter, which, where everything commands such an enormous price, exhausted her little stock of money. No chance was before her but to work, and the choice of occupation lay between washing and sewing. She decided to sew, though washing would have been the most profitable business, her Southern blood revolted at the idea of engaging in such drudgery. By plying the needle early and late, she was enabled to keep even with the world, but could not by strict economy and vigilent exertion, lay up even a trifling sum. Had her husband lived, they would have been entitled to six hundred and forty acres of land, by complying with the requirements of the Donation Law; but, as he was gone, half allowance was now her portion, and to obtain this, she must "reside upon and cultivate for four consecutive years," a thing to her inexperienced mind, impracticable.

The winter had been mild, with the slight exception of a few freezing days, and February, the Oregonians holiday season, was ushered in on a bright balmy morning, when Summer birds chanted their sweet carols from the boughs of a denuded locust tree that swayed to and fro in the morning breeze, near the widow's only window.

"Why should mankind alone be miserable, in this beauteous world," she sighed, as she looked upon the merry songsters. Her temporary residence overlooked the Willamette Falls. She looked long and steadily at the foaming, gleesome cataract, and fancy wandered away to the many scenes of the kind she had wearily passed, since her husband had been consigned to the grave. Long years of toil and privation; weary scenes of suffering, both of mind and body, lay before her imagination, pictured vividly in the distance. Despair tugged at her heart-strings, and she felt like giving up the weary struggle between poverty and suffering, when a "still, small voice," whose echo long afterwards, sounded through her soul, whispered, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." She knelt, and an eloquent appeal to the Most High, ascended upon the listening air.

As though an angel of mercy were sent to minister to her drooping spirit, letters, the first she had received for months, were handed to her by a lady for whom she had been sewing for weary days and weeks. She eagerly broke the seals, and Maurice Stanton's name appeared at the bottom of the fourth page of each epistle. One had been written some two months before the other, but by some mismanagement had not been received before.

It contained a melancholy account of the death of Mr. Mansfield, who had felled a forest tree upon himself, where he had been making rails in the timber.

For an hour after she had perused the first, she held the second letter in her hand, dreading to open it, lest further gloomy tidings should meet her senses. At length she broke the seal and read the contents through mists of fast falling tears. Part of the letter, for the edification of the reader, we will transcribe:

"We are living in what my father would consider a real backwoods style, though Ada says she is perfectly contented. We have a hewed log cabin, containing two rooms besides a kitchen. The house is rudely constructed, but '*love*,' you know, levels many aspirations. I wrote you two months ago, concerning the melancholy death of my lamented father-in-law.

"We had built our cabin and fenced a garden over a section line, so that each could reside upon and cultivate, without being deprived of Ada's society. Her father had filed his notification of a residence upon a half section of land, which Ada holds as his only heir.

"Now for our proposal. Ada says that if you could come with your family and reside with us, and be content with our fare,—which at present is of the plainest description,—she will deed to your children, the three hundred and twenty acres of land her father left.

"Now, my dear friend, you will offend us, if you refuse. She says, and I'm of her opinion, that its a crying shame for us to be isolated upon a claim of nine hundred and sixty acres, when you, who are alone in the world, with a helpless family of little ones, cannot, unless aided by friends who are willing to circumvent the law, hold even what would, in your own right have been yours, had your husband lived to hold his portion.

"There is more than one horn to a dilemma, and we are fortunately, at liberty to take hold of the one which is the most easily managed.

I have not yet 'proved up' mine and Ada's claim. Consequently, if you will come, we can move the cabin to our middle line. You can then 'prove up' and hold in your own right, three hundred and twenty acres of what we now claim and we can 'spread our wings' over another half section, joining the one we shall reserve for ourselves.

"We can easily do this, provided no other claimant secures

the land before we hear from you. I confess that we have no need of so much land, but if Uncle Sam is generous enough to give it, we have as good a right as any one to accept the present.

"You ought to see how easily Ada takes to farm life. She is often sad when reflecting about the loss of her parents, but her naturally buoyant spirit does not remain long at a time under desponding clouds.

"Our location is beautiful and when our 'four years are out," we hope to build upon an eminence, overlooking the river, where gentle sea breezes can be enjoyed and where nature has been particularly lavish in her display of the sublime and beautiful.

"I have been thinking of going to the mines, but Ada says, and perhaps she is right, that economy and industry at home are so much more reliable as paymasters, than labor and vicissitude in the mines, that I have hearkened, like a model husband, to her far-sighted judgment and for four years at least I am to be a farmer.

"The Baker children have gone home to their relatives in Wisconsin, in the care of an uncle, who fortunately for the children, called at our house as a wayfarer and recognized the orphans. He has amassed a fortune in the California mines, and is going home to get married. They are to return by the Panama route. Their leave-taking was very affecting. Ada begged hard to keep Eda, but to no purpose.

"She sends you much love, and repeats her earnest request that you will comply with her offer. She will write you soon. Don't delay to answer, for we are awaiting your decision about making our proofs of settlement."

Mrs. Welden read and re-read the letter, as if she could scarcely believe her senses. She had trusted in the Almighty Ruler for protection, but with so little faith that she was ashamed of her pretensions. She had never dreamed of so kind an offer as this, and as soon as she could still her agitated frame, she wrote the following reply:

"I must acknowledge, my dear disinterested friends, that your liberal offer has been most opportunely given. When your letter came to hand a few hours ago, I was ready to

sink under the oppressive weight of poverty, toil and suffering, to which I have been so long subjected. I am at loss for words with which to thank you for your kindness. My only fear is, and will be, that in living with you, I shall prove a burden to those who show themselves so willing to befriend me. I have nothing upon which to lean for a support. If I could sell my portion of land, perhaps I could get something to work *with*, but the Surveyor General has said that I cannot give a deed to land until the title is perfected; and as four years must pass before I can really possess a claim, I cannot hope for assistance soon in that quarter. The way looks dark, but the Lord will not forsake me. He has raised up kind friends to help me now, and will not desert me in a greater need.

"I have been hiring myself out to do fine sewing, and have strained my eyes until a hazy glimmer surrounds an object the moment I look steadily upon it.

"Herbert and Effie Goodwin have both secured good places for the present. Effie comes to see me occasionally, and her presence always enlivens me like a sunbeam. I did not hear until this morning about your father's death. This is a world of disappointment, trouble and sorrow. But we have an assurance that he is now united with those who went before, and though he cannot come to us, we can go to him. To say to you that I feel a delicacy in receiving, as a present for my children, the inheritance which your father left, would be saying no more than you who know my natural disposition, are ready to believe. You have offered aid in this my last extremity, and I will waive all scruples of pride and come to you within a fortnight. Till then, adieu.

MEGGIE WELDEN.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE BACK-WOODS FARMERS.

FARMER GRAY, as we must again call him, had many debates with his wife, Sam and Polly, about where they should locate.

He did not want to settle in the timber, but Mrs. Gray, who regretfully remembered her Illinois home, had a *penchant* for the forest and finally prevailed upon him to build a cabin beneath the shade of a dozen black, gigantic fir trees. In an early day, the Indians and squatters, for the sake of giving grass a chance to grow, annually fired the underbrush and fern. The fir trees received their share of the general conflagration, but were seldom killed by the fire, though the charred, dead lower limbs will bear evidence for many years of the burnings the trunks have survived.

Farmer Gray settled in a neighborhood of back-woodsmen, who had emigrated, many of them from western Missouri. The habits of his associates were much to his taste, and when we have described his farm and house, we will have given a faithful delineation of the most common features of his neighbors' homes. A log cabin, which could only boast one room, a large, dried mortar fire-place, heavy batten doors and open windows, with blankets for shutters, afforded his and Sam Green's family a refuge for the first winter. When summer came, they were too busy to fix up the hut, and besides Farmer Gray concluded that a "tight house was unhealthy," so that several years passed before he was ready to build a new house or even repair the old one. He managed to "get in" with four yoke of oxen, and with these he succeeded well in breaking prairie.

Sam traded off his wagon for cows, and for the sake of economy, he lived with his father-in-law. The cabin was built near the center of the claim upon two section lines, so that two square miles could be held by one house and two families.

Maurice Stanton, who would permit no one to prefix the Dr. to his name after he left the Plains, suddenly appeared at Farmer Gray's door, one afternoon in the February holidays. He lived about thirty miles from his old captain, and

this was the first time he had seen him since they had parted at Oregon city. Farmer Gray was delighted with the visit, and quite "tired out" his visitor with a tiresome walk to his various corner stakes.

"Farmer Gray, when land comes into market, and there are immigrants to purchase it, then you and I can sell enough to make farms for several families and have plenty left for our own use."

"No sir-ee! I'd rather buy than sell. I've crossed the Plains a purpose to git elbow room, an' I've got it an' intend to keep it."

Maurice smiled. "I am not willing to give up society for the sake of land. One hundred and sixty acres of good soil is enough for *anybody*. If Uncle Sam had given us no more than that, we would all be better off in five years in the way of schools, society and improvement, than we will be as matters stand, twenty years hence."

"But we wouldn't be so well off for stock range."

" 'Stock range' is very convenient in its place, but society is better in my estimation."

"I earnt a section o' land a crossin' the Plains an' I'm goin' to hold on to it *shore*."

"So did Mrs. Welden and other widow ladies whom I could name. Yet they cannot hold but half that amount for themselves and children, because their husbands are gone. And to 'reside upon and cultivate' as the law requires, is calling for an impossibility from a lone woman who has nothing but her feeble exertions to depend upon for a support."

"A woman haint no business *with* land, nohow."

"Women have, or ought to have, as good a right to *live* as men. If a section of land is no more than enough for you and I, how much has a widow earned, who has lost her husband on the Plains, and journeyed on alone to this 'land of promise,' without a single relative to look to for support or

protection?"

"What could a woman *do* with land, if she had it, I'd like to know?"

"Land will some day be valuable in this prosperous country, and a few years' residence in a town where she could get the means of support by industry, would be rewarded by a few thousand dollars as the price of her claim, to which a widow has as good a right as you or I have to our possessions."

"Durn the women! They'll marry d'rectly an' won't have no business with two farms."

"In case they should marry in time to hold land as wives to other husbands, then they ought properly to be deprived of the first husband's share of Uncle Sam's bounty. But the way matters stand, they are compelled to marry or starve."

"I never thought much about the Land Law afore, respectin' widders, but here's Bald Hill Smith. He lives about six miles from here, an' makes a mighty poor mouth about me an' my old woman holdin' a square mile, when he can't git but half that for him an' seven children, bekase his wife's dead. But I s'pose our palaverin' over it won't mend the matter, an' we'd as well dry up. What's Miss Welden a doin'?"

"She is now in Oregon City, but I have offered her a home at my house, and expect her to come up on the Valley Bird. We are going to try your plan of living upon section lines, in order to hold land for her until her 'time is ouit'"

"I hearn the other day that Miss Graves, that lost her man on the road, aint goin' to live long. She moved on a claim not long ago to hold land for her baby. She's got the consumption an' aint able to work much, but she's got a little money that she thinks she can stretch along while she lives, an' maybe she can give the child away."

"She may be suffering," said Maurice, his sympathy aroused

at the mention of distress; it is the duty of the neighbors to help provide for her wants."

"I told Sally this mornin' that we ought to rig up the oxen an go to see her. We hain't much to spare yit, bekase times is mighty hard with us, but we won't lose nothin' by befriendin' the needy."

Maurice was welcomed by Polly and her mother with genuine hospitality, and when, after breakfast the next morning after his arrival, he prepared to depart, they were much disappointed because he could not remain another day.

"You don't get the miners' mania, do you, Farmer Gray? I see that the people around you do not seem easily allured by golden visions. Most immigrants who enter the valley empty handed, make a speedy rush for the mines."

"No; me nor my neighbors don't leave, an' for that very reason ye'll see us swimmin' when yer hasty folks are flounderin' in the mud. Folks had a heap better *stick to the knittin'*, if they intend to git rich. Now, ye'll see before five years, if I don't have a big orchard, lots o' plow land, good buildin's an' comfortable livin', when ten to one of the gold hunters, 'll have nothin' to live on but vexation."

And so the sequel proved, although few at that time coincided with the views of the foresighted backwoodsman.

As Maurice returned homeward, he called upon Daddy Green, who lived about five miles from Farmer Gray, and was farming much after his fashion.

"D'ye think Polly's got so she does hardly any work now?" Mrs. Green asked.

She could not banish the thought of 'old times,' and her woman's inquisitiveness was as strong as her memory.

Maurice smiled as he recalled old scenes.

"Indeed, Mrs. Green, I always considered your daughter very industrious. Perhaps *I* am not a competent judge, but

Mrs. Stanton says that she is too industrious for her own good."

"Well, one thing is certain, She'll never work like Sam's mammy does. Girls aint no 'count no-way, like they oncet was."

Maurice was not anxious to dispute the point, and excused himself from the old lady's tiresome talk, by going to the woods, where Daddy Green, Jake and Billy were making rails. From them he learned that the widow Graves was living about a mile from their cabin, in a little house that they had helped to build. They also prepared her fuel and other necessaries, going by turns to stay in her house at night.

Maurice was soon at the door of her humble abode. The invalid, whose every motion bespoke the genuine lady, instantly recognized in her visitor, the young physician who had been called to the bedside of her dying husband. A horde of sorrowful memories blanched her cheek. His kind voice seemed to bring so vividly to her imagination, the day when she had last seen the husband of her short period of happy married life, that before she could articulate a sentence, she sobbed aloud as she offered him her hand.

"Does my coming distress you, Mrs. Graves?"

"I'm pleased to see you, doctor, but you came in so unexpectedly that when I saw your face, memory brought up so forcibly the sorrowful circumstances of our first and last meeting, that I was overcome."

He assumed a cheerfulness he did not feel. The hectic flush, which plainly revealed the condition of the poor consumptive, was remarked, and he saw at a glance that the destroyer was at work. He thought it best to be cheerful and not notice her appearance, and turned his conversation to inquiries respecting her opinion about the country.

"I am *satisfied anywhere*, and it matters not where my last few days are spent. Life seems strong within me, but too

many of my family have been carried off by pulmonary diseases for me to be deceived. Warm weather will seal my destiny. I would have remained in Portland, where I had rented a comfortable ready furnished room, but was told that my boy could not hold land as my heir, unless I should 'die upon a claim.' The poor child will be left without relatives or property; but if he should live this land may be of service in enabling him to get an education.

"His father's dying request rings in my ears by night and day. If I could get some one to take him after I am gone, who will be kind to him and educate him well, I will not fear to die." Her face brightened, as she looked upward with a trusting glance. "My husband, we will soon be reunited in a world of bliss."

Farmer Gray's loud sonorous "Wo!" was heard as he stopped his wagon before the door. He soon entered the cabin in company with his wife, who was carrying a traveling bag well loaded with sundry articles of comfort, which she deposited with a grunt of relief in the chimney corner.

"The la me! If that child don't look jest like Jed did when he was a baby! I wish you'd let me have him, Miss Graves. I'll treat him well, and love him jest as well as I did my Jeddy," said the kind-hearted old lady, as she took up the smiling innocent and kissed him affectionately, while sympathetic tear-drops glistened upon her cheeks.

"I'll tell ye what I'll do widder," said Farmer Gray, affecting a jovial manner, while a suspicious moisture burnished his eyes; "I'll tell ye what I'll do. As Sally seems to fancy the young 'un, an' we have no little chaps o' our own, if ye've no objection, I'll take him an' keep him till he's fourteen. He can choose his own guar*deen* at that age. We have coarse doin's an' homely fare at my shanty, but we have warm hearts an' willin' hands. They're goin' to 'rect a school house on my place, an' when he gits big

enough I'll send him to school. If I had my life to live over again, I'd never raise another young 'un without givin' it good larnin'."

The invalid assented to his proposal, and Maurice drew up a document of agreement, which was signed by the interested parties; and Charlie Graves was given up to the tender care of his new protectors.

"See here, Joseph, it won't do to take the child away now, nor it won't do to leave Miss Graves. Polly can do the work at home, an' I'd as well stay here for awhile. You'd as well go home an git somethin' more for us to live on. If there's anything can wake my feelins' it's the sight of feller creetur's in distress."

Mrs. Gray went out to the wagon, to give some private directions to her husband, and Maurice bade the widow an affectionate good bye and joined the couple at the wagon.

"Here, Mrs. Gray, is a small sum of money for the benefit of the sufferer. I am sorry that I have no more, but poverty at present is the common companion of us all."

"The la me! Five dollars 'll git her a *heap* o' little notions; I wish ye had fifty thousan'. Nobody'd use it better an' you would. D'ye think she'll stand it long?"

"I think she will not."

"Well, it seems mighty strange that folks dies off so. When I used to complain about sickness, my old man would say that folks couldn't die in *Oregin*, till they'd went sixty miles east of the Cascades."

"We contracted too much disease upon the Plains, madam, to think of being perfectly healthy for a season. No one has become sick in the valley, who was well when the journey was ended."

"Folks may brag on *Oregin* as much as they please, but it'll be a long time afore I'll think it's what it's been cracked up to be," was the impatient rejoinder.

"Good bye, Mrs. Gray. I have not time now for further conversation. You'll like the country well enough when you have become acclimated."

A month had passed and Mrs. Graves had solved the mysteries of the world immortal. Her little boy was considered a treasure in the Gray family, who performed their contract respecting him, to the letter. Mrs. Sam Green's little Toby who was a few month's younger than the orphan baby, sometimes monopolized the attentions of the grandparents, but as time rolled on, every year adding another to Polly's family of obstreperous boys and girls, little Charlie, with his winning ways and peaceful disposition, became a universal favorite. Farmer Gray often called him "quare," when noticing his thoughtful, abstracted manner, but the child never refused to do his bidding, and consequently gave no ground for displeasure. He often remarked that "it was a lucky day that throwed that beam o' sunshine across his door-step."

His farm was made with a backwoodsman's peculiar exertion. Beauty was altogether out of his line, but every thing substantial and old fashioned, in a few years surrounded his dwelling. As their worldly possessions increased, Mrs. Gray became delighted with the country. She grew eloquent over her Shanghai chickens, fat turkeys and noisesome ducks; and when she obtained a pair of geese, her joy was unbounded. "The grass," for cattle, sheep and horses, was one of her main themes of conversation. The snow-storm of '52, in which some of their stock died of starvation, rather cooled the old lady's ardor, but she was proof against a like calamity, when that dreary time was past. The next harvest was a bounteous one, and the oat-straw, which at her suggestion, was ever afterwards packed in log pens to meet emergencies, afforded food for famishing herds during subsequent snow storms.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MRS. MUNSON.

Mrs. Clinton was going East, to visit her relatives, and Effie was compelled to seek another home. Servitude had been divested of most of its horrors during her sojourn with her lovely friend, and when told that she must seek employment elsewhere, it was with a heart as heavy, as when eighteen months before, she had went to the abode of a neighbor, three thousand miles away, to seek admittance to an humble outhouse, that she prepared herself to go forth in search of other lodgings.

Herbert had not visited her for a fortnight, and did not know that she was in need of a situation.

She had heard that a lady who lived three doors distant from Mrs. Clinton's wished to employ her, and with a palpitating heart she ascended the steps leading to the portico. A servant answered her timid ring, and she was shown into the parlor, where a lady was reclining in an easy chair, surrounded by a sickening odor of camphor and ammonia, who scanned her visitor as if she were a specimen of art placed before her, expressly for inspection.

"How old are you?"

The tones were measured, cold, and haughty, repelling the little assurance that Effie had mustered before addressing her.

"I'll be fourteen next October, ma'am."

"Ah, well, you're old enough to mind Allie, wash dishes, and keep the rooms in order. No one who pretends to work for me, must think of being idle. You may come to-morrow but you must *work*, or I can't keep you."

Effie soon made her exit from the house, glad to get away from the smell of medicines, and from the haughty, overbearing air that surrounded her future mistress.

Mrs. Clinton was too busily engaged with the preliminaries for her departure, to notice the dejection of her protege, who retired to her little chamber in utter loneliness.

She looked from the window upon the rushing river, and listened to the busy hum of city life, until the shades of evening drove the busy throng of men and boys into the shops and dwellings. The busy, noisy river rippled, surged, dashed and rolled its torrents onward, answering, she thought, the melancholy sighings of her desolate heart. And then she imagined that the peaceful, dreamy silence of the habitations of men, and the majestic roar of the cataract, were alike to be considered as tokens of joy that was to come. *Why* she felt this, she knew not, but when the gathering darkness enveloped her, the dejection she had felt had disappeared before the genial rays of Hope.

"May I come in?" Little Jamie was at the door. Effie took a lighted candle from his hand, and almost forgot her cause for sorrow, as she kissed the little fellow, the prototype of the loved and departed Willie.

"Ma's mean, she is! She had no business to take me off to leave you! She says she wants me to see Grandpa before he dies, but he won't seem half so sweet as you. I wish she wouldn't go away, and then you could stay here."

"You mustn't call your Ma, mean, Jamie. Your Grandpa is her pa, and the poor old man will be so disappointed if he don't get to see you."

"Well, I'll have to go, but when I'm a man I'll do what is right," said the child, as he gave her a kiss and bounded away, in answer to his mother's call.

When Effie sought her bed that night, it was to dream of future happiness, which she must pass through weary seasons of trial to gain.

She had lived very economically, and one hundred dollars of her six months earnings had been *cached* away. She hoped

that another year of strict frugality would give her means to obtain an education, which she determined to have, at all hazards.

A dismal foggy morning dawned upon her entrance into her new routine of life. Mrs. Munson was a nervous sufferer, and had given place to miserable feelings and nauseous panaceas until life had become an oppresive burden.

Effie had not been long in her service before the air she breathed, and the constant, fretful and gloomy complaints of the invalid—seriously affected her health. She had always been subject to attacks of blinding headache, but now the malady increased, and she would sometimes be attacked by paroxysms of pain in the temples, severe enough at times to almost deprive her of reason.

Mrs. Munson could not bear to hear any one complaining, except herself, and Effie's purple lips, crimson cheeks, and stifled moans of pain, were sure to be harbingers of a day of unremitting drudgery. Her mistress "had seen girls before who would hire out and then complain, to get rid of work, but nobody could play that game with her."

Shortly after Effie's instalment into her new home, an unexpected parlor full of company arrived. As it was her business to arrange the tea-table and finish up the polish of of everything in the establishment, she proceeded to do her work with alacrity. The thought of "waiting" because she was a servant, did not enter her innocent cranium, and when the guests were seated at the table, she quietly took her accustomed seat.

"Effie, go to my room and see to Allie. Don't come back till I call you."

The words were uttered in an impatient and commanding tone. Effie quickly obeyed, but when she reached the baby's crib, the child was sleeping quietly.

"Don't come back till I call you."

Could it be possible that hers was henceforth to be the lot of a common servant? She, who had been so kindly cared for in her mother's house, and who during her first six months servitude had been so respectfully treated that she scarcely felt the yoke; was she to be ranked with Irish cooks, who were reared in kitchens and had no aspirations beyond their slavish employments?

To her feverish imagination, the thought was terrible. The merry sound of music and laughter from the rooms below, smote upon her ears with a grating sound.

It was the first company from which she had been excluded when under the same roof with visitors, since her remembrances, save one evening, long ago, when she had gone, at her mother's request to soothe baby Willie to sleep, and had slept herself, before her object was accomplished.

At ten o'clock, the party started homeward. Effie had fallen asleep upon a lounge in the nursery, before Mrs. Munson entered.

An impatient shake aroused her.

"I want to know why you presumed to sit at table with my company?"

"I meant no offence ma'am," pressing her throbbing temples. "I needed a cup of tea, and thought, as there was room for me, I would sit down. I always ate at table with Mrs. Clinton and have done the same here, when you had no company. I did'nt mean to displease you."

"You must remember, hereafter, that no matter how pretty my domestics may consider themselves, I do not allow them to eat with my guests. As it is your first offence, I will overlook it, but I did not know which way to look, when I saw you seat yourself among my acquaintances, as though you were a consequential visitor."

"Were you ashamed of me?"

It was a natural question, prompted by her own words,

but Mrs. Munson could see nothing but impudence in the artless query.

"I am not ashamed of my domestics when they are content to observe their true position, but when they presume upon their beauty and try to place themselves at the head of my affairs, then I think it's time to take the conceit out of them! It will not do to give a servant liberty. If I had kept you away from my private table, you would not have thought of this."

Effie retreated weeping to her own apartment, and Mrs. Munson, who could easily "magnify a mole-hill to a mountain," considered herself grievously outraged.

When they had retired to rest, she entertained her sleepy husband as long as he would listen, by a recital of the evening's annoyance.

"Turn her off if she does'nt suit you and don't bore me to death with servant troubles," he retorted, as he addressed himself to sleep.

"But I can't get along without her. She is so good to Allie, and so neat and handy about her work, that I really could'nt think of parting with her."

"Then, if you can't do without her, for mercy's sake treat her with respect. If she is so necessary to our comfort, I'll see to it that she gets the best that's in my house. I have not paid much attention to her yet, but I'll get acquained with her in the morning. One would think, after all the complaints you have made about careless servants, that a pretty girl, who can do your most particular work and still be interesting enough to be an ornament to society, ought not to be found fault with."

"O, you're a Job's comforter. I wish I had a husband who could sympathize with me."

"Strike out, and see if you can't find such a one," he replied sleepily.

A nervous headache drove Mr. Munson from the house at sunrise. He returned at breakfast to find his chamber scented with disagreeable medicinal odors, and the doctor, ever ready to prescribe for his wife's maladies, imaginary and real, had administered a heavy dose of morphine, which had thrown her into a disturbed slumber.

Effie had been hurried from one part of the house to another, with the baby in her arms, answering the nervous invalid's numerous calls, until the morphine had thrown her into a stupor, and finally appeared at the breakfast table, almost exhausted. She took a seat, opposite Mr. Munson, with Allie struggling in her lap. He noticed that she looked exhausted and weary.

"Give Allie to me, Effie. I know you must be tired. You look ill. Have you been working very hard?"

"I am always busy, sir. But before she employed me, Mrs. Munson said that I must work constantly if I lived with her."

Wouldn't you like to ride out to where your brother is at work? I am going by there to-day, and Allie and you can ride that far, and return when I do in the evening."

"Mrs. Munson couldn't spare me. She'll want me every half minute through the day."

"I want to try an experiment with her. I believe that want of exercise is the basis of her ill health. We'll ride out to-day and give her a chance to wait upon herself."

Although the roads were rocky and dusty, Effie enjoyed the ride with childish zest. Little Allie was delighted with the roughest jolts, and the journey to Esquire Crandall's was soon completed.

"Effie," said Mr. Monson, kindly, after they had ascended the bluffs and began to roll more swiftly over the rocky road —"you are the very image of my lost Carrie. She died

when about your age. When I look at you, I feel almost as if the dead lives again."

"I thought Allie was your only child."

"No, Mrs. Munson is my second wife. My former wife had two children, Hubert and Carrie. Hubert will be at home in a few days. He has been absent for three years, studying law in Philadelphia. He is but twenty years old, but writes that he has mastered most of his studies.

"O how I wish Herbert and I could get to attend a good school! I used to wish there was no such thing as science, but since so many misfortunes have befel me, I have felt a strong desire to elevate my understanding. But the way is so hedged up I sometimes wish I could die."

Mr. Munson secretly resolved to give her the advantages which his own daughter would have had, but did not speak of his intention.

Eliza Crandall was a romping, noisy girl of twelve years, who was much pleased with Effie's visit. Mrs. Crandall took Allie in charge, and to Effie's delight, she and Eliza were soon romping over the meadows with a childish pleasure which the child of adversity had not enjoyed for many months. Herbert was plowing about half a mile from the house and they paid him a surprise visit. He was so busily engaged with holding the plow and calling out "haw" and "gee" to the obedient horses, that he did not see his visitors until Effie threw a clod that knocked off his hat. They then darted behind a cluster of bushes, but he caught a glimpse of his sister's sunny curls, left the horses and ran to meet her.

"Why, sister, your cheeks are too thin but they are as red as roses."

"No wonder they're red, when I haven't had this much out-door exercise before for half a year."

"Mrs. Clinton gave you a holiday?"

"No, but Mr. Munson gave me one. I expect to get such a scolding as poor mortals happily have to endure but seldom, when Mrs. Munson gets hold of me again."

"What does this mean, sister?"

"Just what I say. Mrs. Clinton went abroad and I have had to look up another home. I went to live with a bear, who wears the mask of a beautiful woman. To prevent herself from too close inspection, she keeps herself surrounded by disagreeable odors, sickening enough to turn the stomach of a skunk."

"Why, Effie! what kind of talk is that? I did not know that you had left Mrs. Clinton."

"I *didn't*, she left me. *I* know that I don't live with her now, you better believe."

"You seem in good spirits about it."

"Because, just now I'm free. You wouldn't have thought, last evening, when my mistress had a housefull of company, and I, like a poor innocent simpleton, presumed to seat myself at the end of the table, where there was a vacant seat, and was ordered away because I was a servant, that my spirits were so very good."

"I'd like to see anybody serve me that way," said Eliza. "About the time a bear drives me off to stay with her cubs, I'll try to retreat to my own kennel."

"Suppose you had no kennel?" said Effie.

"'Circumstances alter cases,' I suppose; but I'd try to hunt a stye of some description in which to house myself," was the reply.

"O, Herbert! I wish we had a little house, and could live together and go to school."

"We must earn something to live upon first, my dear little philosopher."

Herbert was admonished by the stamping of his restless steeds that he must not be idle, and with a promise to meet his sister at noon, he went on with his work.

"I tell you," said Eliza, "the fashionables and would-be aristocracy of our famous cities, are many of them too nice to associate with their betters. Mrs. Morton hired Lucy Jonson to do her work and wait upon the children. She had never been out to service before, and committed the unpardonable sin of seating herself at the family table. Mrs. Morton ordered her to wait until the family, children and all, had finished their repast. She did as directed; but instead of eating the leavings, when the rest left the table, she prepared herself an extra tea. Mrs. Morton scolded, and she replied with an innocent look, 'I thought your supper was nice enough for me, but you appeared to think it wan't, so I am preparing the best the larder affords. Don't be concerned about me, I shall do nicely.'

"Mrs. Morton was outwitted, and turned her off for spite. Mother was glad to engage her services, and she has lived with us for more than a year. I don't know what we'll do when she gets married; but Pa says I'm big and homely enough to help do the work, and I suppose I am.

"Mrs. Morton has tried many indirect ways to engage Lucy again, but I tell you, girls *can* be independent in Oregon, if they *will* be so. But I know no one in the city who wants me, who will do better by me than Mrs. Munson does. Mr. Munson is very kind, and I'm going to try to stand it a year for his sake and Allie's."

"May-be, *I* would!" was the sarcastic reply. The winding notes of the dinner horn echoed through the hills and valleys, and sounded musically over the farmer's broad fields.

"How I love the exhilirating life of the country. It is so different from the enervating, indoor existence of a pent-up town, that I dread the thought of returning to artificial life" said Effie as she was joined by her brother, who was leading his horses to the barn.

"Sister, I'm going to the mines. This plodding existence won't suit me. The Rogue River diggings are all the rage now, and if you can stay in the city without me, for one year I will then return with gold enough to set you out in style. Before I go, however, I must try to hunt a home for you, where you can be contented. My time here will be out this week, and I will try what I can do."

"Never mind me, brother, I can stay at Mr. Munson's while you are gone. *He* is very kind, and if I do get a scolding occasionally from his wife, I can endure it if I know that you are making a raise for 'the good time coming,'"

"Very well: I can stand it if you can, but I would much rather see you more pleasantly situated, if possible."

Mr. Crandall's house was the abode of kindness and hospitality. The ample board was loaded with the best beef, butter, fruit and vegetables of the season, and the stiff "upper ten" manners of city life were modified by agreeable chat, and the desire of the host and his agreeable lady to make their guests "feel at home."

The house was a characteristic specimen of Oregon mansions in general, being a large two-story building, with upper and lower verandahs, many windows, and of durable workmanship.

Most of the rooms were unfurnished, but the clean well-polished fir floors, and the fire-places filled with green oak bushes, and surrounded by numerous flower pots, gave a refreshing appearance to the otherwise undecorated rooms.

"We intend to have furniture some day; but we do not need such things badly enough to mortgage our possessions to obtain them. We might spend five thousand dollars for furniture, at the rate it sells in this country, and then we couldn't hardly see it in this house," said Mrs. Crandall, whose practical good sense illustrates the principles and theories entertained by many wives of pioneer farmers.

The visit, like all other pleasant things, came to a close, and when Effie took a seat in the buggy, with Allie in her arms, to return to her mistress, she wondered how the day could have passed so quickly away.

Mrs. Munson had remained in her room during the forenoon, thinking all manner of bitter things against her husband, who had left with Effie and Allie, not even deigning to tell her when he would return.

She thought herself the most neglected of miserable mortals, and thinking to spite her husband, she ordered a horse to be saddled and was off for a ride in the afternoon, believing that the exercise would almost finish her existence. Her husband had tried in vain, for many days, to persuade her to ride in the carriage, but Dr. Gwin had forbidden her to do so, and she would not go. She rode away at a brisk pace, and was gone until after her husband's return. Instead of being so sick that he would get no sleep that night, as she had predicted, her cheeks were rosy red; and though tired, she felt no pain. She tried to act cross, but the unusual feeling of returning health made her feel so pleasant that she could not well be angry.

To her own and her husband's surprise, she slept so soundly that she did not hear even Allie's midnight cry for food, and Mr. Munson fed the babe while she was snoring. It was the first night he had spent at home, without helping his wife to a drink, or the camphor, or a warm free-stone to her feet, or a cold wet cloth to head, for almost two years. He had become so thoroughly drilled to the ordeal of rising at all hours, that for a long time he had done so as a matter of consequence; not stopping to question her need of his services, but this one night's rest spoiled him. He protested that it was acting against nature for folks to be awake at all hours, and he would not afterwards submit to the trial without so much demurring that she soon became unwilling to trouble him.

He told her one day, after witnessing some of her overbearing acts, that Effie *must* be kindly dealt with.

"If you don't treat her as you ought, I will adopt her and board her with some respectable private family and send her to school. She is no common girl, and you must not regard her as such."

Mrs. Munson resolved to make her husband believe that Effie was kindly treated, but intended to make her feel her bitterness in many ways, and she lived in accordance with her resolution.

Herbert purchased two Indian ponies,—packed one with provisions, and the other with his blankets and himself—and proceeded to the mines.

"Never mind, sister," said he, as he gave her a parting kiss, "I won't be gone more than a year, and when I come back, I'll take you out of folk's kitchens."

CHAPTER XXIV.

HUBERT.

Mr. Munson's business called him unexpectedly to San Francisco, and his wife had ample opportunities during his absence, to indulge her selfish caprices.

During the nights of his absence, Effie had to sleep in her bedroom to answer frequent calls, and wait upon the baby, and throughout the days, an incessant routine of treadmill duties, kept her constantly employed.

A young gentleman called one day, about dinner time, and when the dinner bell rung, Effie, who had learned the rules of society, took Allie with her to the garden. She thought

the handsome, dark-eyed young stranger must be Hubert Munson, but as servants do not get introductions to visitors, she could only judge by his resemblance to his father.

"Mother, who is that pretty, curly-headed girl in the garden? Why don't you invite her in to dinner?"

"I'm not in the habit of inviting domestics to eat with my guests. She is a girl who pretends that she never served before she came to Oregon. Mrs. Clinton had her first and nearly ruined her by indulgence, and your father doesn't do much better when he's at home; though I've taught her to know her place when he's gone."

"Her place *ought to be* among daisies and sunshine and kindness, or I'm no judge of physiognomy."

"I do wonder if you are going to be as democratic as your father is? I'll cut off those shiny curls of hers one of these days, and see what she'll resemble. She spends half an hour every morning, in brushing them into ringlets."

Hubert knew his step-mother too well to openly oppose her whims, but his interest in the "golden-headed bird," as he mentally styled her, was augmented by Mrs. Munson's unpardonable coldness. He hastily finished his dinner and went to the garden where Effie was weaving a coronet of white rose-buds, and sprigs of forget-me-not, for Allie's head. He introduced himself; talked and laughed with Allie and complimented Effie's skill in wreath-forming until she felt at ease in his presence. She had imagined him to be a stately, demure looking lawyer, glorying in the dignity of his profession and his inapproachable demeaner; but as she listened to his remarks, the thought of "how like his father," made her respect and love him with childish confidence.

"Come, Effie, come! I don't keep you here to play with flowers. Allow me to introduce you to the dinner table," called Mrs. Munson from the nursery window.

Hubert took Allie and continued his walk in the garden, hoping that when Effie's duties in doors were done, she would come after him. But when, an hour after she had left his side, he saw her take a seat beside his mother at the nursery window, with her sewing in her hand, he gave up the idea of further conversation with her for that day.

The next day, when dinner was announced, Effie went again with Allie, to the garden. Hubert looked at his mother with a meaning smile, and saying, "Eat your dinner alone ma'am, I'll wait for better company," he mockingly bowed himself out into the garden and addressed himself to Effie.

"Why don't you eat your dinner, Mr. Munson?"

"Don't call me *Mr. Hubert* is my name in my father's home. I choose the company of birds and flowers, always in preference to dinner, unless hunger is very impudent."

"Why, there are no birds in the garden."

"There are two, Allie and you."

Effie blushed at this unexpected speech, which she hardly knew whether to accept as compliment, flattery, or satire, and could think of nothing to say in reply. Hubert was a little confused at his own remark, and hardly knew what to say next.

"Wouldn't you like to attend school?" It was the only question he could think of to ask.

"Yes, sir, but I can't go till brother returns from the mines. He started a few weeks ago and expects to be absent about a year."

"Have you a brother who is grown?"

"He is not yet seventeen, but he's a man in energy and a gentleman in principle."

Effie's cheek glowed with feeling as she spoke thus of her brother, and Hubert, who was not looking for such a spirited remark, was astonished.

"There is much genuine excellence in this little beauty,

and it's bound to develop itself," he mentally ejaculated.

"Have you no father or mother?"

He had asked Mrs. Munson the same question, but she had replied that she did not "inquire into the antecedents and pedigrees of her domestics, and she could not see why he should."

Effie drew a locket from a pocket in the folds of her dress. "My father died when I was but eight years old. Mother died last summer upon the Plains. Here are the daguerreotypes of my mother, two brothers and myself, taken when we were in comfortable circumstances. It is almost the only vestige of bygone days that I possess."

Mrs. Munson called her and she tripped away to the dining room, to meet her angry frown.

"The next time a meal is ready, I shall expect you to go to your room and sew until you are summoned," said her mistress, as she sailed out of the room, too angry to meet Hubert's mischievous smile with composure.

He examined the daguerreotypes with careful scrutiny. The locket contained four places for miniatures, and from each of these, there peeped a handsome, intelligent face.

Mrs. Goodwin's pale blue eyes, brown, glossy hair, firmly set lips, and pleasing expression, reminded him of a *mother*, who for many years had slept in a silent tomb of an eastern cemetery. Herbert's bold, boyish, handsome face, and Willie's sparkling eyes and broad forehead, he pronounced magnificent. But his eyes dwelt longest upon the dimpled cheeks, rounded shoulders, deep blue eyes, and clear complexion of Effie, whose likeness he pronounced, his ideal of truth and loveliness.

Mr. Munson returned from California earlier than was expected, and his wife's scheme, for keeping Effie secluded, even at meal-time, was broken up. He ruled in some things, and his intriguing wife knew that it would not do to oppose

him when his will was fully roused. After his return, Effie was permitted to sit in the parlor and hear their conversation. Every word of Hubert's narative respecting his life as a student and traveller, she listened to with deep interest.

"Here, Effie, is the locket you showed me to-day," he remarked in the evening. "You need not be ashamed of *your* family. I know a washerwoman's daughter, who turns up her nose at honest laborers." He glanced meaningly at his step-mother, whose mother he well knew had been a laundress, but she choose to ignore the fact, and nothing fired her temper so quickly as the most distant allusion to her mother's plebian vocation. She left the room in a rage, and the attack of nervous headache which lasted through the night, during which time she kept Effie constantly running to supply her wants, warned her mischievous step-son to refrain from such intimations in the future for Effie's sake.

"Father, are you going to keep that girl in constant servitude? I wish I was twenty-one. My money should protect her if it was at my disposal."

"She is too proud-spirited to be dependent. After she has lived with me a year, I intend to offer to board her with some private family, give her spending money and pay her tuition fees, as a reward for her extra trouble here. She will learn many things while here, which, though seemingly hard to bear, will prepare her for life's vicissitudes."

Hubert said nothing further at that time for or against his father's views, though he could not forbear a thought that it was not half so much for Effie's good as for his wife's wishes and his own peace, that he wished her to "prepare for life's vicissitudes."

Business soon called Hubert away from home, but his letters always contained tokens of remembrance for his father's protege.

"*A letter from Herbert!*" Effie exclaimed, one evening

as she met Mr. Munson at the door, holding up an envelope directed in her brother's well-known hand-writing.

Rogue River or Jacksonville Mines, June 1st.

EVER DEAR SISTER:—How I wish you could see mining operations for one day. I am swimming gloriously. The first day after my arrival, whom should I meet but Pat. O'-Donaldson. 'A fool for luck' is the old adage, and I thought it was verified to a certainty, when after prospecting for a few unfortunate days, I struck a rich mine where we are almost coining the precious ore. Pat is at work with me as equal partner. Don't get excited over this 'gold news,' for fortune is capricious, and may turn against me at any moment, notwithstanding the present flattering prospect.

"A world in miniature is here. I never was in Sodom, but from what I have read of that iniquitous city, I think Yreka or Jacksonville would well compare with it. I should have stated before, that I went first to the Yreka mines, thinking that those of Oregon were not so good; but I could do but little there and did not tarry long.

"To give you a description of the daily routine of wickedness that shocks the uninitiated, would be an injustice to your unspotted imagination; but as an idea of life in the mines will interest you, I will give you a brief description of my own experience and observation.

"The first thing I done after the goal was reached and O'Donaldson found, was to unpack and liberate my ponies and erect a tent of fir boughs, green with foliage, as a repository for my provisions, gun, &c., &c., &c.

"We became discouraged, when at the expiration of the fourth day of search without 'raising the color,' as the miners say, we started for the tent not knowing what to do next. I struck my pick into the ground and gathered up some faggots, with which to cook our supper, and when, with an arm full of wood, I stooped to extricate the pick from the earth up came a piece of the shining lucre! You needn't tell anybody, but when I picked up that first piece of virgin gold, I shook as if in an ague fit. It weighs about two dollars. I have found other pieces much larger, but the first one I regard as the pivot upon which my fortune was turned.

"We prepare our own bread, beef and coffee. I wonder

what Maurice would think if he could see the quantities of *bacon* and *lard* that are consumed in the mines. I do the cooking and Pat washes the dishes, consisting of a frying-pan, bread-pan, two tin cups and plates, and a pair of jack-knives. Don't laugh. We are as well provided with hardware and cutlery as the oldest miners are. A few bake bread in skillets with lids to them, but scientific miners pronounce them *green*."

"The Sabbath amusements are more shocking to me than all of the week day rowdyisms. 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy,' sounds like solemn mockery, if suggested by a conscientious person, among a people who market, trade, race horses, gamble and imbibe strong drink, throughout each holy day. A miner rarely works upon the Sabbath, but he persists in doing what is worse. I trust that one gold hunter at least will not enter the vortex of ruin.

"My pocket Bible, which since our mother's death, I am sorry to confess I had seldom opened, proves a welcome friend on Sundays, when I can retire to the mountain 'gulches,' as we term the rugged gold placers, and remain alone for hours.

"I had retired one Sunday, from the *idly busy throng*, when I chanced to open my Bible at the fly leaves, where I found some pencil-lines deliberately traced upon a sheet of tissue paper, so neatly folded that I had not before discovered it. How my heart bounded as I perused the last lines my sainted mother ever penned! I will transcribe them for you as I cannot part with the original document:

"'*Platte River Valley, June 19th.*

"'Sometime, my dear boy, when you are turning the leaves of this Book of books, this little sheet of paper, the last your mother will ever trace, will meet your moistening eyes. I feel that my pilgrimage upon earth is almost ended. When I look upon my loved ones, who will so soon be left to struggle on with toil and poverty, alone in the wide, cold world, my heart bleeds with compassion. But 'when thy father and mother forsake thee, then the Lord will take thee up.' You, my dear children, have heard me repeat this precious promise perhaps a thousand times, but never did I feel the force of the declaration so plainly as now. When I reflect upon

this promise, I feel that though the parting is terrible, yet I can resign you almost willingly.

"'My dying admonition to you, my dear, eldest born, is that you will preserve your *present integrity*, and strive while you live to honor the religion of your parents. Your brother and sister will hearken to you as their elder brother, and, my darling son, *I trust you!*

"'Don't neglect the mental improvement of Effie and Willie and yourself. Be not eager to amass worldly possessions, but strive to 'lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where moth and rust doth not corrupt, and where thieves break not through and steal.'

> Soon may we meet again, meet ne'er to sever;
> Soon may peace wreath her chain 'round us forever.
> Our hearts may then repose, secure from worldly woes,
> And songs of praise shall close, never; no never."

"'My mortal remains will moulder to dust in the desert, but if spirits are permitted to return to earth, I will be often near you. Adieu, loved ones, adieu.'

"I hope, my dear sister, that the admonitions of such a mother will not be lost upon us, but that our lives may prove an honor and blessing to her memory.

"I will often write you, and the responses will be most anxiously looked for. When I collect gold enough to pay for our education and give me a start in business, I will return to you. Perhaps I cannot return before next Spring, as I am determined that this attempt at mining shall be my last. Your loving brother, HERBERT."

Effie read the letter with emotions of joy and sadness.

"God of my mother," she exclaimed fervently, "enable us to be indeed, 'as seed to serve Thee!'"

Mothers! Mothers! Have you never penned choice gems of thought for your children to read and profit by, when you shall have departed from earth? If you have not, pray do it now; for the time will come when those you love and for whom you toil and suffer, will look upon your heart-messages, as pearls of countless worth!

After tea, Effie took the letter into the parlor and gave it to Mr. Munson.

"Would you like to read it?" she asked. I think it's very interesting, and it's just like Herbert. One moment he will be full of boyish animation, and perhaps the next he will be talking like a preacher. And his letters are just like his conversation."

"When Effie retired to rest she dreamed of golden mountains and gorgeous splendor, such as in her day-dreams, she had never imagined. She arose the next morning, feverish with an excitement which Hubert's unexpected arrival only augmented.

At his request she gave him her brother's letter and busied herself with household duties, trying to stay her beating pulse with extra bodily exertion. When the fever cooled, a feeling of extreme lassitude overcame her. She strove against it, but the day was exceedingly warm, and about noon she sunk upon the floor of the dining-room exhausted.

Mrs. Munson at first accused her of pretending to be ill, but finally became alarmed and sent for Dr. Gwin. He came, but prescribed no remedy except gentle exercise and quietude. She followed his directions and was well as usual in a few days.

"I don't see why I don't have as good a chance to get well as other folks have," said Mrs. Munson to her husband and Hubert."

"I see through it all," replied her husband. "You have money with which to pay doctor bills. Effie has not, and nature cures her."

"Absurd!" she retorted angrily.

"Do you believe that Dr. Gwin would have went away without prescribing medicine, if Effie had been a rich man's daughter?"

"Do you believe doctors are that dishonest?"

"Many of them are. Of course they must have a living, and it is to their interest for folks to be sick. I know one

honest physician in Oregon, Dr. West, he keeps a drug-store, but says that the less medicine a man takes the better off he is."

"I shall take medicine at all events," was the reply.

"I wouldn't be the walking 'apothecary shop' you are, for all the wealth of the Union," said Hubert.

"When I need a lecture, I'll apply elsewhere for it," was the spiteful rejoinder. And Mrs. Munson left the room.

"Father, have you read Herbert Goodwin's letter to his sister?"

"Yes, why?"

"Because it's a gem in its way, for a boy like him to compose. His jovial disposition, softened by a loftiness of delicate feeling and elevated by a nobleness of soul, speaks in every sentence. I tell you, father, Effie Goodwin's family is, or rather has been, one of no common mould. And more, I tell you plainly that that girl's destiny and mine will be linked together. I would like to see her mind well stored with useful knowledge, but if she cannot be educated, when she gets old enough to marry, I'll take her as she is. I tell you this so that you may decide about how she is to be treated in your house."

"Your mother cannot spare her now. When her brother returns, she will have time enough to attend to her studies."

"She lives like a galley slave! I'm tired of seeing a girl of her age ruining her form by nursing children, when she ought to be dividing her time between the meadows and the school room. If you tell mother what I have said, she will be more exacting than ever. She doesn't treat her any too well now."

"Well, well, my son, I *had* hoped that you would not think particularly about the girls for some years to come."

"Have you ought to say against my ideal, father?"

"No, I feel a fatherly interest in the girl, but cannot say

that I am pleased with your determination. However, I am glad you have been so frank."

One of the wonders of the world, is the undeniable fact that second wives, no matter how great their faults, always exert an unbounded influence over their husbands, such as the patient and loving "first wife" seldom thinks of assuming. Husbands of second or third wives are not aware of this, but the fact is apparent to all beholders.

Second wives and step-mothers are often the embodiments of perfection, but whether they are or not, is all the same with the enamoured consort.

Munson could not keep his son's secret without the help of his wife, and she gave him no peace until he agreed to tell his son that unless Effie remained with them as a servant during the time for which she had been engaged, he would not consent to the union, but would do all in his power to prevent it.

Mrs. Munson grew more petulent and exacting than ever. Effie could do nothing to please her, and the numerous scoldings she received were very hard for a proud spirit to endure.

A note of a few lines was concealed in her trunk, which she found time to read and re-read every day; the only words of love that Hubert had yet bestowed upon the trusting lone one, whose spirit cried out night and day for *love*.

Reader, let us glance at a letter, that on a rainy, dreary Sunday in August, Herbert is reading in his tent with an expression of deepest interest:

"I wrote you, my dear brother, in my last epistle, a description of Hubert Munson. What do you think? The accomplished, worthy and noble young man, has declared that he loves me and isn't ashamed to own it.

"You will think me young to be dreaming of love, but the self-reliance I have had to cherish, is fast transforming the thoughtless, laughing child, into a calm, reflecting woman. In stature, I am almost grown; but in *intelligence* and *in for-*

mation, I am as a child. O, how I long for you to come back and go with me to school!

"I half believe that Mrs. Munson suspects Hubert's attachment for me, for she is crosser than ever, and contrives innumerable devices to keep us from meeting. Mr. Munson treats me kindly, but he begins to affect condescension in his graciousness, and my proud spirit inwardly repels forced urbanity. I wonder if I ever *will* be free?

"Don't think your sister is desponding. Far from it. Although the life I am leading is distasteful, yet it might be worse, and perhaps I need this trial to strengthen me for still greater ones.

"Little Allie is my pet and plaything. Blessings on her innocent existence! No worldly conventionalisms can throw a shade of darkness between *us*. I wonder what makes most grown up folks so steel-hearted? How willing our mother always was to listen to what we one day considered heart troubles. One consolation remains to us: you have me for a heart-tried friend, and I have you for the same true blessing. I can't believe that Hubert possesses the least vestige of worldly selfishness. How much his name sounds like your own! But you will say 'that a girl not yet fourteen, had better be thinking of pantalettes and pinafores than cupid's arrows. Well, I think so too, though I've been captured before I knew it.

"But my mistress is calling and I must bid you adieu. Do write soon, for your letters are like beams of sunshine in my dreary way. Your loving sister, EFFIE."

CHAPTER XXV.

MRS. WELDON'S OREGON HOME.

MRS. WELDEN speedily prepared for a removal to the abode of her kind friends, whose timely offer of aid, had

beamed upon her weary way, like summer rains and sunbeams upon a withering plant. Ada's smile was a soothing balm to her desponding spirit, and Maurice, the tried and faithful friend of other days, was now more anxious than ever to promote her comfort.

A new life—a tiny infant form—the baby boy of her desolate widowhood, was ushered into existence a few days after she had reached the home of her friends. As she gazed upon it's tiny, dimpled form with maternal fondness, the tears fell thick and fast upon its velvet cheek. She was looking forward to the gloomy array of toil and privation before her; the weary days of toil and hours of anguish, which had been and still would be hers, and the calm tear-drops gave way to stifling sobs.

Ada was instantly at her side.

"Come, Meggie, it's too late to cry now. Remember, 'a hen can scratch for a dozen chicks as easily as for one.' See your innocent baby. He's just the image of his father. Here, Johnny, let your bungling nurse arrange your finery to better advantage. Don't cry when *I* take you," affecting a playful mood of importance.

"O, Ada! how am I to get along with four children, the oldest not yet seven years old?"

"Remember the adage about the hen and chickens," she replied, as she paced the room with the child who evidently thought himself roughly handled, tossed to and fro in her arms.

"You'll *kill* him, Ada," said the mother, anxiously.

"Now, listen! Here you've been crying like a booby, because you think he'll be an extra burden on your hands, and the moment he gets into a little imaginary danger, you cry out as though his life were worth a farthing! Mercy! who wants such troubles as this?" she said with an air of drollery that made the invalid smile. "What a pity," she

resumed, "that we haven't got a sugar trough in which to rock this miniature Oregonian. He was born in a log-cabin, and to carry out the romance, he ought to be rocked in a Hoosier cradle. What *is* the matter, Meggie? Why *can't* you be cheerful? It won't be three weeks till you're roaming over these hills like a little girl. My word for it, the out-door exercise you'll get in the country, will be of more service to you than all the fashionable medicines and enervating laziness of city life."

"I'd like to know who'll mind the baby? I always had a nurse in Rockville, who spent all of her time with the children."

"We'll let Dame Nature nurse 'em here. Now, you're spoiling that child. He'll sleep two-thirds of his first six months into fat and healthfulness, if you'll let him alone. Let me have the care of him. I'll tell you what I'll do. I have a theory of my own about children, and if you'll let me practice it, I'll take the whole management of him into my hands."

"You can teach me how to manage him. You'll find me eager to learn."

"Well, if I'm to be teacher, I guess I'll begin at once with my lessons. Don't nurse him only just when he needs attention. Don't humor him to a lighted candle whenever he wants it. Make him know that his couch is his proper place until he gets over baby sleepiness. Maurice can make a little wagon, and Cilia and Howard will delight in drawing him over the prairie in fair weather. Don't allow him anything but his natural nourishment until he gets some teeth. Teach him to love the bath-tub. Follow these directions, and six months will pass away before you begin to know much about trouble with him. Meanwhile, you can jump the rope, climb the hills, run races with the squirrels, and grow blithe and active."

"If it ever quits raining," she answered, with an impatient sigh. "I thought the February holidays were the harbingers of spring, but now, the first of March is here, and the rain, mud and fog are more disagreeable than ever."

"O, Meggie, you're desponding now. Sunshine will come in its proper place."

"But the Oregon City folks say that we will be compelled to keep fires to *warm by* most of the time, all the summer mornings and evenings."

"So much the better for us. The evenings and mornings here are always cool. There are poisonous vapors around the dwellings of man that ought to be consumed daily. When summer evening fires are unfashionable, ague is always prevalent. Good fires are as destructive to poisonous vapors as the forked lightnings are. We have but few thunder-storms in this sequestered region, but nature has provided a substitute. We *need* fires regularly, and they answer the purposes of electricity, without being half so dangerous."

"O, well, you can theorize anything into beauty. I love to hear you explain away my pettish opinions. I had begun to think, but recent experience has proved my arrogance, that I had become proof against my old propensity to pine after lost possessions. Oh! I have passed through so many days of darkness already, and still the weary path of life that I must traverse alone, appears so rugged, that I almost feel compelled to give up the weary struggle of weakness against misfortune."

"'Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof,' my dear. Herbert Goodwin used to say to his sister, 'Come, Effie, let's not climb the hill till we get to it.' That advice I now give you, hoping that you won't worry any more about a living, till you begin to grow hungry."

"But I feel so *dependant* here. If I had means of my own

to live upon, so that I would not feel myself a pensioner, I think I might be contented."

"If you harp upon that string, you will get Maurice and his matronly wife into a quarrel with you, in which you'll get used up, like Mrs. Green did when she and Mrs. Gray fell out. Mr. Welden and pa were equal partners in all their possessions. I received my share of the remaining possessions, apart from the land, in the effects brought to Oregon. The land is honestly your children's. We are not afraid of losing anything by your sojourn with us, and if we should, it's our own look out, not yours. Now don't talk any more. You are weary and must sleep. The children will stay with me in the back room."

"Ada, darling, you are the dearest of consolers. Perhaps I won't have such desponding and impatient freaks, when I get stronger."

"I told you not to talk," putting her hand playfully over the invalid's mouth and imprinting a kiss upon her forehead. "I'm going to enforce order in this house, and one of my strictest rules is that you shall obey me in all things, until you become as healthy as I am," and she left her patient alone.

"There is a marked difference between splitting rails and studying medicine, Ada," said Maurice, as he came in from the woods to his dinner.

"And there is a marked difference between your appearance as a pioneer farmer and a dressed up student," she replied with a smile.

"Which style do you prefer, gipsy?"

"A *man* looks better than a *dandy*, if a clean hickory shirt and corduroys *are* considered rather outlandish habiliments for a genteel land proprietor," she answered, glancing at her husband's substantial, unpretending attire.

"Did you consider me a 'dandy,' when you first saw me at Rockville?"

"I didn't think much about it. Some one told me that you were preparing yourself for practice, and I could see nothing about you then, but sickening pill-boxes, shelves full of patent medicines, arrays of surgical instruments, and a musty office filled full of medical books, alarmingly suggestive of all manner of the 'ills which flesh is heir to.'"

"But you've been foolish enough to become the wife of such a medley of monstrosities, notwithstanding first impressions."

"I found that you were unlike any doctor I ever saw, and I admired your singularity."

"Just say you began to love me, and make a clean breast of it, pet."

"No, I *didn't*. I'm not over sentimental any how; I never cared very much about you until after we left Platte River, that's a fact."

"What made you care so much for me *then?* As you've begun to relate your experience, I'd like to hear it through. I have been certain of your regard ever since that memorable conversation under the cottonwoods; do you recollect? Let's hear the whole story, puss."

Ada's mood changed instantly from levity to seriousness, as she threw up the locks that shaded her husband's forehead and looked into his eyes with wife-like trust.

"I can't talk over the circumstances of our courtship and marriage, without recalling sorrowful scenes. If my parents were living now, and could see how happily we get along together, in spite of poverty, I am sure they would not think that I had wronged them. But I haven't answered your question. When we left you so abruptly upon the Plains, my fountain of affection, so deep that it had lain comparatively dormant, while everything went on smoothly, was

stirred by sudden emotion. 'Still water is deep,' is an old saying, but we know that when still water is forced into action, it has power in proportion to its depth."

"Well argued, my sensible philosopher," said Maurice, kissing her fondly. "I'd rather hear your calm reasoning than all the sentimental silliness that was ever spoken by shallow-pated lovers."

"It's changing the subject a little, but I would like to know when you mean to write to your father? He would be glad to know where you are and what you are doing."

"I sent him a copy of the 'Weekly ———,' containing a marked notice of our marriage, but I will not write until I can tell him that I have plenty of this world's goods, and a home he needn't be ashamed to see me occupy."

"Why not, Maurice?"

"He was so cross with me because I couldn't fancy pill-making and drug-mixing, that I want him to know that I'm able to live without the least help from him, before I begin a correspondence."

"I thought your father was a Hydropathic physician."

"No, he strongly advocates pills and pork. I believe myself, that they ought to be classed together."

"Where did you get your theory respecting hygiene?"

"From nature and observation and you."

"From *me?*"

"Yes, you."

"What do you mean?"

"I had a theory of my own before I saw you, but never had the courage to reduce it to practice until I remarked your glowing cheeks and perfect health. I observed one day to your father that yours was the most healthful countenance with which I was acquainted. 'Yes,' he replied, 'and nature has reared her, is the only reason. If my early life had been spent as hers has been, I would live to be an old man, but drugs, long ago, ruined my constitution. The secret of Ada's good health is proper clothing, bathing, exercise and food, and *no* strong medicine.' Although I was studying medicine in an Allopathic college, I from that moment resolved to follow no dictates but those of nature, common sense and conscience. How well I have observed that resolution, you can judge."

"I am satisfied with the result, Maurice. And we'll see what nature can do for Meggie and the children, before a great while."

Mrs. Welden awoke from a refreshing sleep. Ada was listening for her slightest movement, and entering the room, she drew aside a window curtain and bade her look out upon an undulating landscape that was illumined by a flood of mellow radience from the setting sun.

"How lovely are thy works, O Lord," she murmered, as she gazed upon the beauteous scene. Groves of dark evergreens were scattered here and there over the natural meadow; hazel thickets were begining to show early buds; the sweet bunch grass was waving in regular windrows in the pleasant breeze, and the knotty white-oaks—not yet showing signs of returning vegetation—were alive with the music of wrens and meadow-larks.

An eddying breeze stirred the boughs of the gigantic oak near the window, and ten thousand pearly rain drops, burnished by the sun-rays, dropped from the naked branches, and the agitation of the tree was stilled.

"How could I have been so peevish this morning, I wonder? As if the rain were unnecessary, I was complaining of its visits. Ada, you must have a very poor opinion of my boasted trust in the Lord, when you hear me complaining so peevishly of what He does."

"O no, Meggie, you were nervous and weary this morning, and your mind naturally turned to melancholy reflections.

You are now refreshed, and can see beauty in the things you would have complained of a few hours ago."

"Dear girl, you can show me excellencies in myself that I cannot discover without your aid. If my latent good had been proclaimed to my associates in days gone by, by such a chronicler as you, much that I have done amiss, might not now be thrown between me and happiness.

"Let by-gones be by-gones, my dear friend. You and I, in this delightfol haunt, will have few necessities, and *may* have few aspirations.

"Let us see how easily happiness can be secured, if we are only willing to accept it at the hands of God and nature."

As Mrs. Welden's health improved, she began to live, as Ada said, "half of the time in the hills." The feeble step and languid motion was gone, and when Johnnie was three months old, his mother looked as healthy and vigorous as he did. The older children grew tough and tawny, and although their fastidious mother at first disliked the idea of their wearing coarse substantial clothing, she soon found that she could afford no other for everyday wear. She soon became accustomed to the change from plaids, merinos, and embroideries, to drillings and calicoes, though her handiwork in the fitting of garments and arrangement of proper blending and contrasting colors was so different from the taste, or rather want of it among the most of her neighbors, that their clothing never looked "shabby" or "common."

A few years passed fleetly away, and no one would have scarcely recognised in the gentle, subdued and winning manner of the widow, the pettish, exacting, selfish, and haughty person whom we first introduced to the reader as the wife of John Welden, the retail merchant.

She was indebted to her benefactor for countless favors, but they would receive no remuneration for their services,

in consequence of which she resolved to give the destitute the spare means at her disposal.

She obtained plain sewing to do for bachelor neighbors, and, as her work commanded a high price, she gradually added to her stock of comforts, until when her four years residence were completed, the land which she could not have obtained without the help of friends, was sold for a handsome sum. With this she fitted-up a snug little home upon her childrens' claim, where she was soon surrounded by happiness, prosperity, and contentment. Three miles from her abode was an academy, which her children attended in all weather, without danger of catching fashionable colds.

Her Gothic, vine-clad cottage was situated on an eminence overlooking the broad, dark Willamette river; deep green forests of pine and fir—romantic hills, valleys, and mountains—and many acres of undulating fern and grass-covered prarie, over which, in early summer, wild flowers and wild strawberries vied with each other in the enjoyment they bestowed so lavishly on mankind.

Ada was visiting with her one afternoon, shortly after the new cottage had been erected, and they were standing upon the portico, speaking of the contrast between the Ohio and Willamette rivers, when Mrs. Welden related the following incident:

"It was a bleak November evening, and I was standing in the verandah of my Rockville home, and looking through the thinly-falling snow-flakes towards the crushing ice, which was fast forming into a solid, mighty, chrystal bridge across the lovely river. The wind howled fitfully through the lattice, and I drew the folds of a cashmere shawl closely around my head and shoulders. I was indulging in a deep reverie, which might have continued until dark, but for a wretched-looking mendicant who mounted the steps and besought me,

I thought rather impudently, for charity. I repulsed her with bitter scorn, and thought no more about her until a week afterwards, when I learned that she had perished of hunger and cold in a rude hut in the grocery end of the village. The night after Johnnie was born, I dreamed that she came to me, mocking my desolation and cursing me horribly —I awoke in a fright, but never had the courage to tell you of this until now."

Ada's lustrous orbs filled with tears. "I remember the beggar and the circumstance well, but did not knew that she had been in need of food till it was too late to help her.— Her husband was a confirmed inebriate, and it is said he abused her shamefully."

"I awoke from that horrible dream, determined to make amends as far as possible for my selfish acts, by dividing my stores, when I had them, in the future. 'There is that scattereth and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty."

"Do you know Meggie I sometimes thought that you were too liberal for a widow of your scanty resources. One fall in particular, you gave away so much of your winter's provisions, to a family of sick immigrants, that I was almost vexed with you. I shall not have such thoughts again. We won't go wrong, if we'll obey Holy Writ."

"I saw a lady on whose brow,
Haughtiness stamped her sternest mien;
The humble beggar passed her door
With *want* stamped on her garments poor;
"O, lady have compassion now,"
The proud lip curled with deep disdain.

"Go to," she said, "and come no more,
Bread I have not for such as you;
I thank you not for coming here,
Complaining, shedding thus the tear
Of false deceit, at honor's door;
As though such stories all were true."

She turned with haughty step aside,
The mendicant pursued her way
To a rude hut where want had stared,
And drunken revelries had glared,
And death and hunger side by side,
Fought desperately for the sway.

The scene is changed. What do we see?
The haughty proud one's wealth is gone,
She's traveled far, her husband's dead,
And children cry to her for bread,
'Twas hard to obtain food for three,
And now there's another one.

She sleeps: dreams of the misty past
Flit by her, in her troubled sleep;
The phantom mendicant comes by
With triumph beaming from her eye,
"You would not heed that cry, my last,
Now think of your own woes and weep."

She wakes; 'tis now too late to make
Full restitution for past sins,
But then," she cried, "while I have life
To battle against hunger's strife,
The needy I'll no more forsake,—
He ne'er does good, who ne'er begins."

* * * Full many a time has dark despair,
In days gone by o'ershadowed her,
But faith and mercy have prevailed,
Oft, where the darkest woes assailed
And she now turns with pleasure where
Greetings of tried ones gladden her.

CHAPTER XXVI.

LETTERS.

"*New York, October* 1*st*, 18'.

"This evening, my dearest one, I arrived at the St. Nicholas and engaged lodgings for a fortnight, ate my dinner,

strolled down Broadway until tired, and then sought my room to write to you.

"You no doubt have wondered at my unaccountable absence, as I have no idea that my worthy father has deemed it advisable to inform you of my whereabouts. I trust that the course he pursued with me is at least judicious, even if it does seem unkind. He told me, the morning before I last saw you, that he desired me to travel and see as much of the world as possible, while you are preparing yourself for the duties of life. Of course, the thought of leaving you was painful, but I could see no way to ameliorate your condition at present, and I believe my parents will treat you much better when I am absent, in consideration of your future destiny, than they would if I were near you.

"When your year of servitude, which my father persists in saying will fit you for self-reliance in days to come, (though to be candid with you, I don't believe he'd think of that if his wife thought she could spare you,) shall have passed away, you can then attend the Institute, where a few years' application to study, will fit you for any station. You are perfect now in my eyes, but for your own good, I wish you to learn the sciences. I will keep a journal of my travels over the world, and sketch many scenes of beauty and interest for your tasteful eye, knowing that you will prize them highly for the artist's sake.

"A few years will make some difference in your personal appearance, but the golden ringlets, deep blue eyes, dimpled cheeks, and rosy lips, beautified by a purity of expression, all your own, time will only clothe with deeper loveliness.

"Your miniature, I prize as a beacon to guide me in the path of virtue and honor; and I did not need that truthful expression of yours, 'I'll look at this if tempted to do what is wrong,' to make me believe that the likeness of my 'honorable self' will be duly prized by its fair possessor.

"The way I left you, like a cowardly culprit, is my worst mortification, but father said it must be so. He said that if you had proper confidence in my integrity, you would not distrust me, and that you are too young to be capable of knowing what you do want, although he admits that you are dear to him because you resemble my departed sister.

"I told him that if childishness had made you what you

are, I hoped that time would never change you. I believe he is secretly pleased with the whole arrangement, although he will not lay aside his dignity to say so.

"I could indulge in a thousand passionate expressions of my regard for you, but will keep them for future occasions, which, though years must pass before we meet, I often realize in the sweet visions of the night, when I seem to tread the flowery foot-paths of gentle eminences, gather flowers in the shady dells, or listen to the roaring waterfall, with you by my side, whom even now I presume to call *'my own sweet wife.*

"I will not wrong you by requesting you to remember me. *I know you will.* My letters will often visit you, but I can get none from you at present. If you will write when you receive this, and direct to Lisbon, I will probably receive your letter, as I will visit Portugal before spring. But my second gilt-edged sheet is full. I'll try a sheet of foolscap next time, perhaps I can pen what I wish to upon its ample pages.

"Show this letter to my father. I wish him to know that I do nothing clandestinely.

"'*Thou knowest taht I love thee!*'

HUBERT MUNSON."

Another letter was clasped in Effie's hand, but her usual ardor about reading Herbert's epistles, was this time checked by the written words of another and dearer hand.

The dark sorrow that had clouded her existence for three weary months; the feeling that she had been the suffering object of an impulsive young man's duplicity, which her mistress had intimated a score of times, was now cleared away and she was happy. Hope is the heart's own solace, but suspense quickly bringeth despair. She was aroused by an angry command from Mrs. Munson, who ordered her to "prepare the tea-table, and not mope herself to death."

She hurriedly placed the letters in her Bible and ran down stairs without closing her chamber door.

It was late before she was again permitted to seek her chamber, and when she again opened the Bible, her letter,

the letter was gone! Whose work was this? No one could have visited her room except Mrs. Munson. Could it be possible that she had purloined it? If so, for what purpose? She thought of asking her for it, but stood too much in awe of her mistress to do so. She was too much disturbed by the loss of Hubert's letter to read Herbert's message that evening, and throwing herself upon a bed, she wept herself to sleep.

In Mrs. Munson's boudoir, another scene was transpiring. She possessed a tact of imitating handwriting, and with Hubert's heart-message before her as a copy, she penned a letter to suit her own fancy for her husband's eye, the purport of which was that Hubert hoped that Effie would forget him. He had thought her engaging and pretty when in her company, but a conquest he had made in a New York ball-room had eclipsed his ideal so completely that he had determined not to fulfil the boyish engagement. The envelope that had covered the real letter, encased the spurious one and the easily blinded husband and father, had no reason to suspect his wife's designings. Effie's swollen eyes and abstracted manner also helped to convince him that she had first received the letter and was grieving over his son's inconstancy. He suddenly grew very generous and decided that she should attend school until her brother should return from the mines and pay her board by doing chores of evenings and Saturdays. His wife remonstrated, but he was inflexible, and the next Monday morning foundEffie among a school room full of girls between ten and twenty years of age.

Eliza Crandall, whose ready wit made her a universal favorite among those who happened to suit her fancy, introduced the new scholar to her friends as an intimate acquaintance, taking the liberty to explain the general rules of the school, and doing all in her power to make herself agreeable.

"Who *is* she, anyhow?" queried Delphine Howard, turning to her particular friend, Augusta Morton.

"Nobody but Mrs. Munson's servant," was the charitable reply. "What business she has to come here, is more than I can imagine. The free school is the place for paupers."

"And Mr. Barton's school *should be* the place for ladies," said Eliza boldly. "How our usually far-sighted preceptor could so far overstep the bounds of propriety as to admit such as you into his fold, is a mystery to me. But money covers a multitude of sins, and cloaks any amount of shocking vulgarity."

Her retort raised such a laugh that no reply could be heard, and the two exclusives walked away to the farthest corner of the recitation room. Effie, who had heard their unkind criticism of herself, choked back the rising sobs and tried to be sociable with her friend and the numerous other girls who were always ready to notice whoever their leader choose to befriend.

Bartholomew Barton, A. M., was a benevolent looking gentleman, who deigned to bestow a benign smile upon his newly installed pupil as he entered the room. He appointed her various studies, and gave her a seat next to Eliza Crandall, in courteous compliance with her timid request.

Mrs. Barton, an amiable lady, with glossy black hair and stately, measured carriage, was the dignified principal of the female department.

There were several subordinate teachers, or as the girls dubbed them "subs," who took charge of the various classes —Mrs. Barton's office being to enforce order, see that no lessons were omitted, and superintend the musical department.

Effie dipped into her studies with a zest which astonished her teachers. The constant drudgery she had endured for so long, had not injured her natural intellect, but on the contrary, comparatively degraded position she had occupied,

had awakened such a desire to prepare herself for a higher sphere, that she was not content to pass an idle moment.

Some of the girls called her the kitchen student, and other epithets of a like character, very annoying to a proud spirit.

She would not resent their insinuations herself, but she had no necessity for doing so whenever Eliza Crandall was present.

The winter was rainy, chilly and disagreeable; so little like the feathery snow-flakes and biting frosts of her childhood's home, that she often pined for the clear, white, rustic habitation of her early life.

School had closed one evening, and she, with a noisy party of other girls, was standing upon the slippery stones in front of the Institute, when the stage-coach was seen through the driving mist, making its way through the muddy slush of Main street.

"Girls, will some of you please to go with me to the post office? I believe I have letters there, and I don't like to go alone."

"*A love letter!* That's it! now own up, kitchen wench!" said Augusta Morton, spitefully.

Tears came to Effie's eyes.

"Kitchen wenches are above snapping turtles," said Eliza. "Effie gets out of the way, and considers the source it comes from, when you snap at her. She treats you just as the moon did the puppy."

"How was that," queried one of the girls, always eager to get their Punch to tell them a story.

"Why, you ignoramus! Are you like the family in the back-woods? In the dark about common things. Well, I'll enlighten you, because I'm compassionate."

"You know, I suppose, that the moon is naturally a much more important object than a puppy. Master poodle didn't think so, and to assert his superiority, he barked most impudently at our majestic Luna. She didn't deign to notice him, but kept on shining as though there was no such a thing as an impudent puppy on this green earth. If she could see through the mist of an Oregon winter, she'd see impertinence enough in some of the members of our City Institute.

"I must hurry," said Effie. "Eliza, will you go with me to the post office?"

"I will go, said Winnie Holmes. "Eliza promised to go home with Allie Winslow. She lives two miles from town."

"Thank you Winnie," and the girls started off, picking their way as best they could, along the slippery, hilly sidewalks, towards the busy, crowded buzz of Main street.

Mr. Munson was in the post office, and Effie almost fainted as she met his enquiring glances.

Winnie spoke. "Are there letters here for Effie Goodwin?"

"Two of them," replied the post master, an old gentleman who was busily engaged in distributing letters and periodicals, as he handed her the coveted treasures.

Effie hurried out of the office and Winnie, who had judged from her perturbation that the letters, one or both of them, concerned her very deeply, had just time enough to say playfully, "I can tell now what made you discover the stage coach so easily," when Munson stepped into the street.

"I'll walk home with you, Effie. Miss Winnie need not take the trouble to accompany you. It's going to rain again in a few minutes."

"Good-night, Winnie."

"Good-bye; may pleasant dreams and happy thoughts keep you company." And the happy daughters of prosperity walked musingly homeward.

Effie glanced at Mr. Munson.

"Did you think I would not fetch your letters this evening?" he asked sternly.

Effie did not doubt his honesty. She could not tell him that she doubted his wife.

"I thought I would go to the post office myself *one* time. I had never been that far up town before, and I have lived here about eighteen months. Was there anything improper in my going?"

"Mrs. Munson looked for you to come to Allie before I left the house. You should always hasten home after school is dismissed.

"I didn't mean to displease you."

"Ah, well; we won't quarrel about it. Hereafter, you'll know what to do. What post marks are on your letters?"

"One is Havre, the other, Jacksonville."

"Have you a letter from Hubert?"

"I suppose so. I have no other correspondent in foreign countries."

"How long since you received the last one?"

"Let me see. I got one the first of December. It's now the last of January—two months have passed since I received the last one. I would have shown you the letter, but it was lost in some mysterious manner, and I have not seen it since the evening it came to hand."

The rain began to descend in torrents, and their anxiety to get home precluded further conversation.

Mrs. Munson was attacked with a fit of hysteria, and Effie could not get to read her letters till near midnight. Opiates finally gained the ascendency over affected nerves, and when Mrs. Munson fell into a disturbed slumber, Effie gladly retired to her room, where her letters had been carefully locked up in her trunk.

Hubert's was the first one opened.

"The journey over the rolling seas; the constant excitement of seeing and hearing something interesting and new; the fatigue of traveling, and acquaintance of foreign belles

cannot force my imagination from the all-absorbing theme of my future life and you. I grow home-sick in spite of constant action. The greatest enjoyment I experience is in sketching those promised curiosities for your edification; a business in which all my leisure hours are occupied.

"I have seen many wonders of the eastern world. Paris, with its countless objects of amusement and instruction; its gay belles of fashion and genial atmosphere; foggy, dreary, busy London; the beautiful rural scenery of Great Britain, and France; *all* would amuse and instruct you. I almost wish that I had waited until you could accompany me, before making this tour. I see you blush and smile, and hear you say, 'I don't want to travel any more.' Well, I am glad, my own dear one, that you are domestic in your notions and aspirations. You may need all your natural skill in transforming me from a roving student into a hum-drum gentleman, a pattern husband, whose delight will be a peerless wife and lovely rural home, away from the turmoil of busy life and care and vexation. You will believe me when I say that for your sake I am anxious to return to Oregon. You can understand my meaning also, when I tell you that for your sake I will at present remain away.

"You are now past fourteen years of age. You and I both dislike early engagements, yet, as Cupid is blind, even so are his victims. I wish to see you a full grown, well-informed and superior woman; physically, as well as mentally developed. Superior to the weak and suffering of your sex, who thought marriage the chief aim of their existence, until encumbered with life's arduous duties, and who now say that had they known the trials in store for them, they would never have married. Such cases of repentance after marriage are quite too common. I want the wife of my bosom, whom I shall love as my other self, whose every thought and action should be in unison with mine, to know something about the weary road of life. We must not look forward to a life of unalloyed pleasure.

"It will be my highest aim to smooth the rugged way of your pilgrimage on earth, but I would not have you ignorant concerning the fiery trials that are to await us in this unfeeling world.

"You will think this letter prosy and dull. So it is, but

in after years—you, as my noble, my peerless, my dearest wife; the boon companion and sharer of my joys and sorrows, will thank me for having written you thus plainly.

"I have no news for you but heart-messages. The many objects of curiosity and interest which I see daily, are not half so important between you and me, as are these plain and real, heart-spoken feelings of the soul. You are now the embodiment of all that is pure and trustworthy and true. But my own dear little treasure, you imagine but little concerning this treacherous object, this two-faced companion that we call '*society*.'

"Before I see you again, you will have become a belle, as you are now a beauty. I want you to form an affable and agreeable acquaintance with gentlemen, but what I, as one who loves you better than life itself, may presume to ask you to guard against, is the art of flirtation so common with young ladies attending school. Truth is your beacon star, let Virtue and Honor be the helm to guide you in the highway of maidenly duty.

"This is the fifth letter I have written you. The news is all recorded in an epistle to my father, which I shall mail with this. If he asks you about the news, tell him that your letter contains matter more important than incidents of daily travel. Show him this, as well as my other letters, that he may know that my sentiments in regard to you remain unchanged. With many imaginary embraces, I now bid you adieu."

"Will I ever be worthy of him?" she soliloquized, as she folded the uncommon love message and broke the seal of her brother's epistle.

"The car of fortune has passed into other hands, my dear sister, and as I am no longer making money here, I intend to take what I have to you, as soon as the weather and roads will permit me to travel.

"My placer was exhausted about a month ago. O'Donaldson worked with me and behaved like a gentleman, doing half the work and pocketing half the gains until our claim was thoroughly worked. We each possessed the comfortable little sum of eight thousand dollars, and I tried hard to persuade him to keep his money and return with me to the

valley. He promised to do so, but while we were waiting for better weather, he was induced to drink and gamble, and some sharpers soon seized the last dollar of his hard earnings. He raved. They taunted him. He grew furious and felled the ringleader to the ground by a skilful stroke of his shillelah. The fellow did not arise, and when, a half hour afterwards, we tried to arouse him, *he was dead*. What an awful scene! A gambler hurried into the presence of his Maker, without a second's warning! 'Man giveth up the ghost, and where *is* he? I have seen enough of a miner's life, and am sick of witnessing the appaling acts of iniquity that are everywhere visible. It is true, the miners have their laws, respecting order and government with republican spirit; but the more refined acts of civilization—the decorum of speech and action—the honor due to the God of the Universe; the religious observance of the Sabbath: these things are scoffed at, ridiculed!

"I long to breathe again the hallowed air of civilization—to once more attend church, and listen to the oracles of Jehovah proclaimed from the pulpit, by the mouths of His witnesses.

"The gambler was buried without any ceremony, except a few revolting curses from some fleeced bystanders.

"O'Donaldson was taken to the city jail to await his trial. Poor fellow! How bitterly did he begin to reap the reward of wrong doing. I visited him in the evening. He confessed that he was sorry he had gambled, but declared that he did right in killing his tempter. I tried to show him wherein he had done wrong, but he would not be convinced. I left him with a heavy heart.

"At his dictation, and in compliance with his request, I penned a brief history of his past life, which he requested me to convey to Maurice Stanton. Last night a mob collected around the jail, forced open the door of his cell, and hung him without judge or jury! But I will not dwell upon this sorrowful subject longer.

"Hundreds of miners would leave here if they had the means to get away, and hundreds of others appear to be perfectly contented. Gold, which I used to prize so highly, has become so common that a monte-table groaning beneath the weight of a ponderous heap, is a sight I hourly witness.

"My own 'pile' is securely cached away for your benefit and mine. No temptation to bet or gamble will rob you—my dear sister—of your coming pleasures. Start to school to-morrow, if you wish, your brother can foot the bills.

"We are now in the midst of an Oregon winter: Rain at morn, more rain at noon, considerably more rain at night.

"We live in canvas houses, cook by out-door fires, under big fir trees, and spend the time in different occupations that suit us best. Water is too high for mining on the river bars, and those who cannot work upon the elevated lands, or in the bluffs, are out of employment. But this letter is growing tedious and I will stop. I hope soon to see you, when we can talk over all these matters at our leisure."

Sleep had forsaken her eyes, and slumber her eye-lids. She thought there was too much joy in her cup for the draught that was ready for her to quaff, to be a real one.

One thing was a mystery. She had not received the other three letters Hubert had spoken of having written. Had Mrs. Munson suppressed those letters? She had not met Mr. Munson at the door, for many weeks. Had he given her letters to his wife, supposing she would get them? All was a mystery, and without thinking of sleep, she sat down and wrote a long letter, informing Hubert of her suspicions. She wrote concerning her school; of Herbert's anticipated return; of her own feelings, so harmoniously responsive to his own; with such good sense, sound logic, and firmness of spiri, that no one who knew her would have thought her capable of doing so, without aid.

"I feel," she wrote, "that I must *act*, and *decidedly*. I am willing to hear open reasoning from those who may have a right to interfere, but to submit tamely to subtle chicanery, I cannot—*will not* do it! If I am a child in years, circumstances compel me to be a woman in action.

"Being left dependent upon my own resources for a livelihood; having no one to whom I can look for guidance; being tossed to and fro upon the wheels of adversity, as a common servant; and having moreover, an innate conscientiousness concerning my duty: have caused me to exercise a self-reliance that long years of prosperity would not have taught me.

"I have been the victim of duplicity in your father's house, and *cannot longer remain here!* I do not implicate your father. He is blinded by his wife, and loves her so dearly that he cannot fathom her subtly-woven schemes. I love him for your sake and Allie,—I almost give up the thought of leaving, when I speak of her—she is all sunshine, the song-bird of my otherwise insupportable existence. I expect my brother to return in a month, with plenty of means for our support. Till then I shall board with Winnie Holmes.

"I will say nothing to displease your father. A minute examination into this nefarious letter business, might get me into trouble, from which your coming could only extricate me. Mr. Munson would blame me of course, or should such an improbability occur, as his seeing the part his wife has played, he would have such unpleasant feelings as I will gladly spare him the mortification of having to experience.

"I direct this letter to Florence, whither, I heard your father say, you would journey from Lisbon, where, if mails are true, and steamers fortunate, you will find a long letter from *your own faithful* EFFIE."

Mrs. Munson met Effie the next morning at the breakfast table.

"I shall keep you out of school to-day, Miss Pert. You waste so much time after school hours, that I can't afford to board you for your work."

The last evening was the first that she had overstayed her time a moment. She arose with a haughty demeanor that she had never before ventured to assume in that imperious presence.

"I am going this morning to bid my jail good bye. I shall *board* until Herbert returns from the mines. Had it not been for your last exacting requirement, I should perhaps have given you a few days warning."

Mrs. Munson looked as if she could have "bitten" her with a good will. She could not speak for surprise and rage, and Mr. Munson replied:

"I think that step is hardly prudent, Effie. You will find that board at five or six dollars a week, will amount to a few hundreds in a short time."

"My brother writes that he is amply able to give me an education, and wishes me to devote my evenings to study."

She went to her chamber to pack her wardrobe and closed the door just as she caught Mrs. Munson's words, "I have always noticed that if beggars are exalted ever so little, they'll act like free negroes." She did not hear Mr. Munson's reply, or the scalding tears she shed over the open trunk would have been deprived of half their bitterness.

"I consider that she is no more of a beggar than I am. She has worked honestly and faithfully for a living, and should not be blamed for seeking to better her condition. How would you like to be treated as she has been?"

"That's the way a wife gets consolation! What is to become of Allie? *I* can't take care of her."

"You are as able to wait upon her as Effie is," he replied impatiently, as he arose to leave the room, lest he should hear some provoking reply. He entered the parlor, and Effie went to the door with swollen eyes.

"Here are my letters, you may read them if you wish." She tossed them into his hands and again sought her chamber, where she managed to cool her throbbing temples by bathing her face and head in cold water. When she was ready to depart, she again went to the parlor door. She thought her master acted confused as he grasped her hand and said, "if you are to be my future daughter, as this last letter of Hubert's indicates, I desire you to consider me as your father, and I will do anything in my power to make you happy. I thought this love affair was settled, from the purport of Hubert's first letter to you, but there is a singular contradiction of ideas in the two epistles."

"Have you seen his first letter? Do you know where it is?" she asked eagerly.

"If you are going to leave my house, it's time you were starting," exclaimed Mrs. Munson hastily, as she entered the parlor. She had overheard their conversation, and was determined to prevent further explanation.

"I'll take your trunk to Mr. Holmes' this evening in the buggy," said her host kindly, as he accompanied her to the door.

"Thank you," she replied falteringly, as she turned away from her "prison house," as she was wont, in after years, to style the home where she had known so many sorrows.

Mrs. Holmes was willing and anxious to receive her as a boarder, and the hours she spent in Winnie's engaging company, were replete with happiness.

CHAPTER XXVII.

COMPOSITIONS.

"Come Biddy! confess! "Who is the wight of your engaging conquests? Or have you received the mitten in your last letter from Teddy or Jerry?" queried Delphine Howard, as Effie entered the noisy school-room in company with Winnie Holmes.

"If it were not beneath the dignity of a lady to notice such insults, I would teach you a lesson of humility," said Winnie. "Miss Effie Goodwin is a respectable boarder at my father's house, and I will not listen to such impertinent remarks concerning our family guests."

"Ma, called upon Mrs. Munson yesterday, and she said

that she was going to keep her an indefinite length of time."

"Which indefinite length of time, expired this morning," said Effie.

"Effie has a brother, who will soon be in from the mines with a 'pocket full of rocks.' Such girls as you and Augusta Morton will go off into ecstacies about him, badly as you have treated his sister," said Eliza Crandall, joining the chattering, noisy group.

"You think I'll fancy him because you do," said Delphine, sneeringly.

"You couldn't follow a more ennobling example," was the playful retort.

" 'Self-praise is half scandal,' " chimed in Augusta.

"Why, snapping Turtle!" affecting to have just discovered her, "where did you spring from?"

The measured step of Bartholomew Barton, A. M., was heard in the hall, and the girls instantly seated themselves with their books, as though study was their most absorbing occupation. The Professor spent a few moments in the recitation room of the girls, in superintending their various studies, and appointing to each assistant her manifold duties for the day. When this nominal task was completed, he bowed himself out, an act of courtesy to which the misses were required to respond, and Mr. Barton assumed for the remainder of the day, the difficult task of keeping up the semblance of order.

This morning however, the Principal summoned the boys —about fifty in number—into the recitation room of the female department, and announced his "rules, regulations and requirements, for the coming spring exhibition."

Excitement was on tiptoe. The girls, many of them with rueful faces, in anticipation of writing the compositions they detested, made all manner of complaints to each other and their teachers. The Principal and his lady did not hear their

muttered exclamations of dissatisfaction, or measures would have been taken to suppress them.

We have often, when listening to the whining complaints of composition-writing schoolmates, wondered why it was that they made themselves so miserable over what was such a source of improvement and what *might be* such a delightful occupation. A group of school girls are assembled, and one begins her story.

"Those dreadful compositions! I wish they had never been thought of! I'd rather stand at the whipping-post, in the power of a negro driver, than to get up and read one of my own productions before a crowd."

"And I'd rather do with half allowance and sleep on beds of nettles, than arrange my shallow thoughts for the eyes and ears of critics."

And another. "O, Mary, if I could write as you do, I wouldn't care who'd hear my efforts," when Mary knows that the complainer is very vain of her own work, but applauds *her* to affect modesty. This, and similar "small talk" in which each one tries to form a more exaggerated estimate of her unassuming diffidence than the previous speaker has indulged, make up the sum total of most young school-girls talk about necessary mental exercise.

For shame girls! If you think you're clever—and what school-girl doesn't—be as modest about it as possible, but cease making yourselves ridiculous, with these silly exaggerations.

"What do you think of our coming exhibition, Effie?" asked Carrie Winters, at noontime, when they were all disertating upon their coming troubles.

"I think those who complain least and work most, will gain the greatest victories."

"Don't you dread the exhibition?"

"I can't say that I do."

"Servants don't often mind showing-up what little they know," said Delphine, haughtily.

"When will you learn to treat Effie as you should?" said Winnie, as she kissed her friend's burning cheek.

"Girls," said Effie, "will you sit down upon these rocks and hear my story?"

Her eyes were humid, and her voice faltered.

"O, certainly we'll hear it, if you have anything to tell," said Augusta.

"Two years ago, when my mother was alive, and I and my two brothers were her pride and joy, we lived in a sweet, rustic, vine-clad cottage.

"We were not wealthy, but we were what is better, comfortable and contented. My mother had been left a widow when I was small, but had spared no pains to refine and instruct me.

"My brother Herbert *loved* his lessons; I thought that science was useless. He profited by the example and instruction my mother was able to give; but I, though I could not help learning many useful things, took but little heart-interest in my studies. Times changed. We were expelled from our home by the villainous acts of a man who was aided in his scheme by our country's laws.

"We were homeless, and with the exception of some moveable property and a few valuable family relics, we were penniless. We started with coarse but kind companions to come to Oregon, where we were told, we would be able to regain more than we had lost. We journeyed many miles and my mother who had toiled and suffered and struggled for the benefit of her fatherless ones, was called to the skies.

"Girls, you all have living mothers. You know little about an orphan's loneliness. Little brother Willie was also called away, and Herbert and I were left alone. We

journeyed on, and when we reached this 'Oregon City,' this goal which we had struggled through so many privations to reach, we were without money, without property, and without friends who were able to assist us. There was but one honest way for me to earn a living. I must work, must hire out as a servant. For nearly eighteen months I have toiled for food and clothing. My former neglect of lessons, when the opportunity for further improvement was gone, appeared to me as almost criminal, and I resolved to lay aside every penny I could spare, for the purpose of defraying school expenses.

"Yesterday, I received a letter from Herbert, stating that he is coming home with plenty of funds for us to live upon. One thing I have to rejoice over. I have learned to love and prize my studies and am going to live for some useful purpose. I want, if again stricken by adversity or loss of friends, to be qualified to fill some useful and worthy station. Here is a locket containing the miniatures of the loved members of my family."

There was not a dry eye among the assembled group of listeners, when the artless narration was finished. Those who had been the most sarcastic and unfeeling towards her, humbly asked forgiveness. Augusta and Delphine sobbed, and as they received her kiss of forgiveness, their hearts were bowed in contrition. Their unkindness had not been so much the result of ill-nature, as of thoughtlessness and education.

Effie Goodwin, the unfortunate, the persecuted, was now their firm friend, and they tacitly acknowledged her as their superior.

Two prize books, match volumes of Shakespeare and Byron, were to be awarded to the writer of the best original composition, either poetry or prose. A committee of the

most eminent Territorial officials were to be the judges, and a spirit of competition ran high.

Herbert reached the city in time to spend a month in the school before the grand show of school-day genius was to come off, and judging from his weekly original speeches, the Professor was confident that he would win the laurels. Time sped on, and the morning of the exhibition had dawned. People flocked in crowds to the Institute, evincing a laudable zeal in the great work of mental improvement.

The competitors had given up their productions the week before, for the inspection of the committee of critics, but none knew who was the successful aspirant. The dignified Principal had deigned to tell his anxious scholars that the master-piece would be the last one called for, but further than this, they knew nothing, and when the reading time arrived, there were many fluttering, expectant hearts in the assembly of excited students.

Compositions bad, indifferent and good, were read by their respective authors, and the sun was sinking low in the west, when "Herbert and Effie Goodwin," echoed through the hall, in Mr. Barton's most sonorous accents.

Effie faltered and blushed, but was re-assured by a manly smile from Herbert, as she accepted his proffered arm and mounted the stage.

A dress of azure blue became her pearl-tinted complexion, and the oblique rays of the sun as they penciled amber hues in her golden curls, ornamented by a simple white rose-bud, so enhanced her ethereal beauty, that the audience fancied she looked angelic.

"Adversity and its Benefits," was the subject of her manuscript, and many were the enconiums of praise lavished upon this her first triumphant public effort. She read with remarkable ease and accuracy, and the gentle modulations of her tremulous voice added power to the effect of

her beautiful, philosophic reasoning. The audience was pleased, astonished. And when informed at the close of the exercises that the youthful writer had not been at school but two months in as many years, they could scarcely credit the assertion.

"Prosperity and its Pleasures," called out the Professor as soon as the hum of applause and congratulation had subsided. If Effie had appeared ethereal, as she stood upon the stage, Herbert, as he faced the audience with his manuscript held carelessly in his hand, certainly had the appearance of a practical orator. He scarcely glanced at the written pages, but the words seemed to come forth without the slightest effort, as if they were the instantaneous creations of his own deep mind, uttered without a previous thought. He had grown tall, and his manly figure was displayed to good advantage in a modest suit of broadcloth. His face was sunburnt below the eyes, but the dark curls were thrown back from his marble brow, stenciled with lines of thought; and his boyish face lost all juvenile expression, as he became warmed and fired with the increasing interest of his subject.

"Who is to have the premium?" queried Mr. Barton, when the deafening applause began to die away in distant echoes.

"They're half an' half," exclaimed a stentorian voice at the door, which Herbert and Effie thought was familiar.

"Those of the audience who think Miss Goodwin's effort the most successful, will please arise."

"I say they're half an' half," repeated the same loud voice.

No one arose. The same proposition was made in behalf of Herbert's composition, but no one responded. Bartholomew Barton, A. M., was sorely puzzled. He knew how they ought to vote, but could not frame his vocabulary into the proper phrases, without some little reflection.

"Tell them that thinks they're half an' half, to *hist* them-

selves, an' see if there ain't a commotion," vociferated the same outsider.

"That's it," smiled one of the dignitaries, and the listeners, with one accord, arose to their feet.

"Will some one tell us what features of the two last compositions are superior to many of the others?" said Mr. Barton, when they had resumed their seats.

"Gracefulness of style and purity of sentiment, interfused with common sense in the superlative degree, and a sincere way of speaking the truth with an artlessness that is irresistible," answered a noted member of the bar, speaking from impulse.

"I half wish now, that I had treated Effie more like a lady," whispered Mrs. Munson to her husband. "But she is now in her native element, showing off her vaunted beauty. She's nothing after all, but a medley of affectation and impertinence."

Nothing but envy, or the most bitter hatred, could have excited such a remark.

There was to be a musical entertainment in the evening, and the exhibition adjourned until seven o'clock.

"Halloa, 'Erbert."

"*Captain Gray!*"

"It's *me*, that's a fact. Sure as fallin' off of a log."

"When did you come to the city?"

"I happened along to-day, an' hearn what was goin' on, an' thought I'd come and see the performance. I allers thought ye'd make a mark in the world, but I didn't expect ye'd begin this soon."

"I did not expect it myself; but most of the students are so averse to writing compositions, that it requires no great effort to outdo them."

"I thought ye was in the mines."

"I *was* in the mines, but I raised the wind, and am going to raise my knowledge box while I have the needful."

"That's the right kind of grit, my boy; the right kind of grit. Effy's up with ye in smartness, if she is of the female persuasion."

"I'm proud of her," said the brother, fondly, as he turned from his backwoods friend to watch her fluttering movements among the congratulating throng of ladies.

"Well ye may be proud of her, for she's pretty as she's smart. She's ahead of anything I've seen for many a day. That's so."

"Thank you, Captain Gray. How are your folks prospering?"

"They're alive an' kickin'. They took in a heavy dose in the way of dinner yesterday. I guess they'll make the riffle."

"How do you like farming here, in comparison with farm life in Illinois?"

"Well, it's about after the same old sort. That is, since I got my land open. I don't have to feed the stock much in the winter, and that's *some* of an advantage in my eye. My constitution can bear a good deal of ease, though old Gray's a regular snorter to work when his hand's in. My old woman can make more money than I can, though—off of her cows and chickens. I brought a load of her fixtures—butter an' eggs, an' the like—to market to-day, an' the money I got for 'em is enough to make a Sucker's eyes 'bug out.'"

"I am sorry I cannot invite you to my lodgings, but I board with my sister, at the house of a private family, who are already crowded with company. If you will put up at the —— Hotel, I will foot the bill, and breakfast with you in the morning."

"I'm much obleeged, but I've looked out for the campin' privileges. My wagon has a good kiver, an' my bucket is chuck full o' *muck-o-muck*."

"Do *you* talk the *Jargon*, Captain?"

"Not of'en. Once in a while I slip out a word of the miserable stuff. I've hearn it till it comes handy an' natural like."

"I'll see you again in the evening, Captain," and Herbert stepped up to his sister's side, as she passed out of the doorway. Farmer Gray greeted her with a cordial hand shake, and walked away, muttering to himself, "I wonder what's come over that boy? He wouldn't talk about *any* one thing a half a minute at a time. I don't see no use in his bein' in sich a pesky hurry."

The evening entertainment was a success. The piano and melodeon were skillfully played by Winnie Holmes and Augusta Howard; and a flute and guitar were agreeable accompaniments in the practised power of two young gentlemen, who had been students at the Institute from its infancy.

Our friends were almost wholly unacquainted with instrumental music, but their skill as vocalists won the most uproarious applause. Herbert's deep-toned bass, responding to the liquid tones of Effie's modulated treble, produced an effect at once pleasing and sublime.

They had arranged a piece of manuscript music, to be sung at the close of the evening's entertainment, and while Winnie throbbed the accompaniments with pleasing skill, they sang alternately, the heart-felt words of their own composition:

"Sister, what if thy sunshine bright;
Thy pathway of effulgent light,
Were all at once beclouded o'er,
With disappointments, deep and sore;
Would'st thou not faint, would'st thou not sigh,
And seek from troubles' darts to fly?
Or would'st thou rise with beaming eye,
And say, I'll overcome or die?"

"Brother, despondency and woe,
Oft times o'ercome both high and low,
The eye most bright, the cheek most fair,
Are victims oft, of dark despair,

But he who would such thoughts defy,
Must set his star of *firmness* high,
Must hope, and trust, and watch and pray,
And he'll have grace to suit his day."

"Sister, this trust has been to me,
A *beacon* on life's rugged sea;
Has guided oft my wind tossed barque,
Through stormy hours, through tempests dark;
And I have thought that faith and hope,
Would ever buoy my spirit up.
But then, alas! unlooked for woe,
Has often laid ambition low."

"Brother, as you and I must brave,
Alone the dangers of life's wave;
Let's here and now breathe a new vow:
Let's say to anguish, we'll ne'er bow,
But through the darkest hours of life,
In deep despair, or sorrow's strife,
We'll trust our mother's God of love,
Who sees our acts from realms above."

They withdrew from the stage amid a grand outpouring of music from piano, melodeon, flute and guitar; and the applause, earnest, though subdued, from the audience, told the brother and sister that sympathy had pervaded the breasts of their attentive listeners.

The moonlight was stealing through the shutters of Effie's chamber window, and breaking across her bed in irregular pencilings of gold and amber, when she entered her room to seek repose. She was excited and wearied with the incessant duties of the day, so new, and unusual to her, and without disrobing, she sat down to meditate. She remained motionless until her thoughts grew calm, when she arose and knelt, throwing her whole spirit into a fervent out-pouring of thanksgiving to Him who is ready and willing to hearken to the most humble petition. She earnestly sought forgiveness for hidden sins, and prayed with childlike confidence to be kept from guile.

"O, God! if souls so pure as these,
Need daily access to thy throne;
If she upon her bended knees,

Our loveliest and our purest one,
Need confess daily sins to Thee,
And crave the boon of grace so free,
What far, far, greater need have we,
To seek forgiveness and implore
Thy watchful guidance evermore."

A month's vacation was a season of delight to the successful students. Winnie gave a splendid party in honor of her guests, and those who had done most to make them feel their degredation as servants, were most anxious to win their notice, now that their place in the first society was securely established. Effie kindly forgave them for past offences, but Herbert did not like to notice those who had slighted his sister in adversity.

"I'm sure, brother, that we're so happy now, we ought to overlook past neglect. Just so long as we refuse to forgive and forget the insults of the past, just so long will we have painful remembrances, which we had better consign to oblivion."

"Well, I'll treat offences as graciously as possible, but I'll arm myself with unmistakable condescension, when I am thrown into the company of Augusta or Delphine."

And he kept his word. No cunning devices, or, as he said, "evil machinations" of theirs, could draw from him more than a condescending bow or sarcastic smile.

"Delphine, I told you that you'd be half crazy about Effie's brother and his 'pocket full of rocks,' and my prophecy is fulfilled," said Eliza Crandall.

"When I need any one to point out my designs or aspirations, I'll employ somebody who is competent. You're jealous, and can't be a disinterested witness."

"I might be jealous if my fancy didn't run in another direction. That being the case, I don't plead guilty, and I'm sure you can't prove your assertions. Don't you wish *you* could say as much in regard to your sentiments?"

The measured chimes of the Institute bell stopped the retort that was forming upon Delphine's tongue, and Eliza, as she took a seat by Effie's side, glanced at her baffled schoolmate with such a look of mischief, that Mr. Barton was summoned to reprove her. The examination of his mischievous pupil, called forth such ludicrously comic answers, spoken with such apparent seriousness, that he was compelled to lay aside his dignity long enough to laugh, though he speedily recovered his haughty mien, saying something rather unintelligible about contempt of authority.

"Will you make respectful acknowledgements to Miss Howard?"

"Most certainly, I am anxious to do so."

"Very well, let's hear you."

"Miss Delphine Howard," turning to her with mock-seriousness, "I am very sorry that your very contemptible conduct has merited Herbert Goodwin's displeasure, and to prove my sincerity, willingly proclaim this to our respectable school. Please accept my commiseration and I will be your friend, in due respect to your father's valuable possessions. Such measure as you give to others, should be given you in return. I humbly ask your pardon for any good opinion I may heretofore have entertained of you, aside from your father's property, and assure you I shall not again be so inconsiderate."

A general laugh followed, which the worthy dignitary could not suppress for full fifteen minutes.

"Miss Eliza, you are required to commit to memory the entire rules of Davies' Algebra, apart from your other studies, within the coming forthight, on pain and peril of excommunication!"

The Professor well knew that this was the worst punishment he conld inflict, for though she possessed uncommon shrewdness and great memory, she was averse to learning anything requiring a little decisive effort. She had master-

ed all the problems of said Algebra, but her teachers knew that what she had learned had made no lasting impression. To "begin at the beginning," and learn such "mopy rules," as she styled them, was a task to her restless mind, but she would not say so, lest Delphine should rejoice over her punishment. She was mistress of the rules within a week, and recited them with a triumphant air. She said afterwards, in Mr. Barton's hearing, that "she believed she'd insult *Augusta* next time. She deserved it as much as Delphine did."

"But the punishment," suggested Winnie.

"O, it's such a benefit, I believe I'd like another dose."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MARRYING FOR LAND.

READER, as we wish to give you a general idea of the different classes of Oregonians, we propose to take you to a mountain home, where lives the proprietor of a section claim, and as much more virgin soil as his cattle desire to feed upon or roam over. A corral inclosing an area of about four acres, is the first object to be seen that denotes civilization, as we wind through the labyrinthine paths of a tall, dark, fir and pine forest that fronts the dwelling. A bevy of hounds, kept by the lord of the wilderness to assist in the chase, comes to meet us as we approach the little cabin, which appears at the termination of the hilly clearing, half hidden by blackened log-heaps, awaiting the driest season for a general bon-fire. A garden through which the limpid waters of a gurgling spring are coursing their gleeful way, peeps out from the huge, black stumps, revealing mammoth vegetables.

A vining rose-bush and the immortal wood-bine creep over the gable ends of the cabin, showing that even in this rude domicil some tasty hand has been at work transforming the homely, projecting logs into a beauteous bower.

Gustavus Willard "used to be" a man of some pretension to taste, but he had money with which he purchased a large band of emigrant cattle at very low rates, at the Dalles of the Columbia. He remained there with his worn out stock until the fall rains renewed the grass, enabling his slowly recruiting band to endure the journey down the pack trail. He settled at the foot of the mountains, and extended his claim into the beautiful valley, while the inexhaustible range of the mountains, afforded abundant food for his rapidly increasing herds.

Gustavus Willard soon found himself immensely rich. But as the rapid accumulation of property too often increases a desire for more, he became eager to hold more of the valley prairie than as a bachelor, he was entitled to claim.

Gustavus Willard must have a wife. That was settled. If he couldn't get *somebody*, he must take *nobody*, or her sister. A squatter lived about three miles from our bachelor's *ranche*. He had a daughter thirteen years of age, "verdant" as the grass she trod; more thoughtless than the cows she milked. Our bachelor called at the residence of the mountain lassie. He thought she wasn't much like the dark-eyed niece who kept house for him at his *ranche*, neither did she suit his fancy like Fanny Waters, who wouldn't have him.

"But then," he mused, "she'll hold that splendid half section of land in the bottom, if I'll marry her, and I can't think of giving it up. I'll be compelled to, though, by next December, if I don't marry somebody."

So the affair was settled. And the big-footed, huge-fisted

mountain child became Mrs. Willard, and was installed in the bridegroom's shanty as Florence's aunt!

Now, reader, you have an idea about Mrs. Willard, so, if you are ready, we will continue our imaginary journey to her residence, looking out all the while for the dogs. Within the cabin is a strange medley of refinement and awkwardness, showing that a difference of opinion about housekeeping is predominant. A baby is squalling vigorously in the little back kitchen, and a child of thirteen months is following suit in the front room. A dignified young lady, tall, graceful, pretty and fascinating, plays the agreeable with us while Mr. Willard is endeavoring to soothe the noisy children. We turn involuntarily to a long shelf of books, where the young lady was engaged in reading when we first entered Some richly bound poetical works, a family Bible Dick's works and Scott's Comentaries, look suggestively out of place in this rustic cabin—not half so well built or convenient as Farmer Gray's first pioneer shanty.

Florence Willard, Herbert's ideal of maidenly loveliness, is before us. The same dark eyes, raven curls and marble brow; the same pleasing expression, in spite of a tinge of sadness visible in the curling lip and tinted cheek, showing that hers is a life of every day disappointment, that made her charming as a child, and render her fascinating as a woman.

"Are you satisfied with life in the wilderness?" we ask. The proud lip curls and an indignant glance of pity and contempt at her aunt, shows better than words can express it, how ardently she longs to be released from her monotonous mode of existence.

"I try to be contented, but cannot say that I succeed. My studies will be completed under my uncle in another year, and then I shall seek society."

Mrs. Willard is a short, clumsy little creature; a mere child, whose trials and duties as a mother and housekeeper,

have blanched her cheek and worn the flesh from her short, broad frame. Her dress is soiled, and though evidently made by the hand of the niece, is shabbily arranged upon her very slovenly figure. Her children, one not a year older than the other, are noisy and dirty. The mother has too much butter and cheese to take care of, to afford time to keep them clean, even if she knew how; and Florence long since ceased to care for them, for she is discouraged.

Here comes Mr. Willard home to his supper. A half dozen men are with him, all riding Indian ponies. They have driven up the enormous band of cattle, and *corraled* them for the night. A multitude of calves, fifty or more in number, are bawling piteously in the pasture that joins the *corral.* Notwithstanding the backwoods life her uncle leads, and the uncouth surroundings of his wildwood home, Florence respects many of his attainments. In spite of his hickory shirt, buckskin pants, and cowhide boots, he appears dignified and courteous, and as we get into conversation with him, we are surprised at his general knowledge. He takes several Territorial, and a numerous collection of States' papers, which are strung upon a line in the chimney corner, making a formidable looking pile. We ask why he doesn't live in society? He answers that his immense herds prevent him from living in a settlement. Echo answers that he's a man of good sense in most things, and knows his wife would be a constant source of mortification to him, among civilized people. Say it reader. Say what you think. He deserves his banishment. Of what use to him is his extra half section of land? Has he not paid dearly for his bargain? "Beter is a dry morsel and quietness therewith,"—or we'll drop that quotation, and give you another yet more to the point. "There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches."

"Mrs. Willard says it's "milkin' time," and as Florence is tying on her bonnet to assist in that important vocation, we will bid them adieu, with the intention of visiting them again in a subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER XXIX.

HOW TIME FLIES.

"Why flies the time so fast?
Days, months and years glide by;
And each looks shorter than the last,
And swifter seems to fly,
On viewless wings, still rushing on
To join the flight of ages gone,
Their silent course they ply."

Six and a half years since Maurice Stanton took possession of his claim, Ada and Maurice were sitting in the verandah, watching the playful acts of two lovely children, prototypes of their parents, who were playing upon the lawn, delighting pa' and ma' with their playful, artless prattle and innocent pranks.

"Maurice, don't you think we ought to receive a letter from your father this mail? It's three months since you addressed him, and you requested him so particularly to come and live with us, that I think he ought to condescend to write, if he won't honor us with his presence."

"There goes the post-boy, now. I guess I'll ride down to the post-office, it's States' mail day, and we'll get an armfull of papers and magazines, if we don't get letters."

"Maurice had sold half of his land, and the other half was now inclosed by substantial rail fences, behind the most of which, the osage-orange was slowly, but surely growing up.

An orchard, covering many acres, was loaded with blossoms of every variety of fruit, common to this genial clime. The delicious fragrance of the beauteous flowers, beaded with sweet, spring rain-drops, made Ada almost wish that the fruit would delay its visit, so that she could longer enjoy the welcome season of bloom. Instead of a log cabin in the glen, a showy white house adorned the hill side, peeping out from a mass of oaken foliage, like a stately palace from a lovely park. The house was not all thoroughly furnished, the main luxuries consisting of carpets and curtains, but Ada told her friends rather confidentially, that the next fall crop of fruit would purchase the remainder of the furniture.

"A letter with the Cincinnatti post-mark!" she exclaimed as Maurice handed her a torn envelope. He still held the letter in his hand.

"Here, read it, pet," he said, as he saw that she was—if possible—more anxious than himself to know the contents.

"That letter is just like tho old gentleman. Sounds just like he converses, when he's pleased," Maurice remarked when she had finished.

"O, I'm so glad he's coming to Oregon! He would have done so long ago, perhaps, if you had invited him."

"I didn't invite him till I wanted him to come. He would have scolded me so unmercifully for being so foolish as to get married without money, that I really didn't care about seeing him."

"He says he'll be here by the latter part of May. Strawberries will then be in their prime. Won't we give him our wild strawberries with cream this spring, and currant jelly and blackberry pies this summer, till he's satisfied to live without pork?"

"Why, Ada! I must say, you act more like a girl of fifteen, than a matron of twenty-four. And that isn't all either," he added, patting her cheek and stealing a kiss.

"What, now, Mr. Criticism? Let's hear it."

"Why, you look more like a girl of seventeen, than a wife of almost seven years. You really appear more girlish now, than when we were married."

"And you think that stately father of yours will think me extremely childish. Isn't that it? Come, own up!" she exclaimed, springing into his lap and returning his kiss with an air which showed that she was not very seriously concerned about his father's opinion.

"No; I didn't think of that, but I was thinking that the doctor would think you had been well cared for."

"Haven't I been 'well cared for?'"

"I guess so. But here come the children. Flora, come to papa. By-the-way, pet, I heard of Florence Willard today," and Maurice gazed into the sparkling orbs of his little one, with a pride and fondness such as the childless (Heaven pity them), know not how to appreciate.

"I saw Hugh Waters at the landing," he continued, "and he told me that she had been attending the academy at Portland, for some time. She is studying music."

"How much our Flora resembles her? I'll have to write this news to Herbert Goodwin. But where has she been all this time?"

"She lived with her uncle Willard in the Cascade mountains until last New Year's."

"How time flies? Herbert is now a man, and it seems but a few days since he fell so desperately in love with that vision on the Plains."

"I heard also, that Herbert and Effie are going to graduate this summer. Effie has out-learned all of her schoolmates and shared the premiums at every exhibition."

"I'm glad to hear of their success. The future appeared gloomy before them, when I saw them last."

"Suppose we attend the coming June exhibition at the In-

stitute. We've stayed at home so faithfully, that it's time to think about a little recreation. We can hail the Valley Bird on her downward trip, and return almost any day."

"Very well, we'll think about it."

Night was coming on, and Ada's little boy was fretting for his usual evening's attention. How noble she looked, as she took the little child into her arms and sunk into a richly cushioned chair, before the newly kindled parlor fire. Little Henry, named for his maternal grandfather, was a rosy-cheeked, pleasing little fellow, about eighteen months old. He had learned to talk, and lisped forth his innocent prattle in a playful manner. His chintz robe was soon exchanged for a snowy gown, from which his plump bare feet were peeping forth, while his hands were fondly stroking his mother's face and hair. His play finally became wearisome, and the head, adorned by chestnut waves of silken hair, fell back upon his mother's arm. Ada looked fondly at his beautiful features and began to sing a murmuring lullaby.

"Write them childless! those cold hearted,
Who can scorn thy generous boon,
And whose souls with fear have smarted,
Lest thy blessing come too soon.

What joy have they, whose hearths are lonely?
All unwarmed by childhood's mirth,
Spite of riches, they are only
Destitute and poor on earth.'

The child's breathing became measured, indicating the reign of sleep. She pressed him fondly to her bosom as she ascended the stairway, and entering her chamber, she resigned the sleeping babe to his place in the crib beside his sister, who had learned, before he was born, to fall asleep without being nursed. When Ada returned to the parlor, the flickering blaze of the fire had warmed itself into a ruddy heat, and she sat down with a thoughtful air and gazed abstractedly among the burning coals. But her meditation was speedily interrupted. The cows had been late about

coming home, and Maurice had just entered the dairy with two foaming pails full of milk. She took a lighted candle, and proceeded to the dairy. A bubbling spring, breaking out from the hill-side, was dammed up, so that the noisy waters could pass over an elevation, forming a gleesome waterfall, which, coursing over the gravel floor of the dairy, made a pleasant rivulet, two inches deep and twelve feet wide. The jars and crocks, that were arranged in this cool streamlet, reminded the beholder of countless varieties of the good things of life. Raise the covers, and you may find golden butter, fresh eggs, tempting jellies and preserves, and a jar of the best of icy cream, frozen by Ada's ingenuity. Ada donned her rubber boots, took her skirts in one hand with a dexterity that daily practice had taught her, and moved among the multitude of pans with a pleasant air.

The milk was strained away to await its proper skimming time, and she waded out of the dairy, cast a contented glance at her handiwork, drew off her boots and returned to the parlor. It was late before the married lovers retired from the parlor, where music, reading, and affectionate conversation, beguiled away the fleeting hours.

When Ada entered her chamber, she paused at the crib, where her children were sleeping: the sweet repose of childish innocence. With a mother's fondness, she kissed each dimpled cheek, and knelt at the foot of the crib, to offer up fervent petitions in their behalf. The silvery moonbeams escaped through the half closed curtains, and radiated around the trio, fit emblems of peace and purity, love and hope, contentment and joy. Maurice watched her for a moment, and then knelt beside her, offering an inaudible petition, while Ada's gentle voice ascended on the midnight zephyrs to the listening ear of the Infinite.

"They sleep. Athwart my white,
Moon-marbled casement with her solemn mien,
Silently watching o'er their rest serene,
Gazeth the star-eyed night.

"My girl, sedate or wild
By turns,—as playful as a summer breeze,
Or grave as night on star-lit southern seas,—
Serene, strange woman child.

"My boy, my trembling star!
The whitest lamb in April's tenderest fold,
The bluest flower-bell in the shadiest wold,
His fitting emblems are.

"They are but two, and all
My lonely heart's arithmetic is done
When these are counted. High and Holy One,
O, hear my trembling call!

"I ask not wealth nor fame,
For these my jewels! Diadem and wreath
Soothe not the aching brow that throbs beneath,
Nor cool its fever-flame.

"I ask not length of life
Nor earthly honors! Weary are the ways,
The gifted tread, unsafe the world's best praise,
And keen its strife,

"I ask not that to me
Thou spare them, tho' they dearer, dearer be
Than rain to deserts, Spring flowers to the bee,
Or sunshine to the sea.

"But kneeling at their feet,
While smiles like Summer light on shaded streams,
Are gleaming from their glad and sinless dreams,
I would my prayer repeat.

"In that alluring land,
The future-where amid green stately bowers,
Ornate with proud and crimson-flushing flowers,
Pleasure with smooth white hand.

"Beckons the young away,
From glen and hill-side to her banquet fair,—
Sin, the grim she-wolf coucheth in her lair
Ready to seize her prey.

"The bright and purpling bloom
Of Nightshade and Acanthus cannot hide
The charred and bleaching bones that are denied
Taper and chrism, and tomb.

"Lord, in this midnight hour,
I bring my lambs to Thee. Oh! by Thy truth,
Thy mercy, save them from the envenomed tooth,
And tempting poison-flower.

O, Crucified and Crowned
Keep us! We have no shield, no guide but Thee!
Let sorrows come—let hope's last blossom be
By grief's dark tempest drowned;

"But lead us by Thy hand,
O, gentle shepherd, till we rest beside
The still clear waters, in the pastures wide
Of thine own sinless land!"

[*Annie Chambers Bradford.*

CHAPTER XXX.

FLORENCE IN SOCIETY.

TWILIGHT had given place to dusky evening in the boudoir of a young lady, who was listening to the sweetly trilled vespers of a solitary canary, caroling his song of gladness in a gilded cage. In the hand of the fair one, was a letter which she had read and re-read, with an interest that contrasted strangely with her usual indifference. Her raven curls were thrown carelessly back, and a faultless forehead rested upon the snowy palm of the right hand. A deep sigh escaped her. "What *shall* I do? I, who have prided myself so much upon my integrity, must now be viewed in the light of a heartless coquette!"

The enchanting vespers of the tiny bird could not soothe her agitated feelings, and finally, as if conscious that he had failed, he buried his head beneath his golden wing and ceased his notes of happiness.

Florence Willard had left the backwoods home of her uncle, who, in consideration of her years of toil and dissatisfaction at his house, had furnished her with spending money, and placed her under the tuition of a music teacher, in the metropolis of the territory.

Henry Warren, a young man of many sterling qualities, had solicited her hand in marriage. She had consented to give him her hand and thought her heart was to go with it. For three months, this engagement had been acknowledged, but as she was walking the streets, a few days before *that letter* was written, she met Herbert Goodwin! The noble boy, who had inspired her soul with such deep emotion years ago, when they both were but children, stood before her. For a moment their eyes met, and the buried germ of affection, that had lain hidden in their hearts, during long years of separation, budded suddenly into vigorous life. Each stood glorified in the presence of the other, but the fair girls happiness was of short duration.

As if the cup of joy was worthless, its contents were poured into her heart only to be misplaced or troubled to the depths, by thoughts that her heart and hand were betrothed to another.

It was enough for Herbert to know that he had seen her: had again beheld the ideal of whom he had dreamed in boyhood, and whom he had sought since manhood, with the energy of undying affection. The meeting was but for a moment, and they wended their diverging ways through the thronging crowd in a day-dream of future union.

Herbert returned to Oregon City in the afternoon, told his sister who had met him, shut himself up in his study, and addressed a long letter to Florence, copying some verses at the close, which Effie had shown him in a popular magazine:

"I had a dream in boyhood: 'twas of one
Whose loveliness seemed fairest child of Heaven,
And even then, in spring of life begun,
'Twas far more bright than mortal e'er was given.
It was a joy and beauty, and my heart,
Was given to vision, and I never
Dreamed that any fate could bid it e'er depart,
But knew 'twould dwell within my soul forever.

"Years fled away, and I, the dreaming boy.
Entered life's grand arena; *she* came not,
Of whom I dreamed with fondly eager joy,
She, seen so long ago, but ne'er forgot;
In dreams she sweetly smiled on me alone,
And smiled in beauty every passing day,
And always memory gave her voice a tone
That thrilled me, as she fled in dreams away.

"And now it's real, this enrapturing dream,
And manhood triumphs, for the dreaming boy,
Triumphs to find the lovely vision *seem*
His bright awakening to a real joy.
Beloved Florence, fondly, dearly met!
Thou art my dream, my hope, my joy, my love;
Though every other star for me should set,
All will be bright if thine beam on above."

"What *shall* I do?" were the words that again and again escaped the maiden's lips, when for the fourth time she had carefully perused the sensible, but passionate epistle.

A servant entered. "Here ma'am, a gentleman sent up this here card. He says he's waited a half hour for you and begins to think you ain't comin' at all."

"Tell him I'll join him presently," she replied, as she glanced at the card, which bore Henry Warren's name and signature.

She pressed her hand upon her throbbing temples, and tried to calm her excited thoughts. The servant's tread was again heard on the stairs, and she arose and descended to the parlor.

"My own Flora! You'll rival the goddess herself to-night at Flora's evening Festival," said Mr. Warren as he advanced towards her.

"Sit down, Henry, I have something to tell you," she replied with an effort.

"We have no time now, dear. We're expected, you know, to play at the soiree to-night, and must no be too late."

"But I don't feel like going."

"Why not?"

"I would enjoy solitude much better than amusement to-night."

"You'll go to please *me*, won't you, Flora?"

"I will go," she said, hurriedly throwing a mantle around her shoulders, over which the raven curls were twining, "but my hat's up stairs. I must go after it."

"Send Mary, and you talk to me," putting his hand upon the bell-rope.

"She's busy, I can go," and she vanished through the hall.

"What is the matter?" he mused, as he listened to her muffled tread upon the carpeted stairs. "Perhaps she has some trouble that I ought to share. I ought to have consented to spend the evening with her at home."

The hat was placed jauntily upon the queenly head. Time was when she would have peeped into the mirror, but *this time* she paid no regard to her personal adornments. As if loth to quit the spot, she stood irresolute a moment, then falling upon her knees, she prayed earnestly for direction and guidance from on High.

"You've re-appeared at last!" said her lover, rather petulantly, as they stepped into the street. He tried to talk cheerfully, but the reserve with which Florence armed herself, so unlike her former affability, cast a spell of coldness over his ardent feelings, and both felt relieved when the short walk was ended. A murmur of admiration sounded through the crowded rooms, as they entered the gayly lighted parlors.

"O, I'm so glad you've come at last!" exclaimed one of Florence's schoolmates, who was to sing this evening for the first time before an assembly. Florence took her seat at the piano, and played some intricate waltzes with admirable success. Fanny Waters followed with a popular song, and Florence continued to play with increased power and accuracy. Henry Warren stood behind her with his flute.

"How enchanting she looks!" exclaimed Hugh, the wild, but good-hearted brother of Fanny Waters.

"By Jove! if she don't shame Venus with her classic beauty. They say that Warren has secured the prize, but I don't believe it."

"But it is a certainty, that he has waited upon her exclusively for the last three months. He used to wait alternately upon all the girls in the city," replied George Danvers.

"I'll bet you an oyster supper that I'll introduce her to somebody who'll cut him out."

"Done!" said his friend with a smile.

One person heard these jesting words with a thrill of disappointment. Herbert and Effie had been invited to the soiree, and had come early to the house of Mrs. Card, who had given the entertainment. Florence had not seen them, for, as they were unacquainted with most of the company, they remained in the back-ground.

Herbert's heart had beat wildly when Florence took her seat at the piano. Three days had passed since he had addressed her and he felt confident that she had received his letter. One idea now clouded his anticipations, which had never before crossed his mental vision. "Was she affianced?" He had seen a young gentleman enter the room with her; had noticed that he dwelt upon her words, and was exceedingly attentive to her performances. He mentally pronounced him homely and unrefined, though most of Henry Warren's city friends called him handsome and interesting. His fine oval face was shaded by a luxuriant growth of dark brown hair; his manner was engaging and his voice pleasant, but Herbert could see nothing amiable, pleasing or intelligent about him.

"You see through a glass darkly," said his sister affectionately, with a covert meaning which he well understood, in reply to his expressed opinion.

"What causes that fever-spot upon her cheek?" he mused. Echo, from the caverns of her heart, answered with a vague expression, which he happily construed into the truth.

She was excited, but was striving to still her agitated system by a desperate effort to excel in the music with which she was engaged. A dress of gray silk, trimmed with rows of black velvet ribbon, exposing the well-rounded shoulders, where the glossy curls were thinnest, a simple black silk cord, from which was suspended a neatly wrought golden locket, falling a little below the waist and secured at the termination of the corsage by a diamond pin, and a wreath of natural flowers upon her brow, became her singular beauty, and set off her natural grace.

"Why, Herbert Goodwin!" said Hugh Waters, as he espied him among the crowd. I did not know you were here. Are you acquainted with my sister and Miss Willard?"

"I would be pleased to get an introduction," he replied, ingeniously contriving to neither acknowledge or deny his former acquaintance with Florence.

"I have heard that you once had a decided *penchant* for Miss Willard, but suppose that boyish dream long ago vanished 'into thin air.'"

"My sister is present. Perhaps she would like to become acquainted with your friends," he said, not venturing to reply to his last remark.

"Excuse me, Miss Goodwin; I had not discovered you. We will think that your brother and yourself have come here for the sole purpose of taking items, if you don't stir about a little occasionally."

"Please request your sister and her friend to come to us. I don't like to go through the crowd to the piano," said Effie, diffidently.

"You needn't be ashamed of the sensation you'll create,"

he replied, with a roguish look of admiration, as he started after Florence and Fanny.

He had become acquainted with our friends at the Institute a few years before. He had left school with a somewhat superficial education, and they had met him but seldom afterwards.

Herbert's heart beat more wildly than ever, as he saw the object of his hopes and fears approaching them.

"Miss Willard and my sister; Miss and Mr. Goodwin," said Hugh.

Florence bowed haughtily, but the struggle to subdue the fire in her heart, was not sufficient to keep her self possession there. Her lips blanched, and for a moment she hesitated. Effie was first to speak. "I believe we have met before, Miss Willard; didn't we travel together a few days in the Umatilla Valley?"

"Yes, I remember, but I should have hardly known you."

"Have I changed so *much?*"

"You have changed but little in features, but I have always thought of you as the little girl who chased little Indians along the Umatilla river. It seems strange to see you grown."

"You have also changed, but it is my opinion that it has been for the better, and that is saying a good deal for your present appearance."

"Thank you, Effie. You are the same little tease you always were," she answered, with an effort to appear at ease.

Herbert was talking in an extravagantly gay manner with Fanny Waters, who appeared well pleased with his attentions.

"Miss Floy," said Hugh, "I tell you what it is, I didn't fetch you here to monopolize all Miss Effie's attention. I command you to seek other company, and allow me my favorite seat."

"Very well, if you're my master, I must obey."

"O, you needn't get *hostile* over it. Here's Mr. Goodwin. He's good enough in all conscience for you to associate with. I *pick* my company."

Playfully, "You're the personification of impudence. If I didn't know you so well, I would consider your personalities most insulting. It isn't worth while for a sensible person to get offended at you."

"It would be like pouring water on a duck's back, if you should, Miss Gypsy."

"Why, Hugh! You are certainly the most impolite jester I ever heard. I wouldn't mind him, Floy. Fortunately he never means half he says," said Fanny.

"How do *you* know, Puss? I'd advise you to tell what you know, not what you conjecture."

"And I'll follow your advice when I think it really necessary. But I am spoiling a would-be quartette," and she cast a mischievous glance at Hugh, tripped away, and was soon lost in the throng.

Herbert had often laughed with his sister about the common-place conversations concerning the "Plains," which is so often the theme in an Oregon or California company. She was amused this evening by seeing that he talked to Florence of nothing else, and thought that she would certainly consider him very prosy. She knew where his heart was, and had a sisterly desire for his success, but thought he was making a very poor beginning for a favorable impression. If she had known the tumultuous feelings of both, she would have been spared these annoying conjectures.

Fanny went to Mrs. Card, the hostess, and asked her to request Herbert and Effie to sing.

Herbert's tongue was just beginning to get loose, and he thought he was playing the agreeable to perfection, when a

dozen calls for "Mr. Goodwin and his sister," put an imperative period to their conversation.

"I dread to sing before so many strangers," whispered Effie.

"Don't say so, sister. You've succeeded admirably before greater companies than this," and he offered Florence his arm, leaving Hugh to be his sister's escort.

"O, if Hubert were here!" Effie sighed, as they moved past the expectant company. This sigh, for lonely years had heaved her breast in vain. And the soul-oppressing reality of hope deferred, was beginning to fade her cheeks and wear out by degrees her natural vivacity.

"Here is a piece of original manuscript from the brain of one of our Oregon poets. I received it from his hand a few days ago. Please to try your powers, vocal and instrumental, upon one of our home productions," said Hugh.

"One would think you were sole manager from your manner of assuming authority," said Florence, with a quiet smile

"Aren't you going to sing? The listeners are becoming impatient," said Fanny.

Come one and all,
Both great and small,
And hear the wondrous story,
How far and near,
With hope and cheer,
And thoughts of future glory,
Resounds the songs,
Of coming throngs
To this fair Territory.

Well may they come,
And sing the song
Of hope and joy, and gladness,
For rolling hills
And vales and rills,—
Great antidotes for sadness,
Make stoics smile,
And woes beguile,
From those who're prone to madness.

"From Yankee land,
From ocean's strand,
From o'er the broad Atlantic,
Folks come in bands,
With willing hands,
And heads no wise pedantic;
And work and sing,
And tribute bring,
To Sam with zeal half frantic.

"This uncle great,
Who sits in state,
Makes us pay postage, treble;
Won't pay war debt,
But lets us 'sweat,'
In spite of border trouble;
As though alone,
We could go on,
Like States in age our double.

"But politics,
And other 'ics,'
'Tis said 's no conversation,
To suit the ears
Of lady dears,
The fair ones of our nation,
Who should give way
In what they say,
To first lords of creation.

"So fair ones all,
Forgive our call,
Upon our lady 'betters,'
We postage pay—
From day to day
Upon your numerous letters.
We don't blame you,
That's very true,
But we don't like Sam's fetters.

"Now is your time,
And let this rhyme,
Provoke you to the task, dears;
Put on your charms,
And 'other arms,'
And polish up your masks, dears;
Muster your 'pluck,'
And tell 'old Buck,'
That you've a boon to ask, dears.

He'll not refuse,
The boon you choose.
Although he may look graver,
A bachelor,

You need not fear,
From duty he'll not waver,
If you will press
Him to reduce
The postage in your favor.

"Ten cents, you say,
'S naught anyway;
But aggregates amount up
To grevious sums,
And many 'hums,'
You'll see if you will count up,
That what we pay
Thus every day,
Slowly sips the fount up.

"Our eastern friend
Can letters send,
From Maine to frontier Texas,
For three cents each,
And know they'll reach,
While we've such sums to vex us;
Besides such tax,
The mails are lax;
And failures oft perplex us.

"What right have we
To pay three times three,
With one more added over;
Because we're here,
On this frontier,
Toiling with zeal so clever.
Say Uncle Sam,
With mien so calm,
Will you amend this never?"

Herbert, Florence and Effie, joined in the vocal music, while the piano, under the management of Fanny Waters, played a skillful and admirable part in the lively, double-quick time strains.

"Come! Waters, own up! Who wrote that song?" said Danvers.

"We *must* know," ejaculated a dozen voices.

"Well, I'll tell you all that you have a right to know, or I have the privilege to divulge. I am acquainted with a lady up the country, who designs to start an Oregon Magazine. To effect this, she has opened an extensive correspondence

with Eastern publishers, and sending off a dozen or more letters every week; many of them inclosing a ten cent stamp to pay return postage, has proved to be a heavy tax. She is a lady of enterprise, and has been agitating this subject, until her husband, in answer to a suggestion of hers about petitioning Congress to reduce our mail expenses, 'let off' this impromptu song, requesting her to circulate it."

"We are dying to know who they are," said one.

"And who is this literary lady?" queried another.

"When will her Magazine be issued?" asked a third.

"Don't all speak at once," said Hugh, comically. I am not permitted to divulge her name at present. You'll hear from her magazine in due time. Meanwhile, we hope you ladies will practice the theory of this Oregon song. If you don't succeed while Buck's in office, you'll stand a poor chance with a married man."

"I noticed to-day, in the Tribune, that the Post-office Department does not now pay expenses. I'm afraid the ladies' petition will do but little good," remarked Mr. Card.

"I'm sure we don't want to beg anything," replied Hugh. Let them raise States' postage two cents and reduce ours five, and there'll be some righteousness in the system. Besides, the Department could then pay expenses, to say nothing of the help such a measure would be to these remote countries."

"I noticed in the Post," said Herbert, "that a motion to that effect has passed the Lower House. I hope this matter will shortly be attended to."

"I hope so," added Hugh. "But Fanny, it's time for us to go home. I promised mother to see that your habits are temperate, and I am in duty bound to fulfill the engagement."

"Fanny, I'm afraid you'll never rightly appreciate the kindness of your protector, till he's married and gone," said Florence.

"I'm afraid I won't be able to appreciate it *then*," was the smiling reply.

One by one, the company departed, until Florence and Henry Warren were the only remaining guests besides Herbert and his sister, who were to remain at the house of their obliging hostess for a few days. Florence lingered until Henry became impatient.

"Are you not going this evening, Flora?"

"I will be ready in a moment. Excuse me, Miss Goodwin," and the dark-eyed beauty left the room. Henry stood at the door, ready to accompany her, when she reappeared, attired for the walk. She shook hands with Effie, and kissed her ruby lips.

"Can't you pass that round?" Herbert asked, attempting a playful speech.

"Certainly, that is, the hand-shake, but I'm afraid my other half that is to be, wouldn't like it, if he should hear that I had kissed you," and the snowy hand rested in his. But she quickly withdrew it and turned away, nervously grasping Henry's arm.

"Can't you call upon my guests to-morrow?" asked Mrs. Card.

"Perhaps I will, after school."

"'Tis a pity that our vacations have not occurred together; we might have had several holidays," said Effie.

"I don't wish to hurry yon, Flora, but I forgot my dead-latch key, and the office will be locked up for the night in a few moments."

"Once more, good night. I'm sorry, Henry, that I have kept you waiting."

"What do you suppose the *elite* of our city will think of your actions to-night!" he asked, reproachfully, as they were in the street.

"If I have overstepped the bounds of propriety, none but a jealous eye could have discovered the culminating point, that is certain!" she answered haughtily.

"Do you accuse *me* of jealousy?"

"I *shall*, if you find fault with my desire to keep congenial company."

He felt that he was going too far, and the tone of reproach changed to one of deep affection. Their short walk was soon ended, but Florence had not dared to speak of her tumultuous inner feelings. His manner had quelled her usual freedom of speech, but she would not act deceitful. The prolonged, parting kiss was studiously avoided by the upright girl.

"I have found," she soliloquized, "that he was never designed to fathom the great deep of my affections, and I'll acquaint him with the fact as speedily as possible."

"Good night, dear one."

"Good night," coldly, and she vanished up the stairs.

"Confound it all!" he muttered, as he walked rapidly away. "She's as fickle as the rest of her sex! I know that this coldness is the beginning of a final separation."

Throughout the silent watches of the remainder of that desolate night, the orphan's pillow was watered with scorching tears. Honor, so seldom found among the belles of fashion, was her great ideal of perfection in a woman, but she felt that, go which way she would, the thought of flirtation would destroy her peace.

"If I had told Henry of my childhood's fancy in the beginning, he would not blame me so much. I thought that I had long ago ceased to care for Herbert, and certainly believed that I should never see him again."

CHAPTER XXXI.

MARTHA MARTIN.

FLORENCE arose at dawn, unrefreshed and feverish, and sought the cool breezes of the garden. A fountain there threw up its limpid waters in the bracing air, falling again into a reservoir, from which they escaped and coursed away in a noisy rivulet. She supposed that no one but herself was astir at that early hour, and stood, gazing at the busy fountain, and leaning listlessly against the back of one of the arbor seats; her hair thrown back and eyes cast down, while the refreshing breeze played upon her fevered cheeks, and tossed her curls in every direction over her head.

She suddenly heard footsteps upon the pavement. Herbert had arisen with the larks, and walking at a rapid pace through the city, trying to calm his nervous agitation, which he considered foolish. Hearing the fountains gleeful play, he stopped involuntarily to gaze upon its foaming waters. His eyes met Florence's startled look, and marked the deep-hued flush that crimsoned her cheeks. He bowed and was trying to think of something to say, when to his surprize she turned away and entered the house.

"My tongue never fails to serve me in any one's presence but hers!" he muttered, as he continued his walk.

Florence entered her room, sat down and addressed a long letter to her bethrothed; informing him of her early attachment and unexpected meeting with Herbert.

"This unfortunate engagement has given me any amount of trouble for the two past days. The art of flirtation, you know, I have never learned. I thought I was to marry you and believed I loved you deeply, sincerely. Subsequent events have sounded the shallow depths of my attachment.

I shall ever love you as a friend, but to know that the object of my dearest affection is still alive—that he loves me with a sincerity only equaled by my regard for him,—and still consent to fulfil an engagement that was, I thought, sincerely made, but now repented,—would be doing you an injustice.

I hold that as one man was made for one woman, where the attachment is not wholly reciprocal between the two persons, they had better seek further, or remain unmarried, than to enter into a life-long engagement, which both may repent when restitution is impossible.

"I do not now believe that you love me as you are capable of loving, and if you will annul this engagement, you may one day be able to say to me, when we can both laugh over the incidents of the past, that your attachment for me was but a delusive dream, which, instead of strengthening with your strength, has disappeared before the enchanting loveliness of a more congenial companion. I consider you to be a gentleman of virtue and honor, and believe that you will think more highly of me for having made this confession, than you would, if I had fulfilled an engagement which both of us might have sincerely repented. Wishing to remain upon terms of friendship with you, and desiring you to regard me as a sister, I close this humble confession. Please answer at your earliest convenience, for you know not the struggle my spirit 'is enduring.'"

The letter was dispatched to Mr. Warren's law office, in the care of one of the children of the family with whom she resided. She longed to answer Herbert's letter, but did not feel at liberty to do so until she should hear from Henry.

After breakfast there was another leisure hour before school time, but Florence could not be still, and to make the time pass more agreeably away, she proceeded to the academy. Miss Martin, the music teacher was there before her, and the quiet solitude she had hoped to find for an hour in the school room, must be sought elsewhere. She bowed, and turned to go to the library, but Miss Martin detained her.

"You were at Mrs. Card's soiree, last night," she said, inquiringly.

"Yes, ma'am."

"Did you become acquainted with Mr. Goodwin and his sister?"

"I saw them there, but knew them on the Plains."

"Indeed! I became acquainted with them there. They were but children when I saw them, but I was deeply interested in them and their amiable mother."

"Their mother was dead before I knew them."

"Do they intend to remain long in the city?"

"But a few days, I believe."

"I must call at Mrs. Card's this afternoon. Would you like to accompany me?"

"Perhaps; but there is one thing I want to talk to you about, as the only unbiased person to whom I can go for counsel. If you are an old maid, your heart is kept green as spring-time by the overflowing streams of kindness that cast a pleasing spell upon all who are thrown in your company."

Miss Martin smiled. "One would think you were growing exceedingly poetical over an old maid's imaginary virtues. 'Old maid' I am and expect to remain, for I am twenty-six, and the many dreams of my girlhood are only remembered as seasons of past sunshine—their peculiar *brightness* gone for ever—yet the reflection of by-gones radiates around me, and seems to grow brighter every passing day. But what do you want to tell me, dear? We must finish our conversation before we have listeners."

Miss Martin put her arm affectionately around her pupil. Rain that had played in the air in a misty spray since sunrise, began to patter against the window panes. Florence leaned her head upon her teacher's breast, and told the story of her engagement and its consequences. She showed the letter that Herbert had written, and asked her for counsel, as a child might seek advice from a judicious parent.

"You are doing right, my dear. The only thing in which you are to blame, is, that you did not tell Mr. Warren, from the first, of your early fancy."

"I *intended* to have told him, but somehow I never could speak of it at the proper time, and kept putting it off to a future period, until we were engaged."

"Learn from this experience, my dear girl, not to withhold from your lover any thoughts which trouble you. You may think there are crosses which you can bear alone, but—when your vows of union for life are exchanged with your chosen one—there should be no solitary bearing of heart-troubles, in which your lover, as your husband, should not share and alleviate. Suppose now, that Herbert had been, as you supposed him, dead, or gone for ever from your sight. You saw, or thought you saw in Henry Warren, a man whom you could love and honor. Had you informed him of your early preference, no jealousy would have been awakened in his breast, had he been worthy of you; but he would have thought, and truly, that one so faithful to the memory of the departed, would prove an equally faithful wife to the living.

My experience was dearly bought dear Floy. I pray God that you may never be tried as I have been."

"Do please tell me about it," said Florence, her black eyes glistening with the interest she felt in her beloved teacher. "You needn't be afraid to trust *me*."

"I was left an orphan at an early age, and my lot was cast in the society of a paternal aunt, who, though mindful of my temporal wants, never condescended to notice my *whims*, as she regarded my rather peculiar notions of almost everything. I grew up within myself; felt that I had no congenial friends, and thought I cared for no one, not even myself. Two years before we started to this country, I became acquainted with Mrs. Mays, a sister of my uncle's, to whose kindly regard, I owe all that I am or ever may be that is good and trust-

worthy. But she perished upon the Plains, and again I was mentally alone. Yet not alone, for she had taught me to look beyond the confines of this little world for happiness and rest. When I was sixteen years old, I met and loved Willis Stokes. We were not engaged, but each read the other's heart, and looked forward to years of mutual enjoyment. Business called him to a distant State. I received letters from him occasionally for a few months, but my aunt would not allow me to answer them, and he finally ceased to write. I blamed him for neglecting me, and with a desperate effort to spite him, I began a flirtation with his cousin, knowing that he would get to hear of it, and suffered the report of my engagement with George Stokes to go forth uncontradicted. A year passed and Willis returned. I had never told him about aunt Mays' pious horror of love letters, and he did not visit me—as I afterwards learned—because he was offended about my neglect. Had he known the restraint under which I was kept at home, he would not have blamed me, but I thought he had troubles enough of his own, and kept my grievances from him. George told him that we were engaged and he departed without meeting me. It will be ten years this evening since I last beheld his face. We were standing under the great elms, in the avenue fronting my uncle's home. He told me that he was going, and requested me to enter with him into a solemn promise of marriage. I gave him my hand and was trying to speak, when a spiteful call from my aunt disturbed me. I often wonder how she ever happened to be married. Certain it is that she looks upon the act as something criminal in other folks. I hurried away, merely saying a hasty good-bye. The next morning he took passage in the cars for a distant city, and these letters are the only mementoes left me of my heart's young dream."

"What became of George?"

"He married an excellent girl, and is now living in my uncle's Eastern homestead. He tried to find Willis, after he became aware of my preference, but was unsuccessful in his search. He may not be living, but whether he is or not, the Infinite knoweth."

"Do you believe that Christians who truly love in life, and have perfect affinities for each-other here, will meet in the world to come."

"Most certainly. Aunt Mays quotes 'They neither marry nor are given in marriage,' as her proof of an opposite theory. I freely admit the force of that clause of Divine Inspiration, but my reason for it is this: Our Master says nothing without cause. The world of happiness is so much more perfect than this, (and we will not have the clog of mortality to obscure our mental vision,) that each can read the thoughts of the other's second self, and the attraction will be mutual and instantaneous. 'No marrying or giving in marriage,' will be necessary, for we will possess the intuitive knowledge of 'the angels of God in Heaven.'"

"Don't you ever expect to get married?"

"Not unless I find that I can be a blessing to some one during life. A true marriage is not for me, unless the first object of my regard should find me, which is an improbability."

Numerous voices of happy and dissatisfied girls were heard in the hall; the driving rain having saturated their cloaks and hoods, making fine fun for a few and grumbling discontent for many. Miss Martin replenished the fire in the stove, and called the noisy group to order.

Florence took her usual seat, and as she glanced at the plain, neat dress of her teacher, and marked her subdued, but pleasant smiles, she wondered that she had never thought her pretty before. She knew that she had taken to teaching on account of reduced circumstances, and thought that the

faint lines of sorrow, dimly visible about the mouth and eyes, resulted from pecuniary disappointment.

Mr. Mays, her uncle, had become insolvent after several years of ineffectual gold-hunting and other speculations, and Martha, rather than be a burden on his hands, had accepted her present situation. She was styled "old maid," and "maiden aunty," by all of the girls, whenever her back was turned, but Florence now thought that if they could hear her story as she had heard it, they would speak derisively of her no more.

"I wonder," she thought "if all 'old maids' have so great a cause for continuing in 'single-blessedness,' as she has? She wouldn't be called 'old maid' anywhere but in Oregon. Most girls here, think they must be married before they're fifteen, or they'll be doomed to irremediible spinsterhood. I guess too, they have been affected to some extent with the mania that has infested the bachelors. They used to marry to hold their land. I for one, am not sorry that the Land Act has expired."

"Herbert and Effie were sitting in a bay window of one of Mrs. Card's parlors. Effie had become absorbed in Dombey and Son, while Herbert was trying in vain to get interested in Bayard Taylor's Cyclopedia of Modern Travel, a book well suited to his taste, and which at any other time would have engaged his entire attention. Mrs. Card was superintending the dinner, and had left them alone for an hour.

Herbert shut the volume with a nervous heavy stroke, that aroused his sister from her abstracted dream over the printed page.

"Effie do lay aside that book and talk to me! My head aches! How heavily time drags along to-day."

"I'm sorry to hear you complain of the tardiness of time, my dear brother. I was just getting ready to have a hearty laugh at 'Mr. Toots.' Here lay your head on the sofa pil-

low, and I'll try my powers of mesmerism on your forehead. I guess 'the magnet in my fingers' as Dr. Muse calls it—can drive or allure the pain away."

"You are the dearest sister mortal ever had."

"You're a successful flatterer. I believe I am the dearest sister *you* ever had, if I admit it myself.

"Are you jealous of Florence, sister, mine?"

"What a question! I don't expect to occupy her place in your heart. I shall stick most adhesively to my 'sister's corner'; I'm almost as deeply interested in your success as you are."

"Well, I'll have to confess that I felt a pang of jealousy when you first wrote me about Hubert Munson."

He paused, for a shade of sadness which of late had often mantled his sister's brow, had settled over her features.

"How long since you received a letter from Hubert?"

"Over four years."

"Do you believe he has been false?"

"I do not! I shall always believe his regard for me was all he expressed it to be. He may be dead. I don't know. I have ventured to ask his father about him sometimes, but he treats me so coldly when I speak of his son, that I never persist until I get a satisfactory answer. If he lives he will return some day, if not I can go to him."

Herbert kissed her with a brother's fondness, and seeing that she grew sadder still, he adroitly changed the subject.

"Sister do you know who is the author of that song we immortalized last evening?"

"I can guess."

"Who?"

"No one who crossed the Plains with Maurice Stanton and listened to his songs, could doubt his hand and head-work in that manuscript."

"I wonder if Ada is going to be literary? If there are

women in Oregon who are capable of conducting a periodical, I believe she is among the number."

"Hugh Waters says that she is going to try to start a Magazine that will be inferior to none in the Union. Won't she wake the Eastern critics, if she describes Western life and incidents as they are? Tinged as she can tinge them—with romance enough to make them readable, and spice enough to attract everybody's attention. I don't believe she'll be afraid of criticism, if she can know that her writings are beneficial to the country. One thing certain, her writings will all be of a moral nature."

"Everything must have a beginning. She will probably be successful in time. But my dear sister, I should hate to see you trust yourself upon so precarious an enterprise."

"I never expect to make the attempt—at least not in my own name. I may write sometimes for publication, but I'll hide behind a *nom de plume*, which nobody but Ada can recognize. I should faint under the blow of some self-conceited hypocrite, to say nothing of the well-meant fault-findings that would certainly assail my most earnest efforts in the newspapers and magazines, perpetrated by critics and editors whose long study and final triumphant success have emboldened them to crush into disrepute the first efforts of youthful genius: their bitings being the more bitter because they have a remembrance of how and where they started."

"Why sister! You must entertain a very uncharitable opinion of our press. I am certain that the American public are generally very lenient towards youthful writers.

"You've turned your tune since you warned me against a certain 'precarious enterprise,' a moment ago. I should consider you naturally very fickle, from your remarks, if I couldn't account for it at present by your being in love."

"The life of an authoress, though fascinating in its very excitement and danger to some minds, would be a constant

source of mortification to my sensitive plant. This is why I cautioned you against it. But what do you expect to do with yourself?"

"I used to think I'd be mistress of a little cottage of my own, and live among birds and flowers—as we did in Illinois—only on a grander scale; but life's future is densely clouded now, and I don't know what course to pursue. We'll graduate in June, and you'll of course get married: do some chivalrous deed for your country, besides tilling the soil—writing scientific articles for the ——Tribune; starting benevolent societies: organizing and superintending Sunday schools: repeating numerous plagiarisms upon poems, when you get eloquent, and finally bringing up boys and girls, with bright black eyes and raven curls."

"Is that *all*, sister? He smiled at her vivid picture, but a shade of doubt crossed his face.

"O, you needn't look doubtful. I have the kaleidoscope that enables me to see these things in your future. Haven't I told you of enough to do?"

"I shall grow bald before I perform half the work that you have assigned me; and as to getting married and 'bringing up the boys and girls,' though a truly pleasant picture to contemplate, I thing its realization is *very* uncertain."

"Fie! Herbert. If I had no more hope than you have, I'd die of suspense."

"'Love makes cowards of us all.'"

"Don't call *me* a coward! I'm in as deep as you are, and I'm as brave as a crusty old bachelor who couldn't love if he should try."

"Sister, darling! Tell me? Are you happy, or do you act this way to make me feel at ease about you? If you have hidden trouble, I, as your only relative, ought to share it."

She was sitting upon a footstool beside him, as he lay on

the sofa. He put his arm around her and drew her head upon his breast, looking earnestly into her clear blue eyes.

"My heart knows its own bitterness, my dear brother; I do not wish to add to your manhood's cares by revealing my hidden troubles. Do you remember the sentiment of our evening song that won us such applause, long ago:

"Brother, as you and I must brave,
Alone the dangers of life's wave;
Let's here and now breathe a new vow,
Let's say, to anguish we'll ne'er bow.

But through the darkest hours of life,
In keen despair or sorrows strife,
We'll trust our mother's God of love,
Who sees our arts, from realms above."

"The future was a sealed book, and I knew nothing of the coming troubles of life. Ah! I was *so* happy that evening! With every word of Hubert's letter burning in my heart, and your presence to cheer me, when all before had been so dark! But I do not repine. My motto is, and ever will be, 'look upon the brightest side of every cloud.' There is much for me to do upon this little earth."

The announcement of dinner interrupted the conversation.

"Miss Martin has been teaching in the —— Academy for some time past. She sent me a note at noon, stating that she would call upon you, in company with Miss Willard, this evening, after school," said Mrs. Card.

"Miss Martha Martin? The prim young lady we saw in Platte river valley, whose friend was dying, and whose clothing looked so spotlessly clean in contrast with the soiled garments of other folks."

"You have a strange medley of ideas, sister. One might consider death and clean clothes to be twin sisters, from your way of speaking," said her brother with a confused attempt at an affectionate smile, which, though it played around the mouth, did not reach the eyes."

"She merely stated in the note—here it is—that she had

met you several years ago, and would be pleased to renew the acquaintance," remarked their hostess.

Henry Warren was sitting in his office, busily engaged in trying to untangle the intricacies of a troublesome law suit, when the letter from Florence was placed in his hand. He tore open the envelope with a vague apprehension that something was wrong.

"The conceited fop shall never know that I regret the turn matters have taken," he exclaimed, and returned Florence's letter immediately, inclosing the following note:

"*Miss Willard:*—I am sincerely obliged to you for expressing a desire to annul this troublesome engagement. It is what I would have asked last evening, but hadn't the heart to distress a handsome maiden. In due appreciation of your honesty, honor, and candor, I subscribe myself your friend and brother, HENRY WARREN."

He dispatched the note to the academy, sat down and tried to meditate. He pressed his hand upon his throbbing temples, while a tremor ran through his frame. Mortified vanity was his worst trouble, for he "had fallen in love, and out again," until he could no longer realize or feel any tender emotions. But this was the only instance in which the "falling out" had not been upon his side.

"I'll make her believe that I never *did* love her."

Common sense whispered that that was the very thing she most desired.

"But she shall not have the gratification of counting me among her slain; that is certain."

"A note for Miss Willard," said Miss Martin, as she received the message from the hand of Mr. Warren's errand boy, and advanced towards Florence's seat, saying in an undertone, "I will this time omit one of my strictest rules, and permit you to retire to the library, where you can read your note unobserved, without waiting till the school closes."

Her tone and looks expressed a meaning which Florence understood. She had rightly conjectured as to who was the author of the note, and knew how anxiously her pupil was awaiting its arrival.

"So much for making a confidant of one's teacher," she thought, as she bowed a respectful "thank you," and withdrew from the school-room.

No feeling of wounded pride such as her betrothed had hoped to excite, rankled in her breast.

"He hasn't suffered after all," was the pleasing thought that filled her unsuspicious mind.

When she returned to the school-room, she placed the note in the hand of her teacher, who hastily glanced at the contents and gave her pupil a smile of satisfaction.

The clouds disappeared in the afternoon, and the fresh spring rain drops beaded every out-door object with myriads of diamonds. Effie was gazing through the window, watching the motions of a pair of larks that were building in the grass, where they thought they had found a secure hiding place, when she heard the gate open.

"Misses Willard and Martin are coming," she observed, as she left the window.

Mrs. Card's brown eyes danced and sparkled with merriment, as she looked archly at Herbert, who colored to the roots of his hair. He was conscious that she read his secret, and could think of nothing to say. The call was a protracted and very pleasant one. Florence had been under embarrassing restraint all through the interview, and felt relieved when the proposal to "go" was made by her teacher.

When they stood upon the threshold, ready for departure afternoon had given place to twilight.

"With your permission, ladies, I shall be happy to accompany you to your homes," said Herbert confusedly. Florence nodded assent, and asked Effie to join them in their walk.

"Here is my home," said Miss Martin, when they reached the steps of a large boarding house, two squares distant from Mrs. Card's residence. "Can't you go in with me?" addressing Effie.

"With your permission, brother, I will stop with Miss Martin until you return. Now, don't keep me up till midnight, waiting for you," she added playfully, as they moved on.

"Don't be alarmed about *her* Mr. Goodwin; I'll *chaperone* her to Mrs. Card's to-morrow morning," said Miss Martin.

Reader, we were not there, and can't tell you exactly what *did* pass between the lovers, but certain it is, that before they had spent an hour alone, Herbert was heard to ask her where she would like to live, and other questions equally suggestive of a mutual agreement.

"O, Herbert, *do* consent to go upon a farm! There are too many *smart folks* in the world already. We can have a sweet little home, peeping out from a grove of oaks, with green window blinds, and a trellised portico. Then, in the country, everything looks so fresh and sweet. Such loves of flowers! so many wild berries! such sweet, free birds! How much happier they must be, than my little Lucien, who sings so sweetly from utter loneliness!"

"You didn't become disgusted with farm life when in the mountains, I perceive."

"Don't mention the 'mountains,' or you'll remind me of my *mountain aunt*. Yes, I like farm life. I don't want to work myself to death, though. I'll tell you that in the beginning. I want fresh air and roses, and honeysuckles, and a pony and good health, and you," she added with a blush.

"But there's the dark side; the foggy weather, the muddy door-steps, the raining washing days, (Oregon ladies have to be maids of all work), and the wet stove-wood, and discontented husband."

"Why you take a prosy view of things. Don't you like the country?"

"Yes, better than the city. But you were growing so eloquent over the bright side, that I thought I would remind you of the dark one."

"You spoke of a 'discontented husband.'"

"Just to see what reply you would make."

"My 'reply' then is, that if my husband becomes discontented, I'll box his ears," suiting the action to the word, but so tenderly that he said, "the more such 'boxes' I receive, the better I shall be satisfied."

"I can train you," and she looked archly into his eyes.

"We shall see," he answered, as they parted for the night. The hall clock tolled the hour of twelve as he departed.

"Miss Martin judged wisely, when she decided upon keeping sister over night," said he to himself, as he descended the steps. "I have often said that I would never keep late hours in a lady's company, and have broken my resolution, under the very first temptation."

A maiden who has retired to the solitude of her chamber in a flood of expectant happiness, and a young man who walked the deserted streets towards a public lodging-house, with the realization of a more perfect life than he had ever known before, blooming in his breast, knew nothing of the struggle between mortified vanity and selfish love that was rankling in the breast of the discarded suitor.

Thus lightly are we prone to estimate the inward anguish of others, when we ourselves are happy, even if their misery be not concealed.

CHAPTER XXXII.

MRS. STANTON'S LETTER.

"O, Herbert! guess my surprise!" and Effie held up a letter to her brother's view, a few days after their return to Oregon city.

"A letter with a Valley Brook post-mark? Let me see it."

"Yes. A letter from Mrs. Stanton with compliments to you, and an apology for neglecting us so long. They are coming to the exhibition in June."

"*Read* the letter, won't you, sis?"

"*My Bright-eyed Blue-bell:*—(Do you remember the first 'blue bells' you gathered west of St. Jo.?) My manifold duties for the day are *done*, and with a pleasure only equaled by my anxiety to see you, I take up my pen, lately so seldom used for this purpose, determined to redeem my character one time, by writing everything that may or can interest you. If you knew of the tasks that I daily perform, that knowledge would be a sufficient apology for my seemingly intentional neglect, but as you are not expected to be acquainted with the duties of a mother, and wife of a frontier farmer, you will probably be interested in my experience as such a 'consequential personage.'

"Long years have passed since I was last permitted to behold your sunny face. Each of us have had trials, but each has received countless blessings from Him who watcheth over us all.

"In the autumn of 1850, we settled here, upon a section of land, (you know we married before the expiration of the Land Act, in such cases made and provided,) and began with but little of this world's possessions, besides our willing hands, healthy bodies, and square mile of real estate.

"We now have a good farm, well improved, are surrounded by the luxuries of life, and are, what our neighbors call *rich*. You will forgive my vanity, if I tell you confidentially, that I think so too. In five years, I make with my own hands, more than two thousand pounds of butter for market.

besides doing *all* my other work—washing, ironing, sewing, mending, and cooking—most of the time in summer for a half-dozen men, and being sole nurse of my two children, who are models of beauty and good health, (I would add 'goodness,' but you might think me incapable of judging, as I am a partial witness.) I wonder what my eastern friends will think when they get my letters, for I assure you I have boasted a good deal in my late messages to them, of what I have performed as a farmer's wife.

"My father-in-law, Dr. Stanton, arrived on the last steamer. He is a dignified, aristocratic old gentleman, has but little to say to me, but is agreeable with the children, who are very fond of him. Now that we do not need his help, he has come to us and given all his possessions into our hands. Maurice would not keep them for himself, but bequeathed all to Flora and Henry, except five thousand dollars, with which he headed a subscription for erecting a church and seminary at Valley Brook. He says if we were still poor, the doctor would not deign to help us, and when we don't need his services we won't accept them. The doctor is a deep scholar, and though we differ in many theories, I can learn much from his conversation when he is in a communicative mood. He has consented to aid me in the Magazine enterprise, and with his help and Maurice's I hope to succeed in what I am designing soon to undertake.

"Mrs. Welden lives near Valley Brook, about a mile from here. You ought to see how happy she is with her children. Celia is almost thirteen. Howard is a fine manly boy of eleven; Lucy a lovely little creature of nine; but Johnny is the favorite of the household. Mrs. Welden says that if her husband had lived to see their children so noble, she would have few things now to trouble her. You remember the black woman she met at Lagrange. She received a letter from her master, Mr. Harris, a short time since, stating that she was dead, and that her last prayer had been offered in behalf of 'little Miss Meggie.'

"We have a Farmer Gray sort of neighborhood here; attend church regularly in the log school-house, and have any amount of old fashioned singing-schools. The women, generally speaking, care for nothing but making butter and cheese, and raising chickens for market, besides making

patch-work quilts, and 'goin' to meetin'.' The men like horse-races, corn whiskey, big yarns and tobacco. They consider a select few, ourselves among the number, as being very conventional, but we treat them well, and if they don't fancy our mode of life, they have no reason to tell us so. The girls and boys, from ten years old and upward, care for balls, backwoods' play, parties, and getting married, more than for anything else. But schools are multiplying, and society is growing better every year. I hope the rising generation of youthful Oregonians will be an improvement upon the older frontier stock. I look complacently at *two* specimens of the former, who will, I hope, be exceptions to the general rule of women (?) who ought to be in pantalettes, and men (?) who ought to be arrayed in checked aprons, and ciphering in addition on the village black-board.

"I suppose you are wondering if I am the same wild romp I used to be? I answer, yes! When all healthy out-door creatures cease to play and romp in their own way, then I will sit down in the rocking chair, when not in bed, or over the cook-stove, mop or wash-tub, and see if I can't be dull too. But while everything animate rejoices, and all nature wears such smiling charms of loveliness, I shall laugh, and ride horses, and jump ropes, and climb hills, no matter what prudish matrons may say, or how much Mrs. Mays cautions Martha Martin to beware of my conduct. Do you remember how we heard her telling her niece to never stoop to do such a thing as that, after I had run a foot-race with little Billy Green? I would not be unfeminine, but I would be *healthy*, *active* and *happy*. How sad I sometimes feel, when I reflect upon the way that most American women live! No wonder consumption and debility, and constant suffering are the common lot of so many of the tried daughthers of our glorious land!

"Of the working class—farmers wives and washer-women—I rate them together, for their hardships are equal; how many are overworked every day? Confined in the house from morning till night, taking care of—I had like to have said scores of—little children, and toiling for the comfort of inconsiderate men, who never think of helping them, but who can say, and impatiently enough, that 'it's no wonder women are unhealthy, when they won't stir out and work in the

fields.' Such men are all the rage in Oregon. How can they expect their wives to perform the in-door labor of two or three healthy women, and work out of doors in the bargain? We are not a healthy race like our grandmothers were, but if we will work till our own feelings tell us we have done enough, taking time enough for out-door exercise, while we have the strength left to perform it, I know by experience that we can perform all necessary labors and not die or droop from fatigue either. I am never sick, and I can perform more real hard work than any of my neighbors can, who spend their time altogether in-doors. I would not write these things to you, Birdie, but you are now marriageable, and I want to caution you against those men who would not marry for other than purely selfish motives. A little discrimination will teach you who they are.

"I rode up to the house of one of my neighbors a few days since, a cadaverous, ghastly looking woman, who has three children, the eldest but three years of age. I asked her if she would like a ride?

"'I'd like it well enough, but these pies ain't done, and that meat must be roasted, and those towels washed, and there's not water up from the spring. I don't believe I'm able to ride, anyhow.'

"'Not able to ride—and at work like this?'

"'Yes, we have four workmen, and Silas says that they must have good things to eat. I couldn't leave the children, no how.'

"I answered that I had had a pleasant ride, and if she would mount Flaxy, I would carry on her work and mind her children, till she could return.

"'Well, come in, and we'll see about it. But there's that quilt in the frames. I'm obliged to have it in this room because I must keep the baby by the fire. Silas says we've had to roll it up to make room to set the table, often enough. I thought I'd see if I couldn't get it out of the way to-day,' and she straightened her weary form, and pressed her dough-covered hand over her side, when she had finished the last pie.

"I dismounted, feeling refreshed and vigorous, from the effect of my morning ride, drew off my gauntlets, threw my hat upon a bed and went to work. The woman looked on in astonishment.

"'Where upon earth do you leave your children?'

"'Mr. Stanton takes them out in the fields, while I ride out. I sometimes take the youngest with me, but they are both large enough now to follow him, and I *will* assert my right to one or two hour's freedom every day.'

"'I don't see how you can find time to get away, anyhow. I have to sew constantly, when my housework is done. Silas wouldn't be bothered with the children, either.'

"I glanced at the quilt, which was suspended overhead, in the only decent room in the house. There were four weeks hard work at least upon the quilting, to say nothing of the elaborate patch-work.

"'Which would you rather have, Mrs. Hill, good health or such work as this?'

"The question evidently surprised her. 'You could do without it, couldn't you?' I asked.

"'Yes, I *could*. But I like to have such things.'

"'Well, take my advice,' I answered, 'and let quilts alone. You have enough to do without toiling at such work as this.'

"'If I should stop, what would the neighbors say?'

"'What do they say of *me*? or what do I *care*?'

"'If you don't care, I'll tell you what they say.'

"'Let's hear it,' I answered, with a saucy laugh.

"'Sally Norris,' (meaning her sister-in-law,) 'says you'd a plaguy sight better be making quilts, than spending your spare time out of doors, like a big tom-boy.'

"'Tell Sallie Norris, to *kiss my foot!*' I was about to say, but thought it didn't sound very polite, so I said, 'tell Sallie Norris that my husband buys blankets and counterpanes and don't pay doctor's bills!'

"'Just what I expected you would say,' she replied.

"'But won't you take the ride?'

"'No, I have a blister on my side, and it's too sore to bear the jolting,' and the poor, wearied creature sunk into a chair. The baby began to cry, and without a moment's rest, she took it up and gave it nourishment (?) from her heated breast.

"'You needn't expect to have good babies, when you feed them with side-ache, fever, and sour stomachs,' I remarked, as I came up from the spring with two pails of water.

"'I don't ever expect to have any enjoyment!' she sobbed

in reply. 'It's one baby after another, as fast as I can count them, and no help, and more hard work and less strength every year!'

"That raised my sympathy, so I said, 'tell Silas that I'm coming here this afternoon, a self-invited guest to supper. He may make up his mind to get a thorough scolding from the woman who won't have more than two children in a year, and who *will* play occasionally, out of doors!

"I went home, prepared dinner for our workmen,—and we have a half dozen—straightened everything up about right, and by two o'clock, I was off for the afternoon, with Flora riding behind and Henry before me, upon my favorite steed. Of course, Maurice was in the secret, and was well pleased with the object of my mission. I spent the afternoon in helping about that quilt aforesaid, and we got it out of the frames before time to prepare tea. Mrs. Hill would not let me help her about the supper, so I attached the edges of the quilt, and it was finished, binding and all, when Silas—all the neighbors call him Silas—came in with his men to the supper, which was a nice one to look at though there was a perceptible odor of hog's lard in the saleratus biscuits.

"'I'm ready for that scolding, Mrs. Stanton,' said 'mine host,' after supper.

"It isn't worth while to tell you what I said. You know I said enough. He hinted at first, something about folks minding their own business, but

> Nature impartial in her ends,
> When she made man the strongest,
> In virtue, then, to make amends,
> Made woman's tongue the longest;'

And I didn't heed him. He finally '*succumbed*,' as the Oregonians say, and agreed to stay in the house for an hour every morning, while his wife could ride out, and went so far as to collect all of her patch-work, crochet and embroidery that was in progress; and before I left, he had locked it all up, there to remain, he said, until little Jennie could finish it, and meanwhile, he could get embroideries from Yankee peddlers.

"'Polly,' he said pleasantly, 'I'm going to Salem in a few days. They are making number one Oregon blankets there now, and I can sell a yoke of oxen and purchase what things you need at the factory. I did think I wouldn't sell the steers, but they don't do anything but help eat up the grass, and my hay crop's pretty short, they might starve next winter.'

"'If you had been that considerate years ago, your wife might have been spared many hours of painful toil, and dozens of somebody's cattle would not have starved. 'It's never too late to learn though,'' I added, as I departed, in the best possible humor with myself and them too.

"Three mornings have passed, and she has not yet failed to meet me in our rides. She takes the baby with her, and says he isn't half so cross as when she keeps him in the house constantly. Her cheeks were like June roses this morning, when she bantered Mrs. Welden and me for a race. But you are wearying of this long story, and I will change the subject.

"Hugh and Fanny Waters were here last week, on a visit from Portland. Ask Herbert if he has ever heard of Florence Willard? If he has not, I will tell him where he can find her, if he will first come and see my little girl. He'd get accustomed to the sight of Florence by *degrees*, if he should see my Flora first, for the resemblance is striking.

"I expect to meet you soon. Accept from me, all the love I can spare from Maurice and the children, to be divided equally between your brother and yourself."

"I would have known where this letter hailed from, if I had found it in Canada, without name or postmark. The words drop from her pen just as they do from her tongue. She never knows or cares how she will finish a sentence, when she begins to speak or write it," said Herbert.

"I believe she is the happiest creature I ever saw," Effie replied sorrowfully.

"But she has passed through days of darkness, my dear sister. Think of that."

"I know it, brother, but she knows nothing of the bitter sorrow that long years of hope deferred: suspense that at last ripens into a certainty."

"Pshaw! sister. You were my comforter one week ago, 'Sister, as you and I must brave,' "—

"Hush, Herbert; I dont want to hear that now. You are so happy now, that you can't appreciate my troubles."

"The darkest hour of the night is just before the morning, pet. The exhibition day will soon be here, and I want folks to see that my sister's long term at school has not been lost.

"I shall do my best, as I have always done, to prepare for the occasion, Herbert. I don't often repine. Never, when I see that other folks are sad; but when I witness the *happiness* of others, it seems as if my own were long in coming. I want to know what we are going to do after scoool. I will go to teaching, if you are willing for me to do so."

"No, sister, mine. Our home will not be complete unless you are in it. The money I earned in the mines is now, every dollar, at my disposal. The interest of eight thousand dollars has overpaid our school expenses. I loaned the money to a responsible speculator who is to refund it on the first day of June, next. The half section of land to which we were entitled as orphans, was secured for us by Maurice Stanton, several years ago. As you know, it joins his land and is a lovely location.

"I am going to be a farmer, and show these Oregonians, who don't care how anything looks, what I can do to beautify a claim. Floy is eager to live upon a farm, and I have sent some carpenters, with all the building materials, up the river. We are going to have a gothic cottage erected upon a spot that Maurice and Ada are to choose. The first of October, your birthday, is to be our wedding day. If you desire it, I would be glad if it could be yours too; but I am selfish enough to care nothing about it only for your sake, because I want you to live with me. 'Look upon the brightest side of every cloud,' is your motto, dearie. We'll see grand times yet."

"Guess the news! Guess the news!" said Eliza Crandall, stopping Herbert and Effie upon the front steps of the Institute. Seven years had made but little difference in the appearance or disposition of this fun-loving girl, except that the wild, easy *abandon* of childhood had given way to a more quiet grace, that softened the roguish outlines of her face in a semblance of womanly beauty. "Guess the news!" she repeated. A dozen girls came forward, eager to hear what their Punch had to communicate. Some of these girls were the smaller children of Effie's first acquaintance at school, but the majority of them had not been connected with the Institute but two or three years; the older ones having almost all, either married, or moved away into the country. After keeping them in suspense until she was satisfied, Eliza began her story:

"There was a certain girl, fair to behold, with raven curls, and eyes like burnished ebony, once gazing listlessly into the singing waters of a limpid stream. Her face was perfect as sculpter's model, and upon her snowy hand rested thoughtfully the queenly Sappho head. An open browed youth, an Adonis in appearance, with thoughtful mien and downcast eyes, pursued his solitary way along the shaded margin of the gleeful brooklet. Suddenly a vision stopped him. Eyes from whose dark, clear depths, light gleamed forth, brighter than the most effulgent sunbeams, were gazing into his own thoughtful orbs. And the youth bowed as though a goddess smiled upon him, and the maiden returned the smile with a look that Venus might have envied. For several days, they continued to meet at intervals, along that rippling stream, and then their paths diverged. Adonis had not used his potent eyes in vain, neither had Venus exerted her charms for naught. The youth and maiden were sorely smitten, yet each longed to kiss the smiting hand. Years passed, and they met not again, though they sought each other with de-

spairing energy. At length they met, I will not tell you where. The maiden's Venus-like form had ripened into womanhood, and upon the brow of the noble youth, the diadem of manhood rested. Still, O Cupid, wast thou with them, and they bowed before thy blinding mandates. One sad misfortune troubled them. As though the blind god had determined that they should suffer, he had cast the barb of a half charmed arrow from another source into the vicinity of the maiden's heart. She had bowed to what she thought was destiny, but the slumbering *other* flame broke forth anew at sight of Herbert Goodwin; and Florence Willard yielded to its sway."

"*Eliza Crandall!* when *will* your Quixotic propensities cease?" exclaimed Herbert, half angrily, his face suffused with tell-tale blushes.

"Just when I cease to find attentive listeners, Monsieur la Herbert," she answered, archly.

"*Encore!*" said Bartholomew Barton, A. M., as he emerged from behind a piller, where he had been stationed, an unobserved but attentive listener; but who now came forward, laughing, as the dignitary had not laughed since boyhood. "If you have another story of that kind on hand I would be pleased to hear it. If not, please repeat the first one, as it is yet ten minutes till school time. I see you are to have more listeners," he added, glancing towards his dwelling, from which Mrs. Barton and the assistants were emerging.

"I should be happy to oblige you Mr. Barton, but I really couldn't repeat it if I should try. Perhaps, before I leave school, I can find another subject, if so I promise to summon you to the rehersal," she replied, a little confused, but the ludicrous, comic air she assumed, was so complete, that all who had heard the story were enjoying a real anti-dispepsia explosion of laughter.

"I think this joke is rather more than equal to the one you got upon me about my 'first offer.' Do you not remember my 'sentimental savage?'" said Effie to her brother, as he started to the male department.

He smiled, as he recalled the old scene. "Yes, I should call it considerably more than 'equal,' though that was quite a 'circumstance,'" and he passed hurriedly on.

"Hang it! is that girl a necromancer, that she finds out the private affairs of everybody in the school?" he muttered to himself.

It was not her first attempt of the kind. Many had left that school and married, who had been as ludicrously exposed as Herbert had been, though they thought they had been equally sly about their future intentions. He had intended the whole affair to be an agreeable surprise to his companions at the exhibition, when Florence, a stranger to the whole school, would appear in company with Miss Martin. He had a little conceit too, that when he should pay open attention to the strange beauty, there would be some disappointment, much astonishment, and many conjectures as to where she had come from, and how he had become acquainted with her. How Eliza could have discovered the plot so soon, was a mystery, which subsequent events were destined to unravel.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

HUBERT'S RETURN.

The same excitement and bustle that characterized the preparations for the former exhibitions, were resorted to in getting ready for this one. Mrs. Welden and her children,

Florence and Miss Martin, Maurice, Ada and Dr. Stanton, took lodgings that Herbert had secured for them, for three days at a fashionable boarding house.

Much progress had been made in the school by many of the students, for Mr. Barton was not content with superficial accomplishments, but required careful and thorough investigation of every science, while the art and practice of eloquent speech and composition, received a due share of his judicious attention. Herbert and Effie shared in the honors of the day, but their victory was not so exclusive as on former occasions, for Eliza Crandall, to the astonishment of all who knew her, came in for a share of the greatest honors, while many of the boys and girls, whose talents were no wise remarkable, gained due credit for their un-looked for progress.

Effie had read her composition and had taken a seat upon the stage, while waiting for Herbert and Eliza to finish a complicated dialogue, which, from its very singularity, was attracting the undivided attention of everyone, when a shadow darkened the doorway. She looked involuntarily at the intruder. Surprise drove the blood from her cheeks; her vision reeled a moment, but the hot blood suddenly mounted to her face again, giving a deeper hue to her sunny curls, and her nervous movements agitated her robe of changeable blue and green French silk, which at that moment was suddenly burnished by the sun rays that darted from behind a western cloud, through the open window. The little jewelry she wore was tastefully adjusted to suit her youthful appearance, for, though now in her twentieth year, she appeared but little older than the girl of fourteen, who had so deeply interested that audience, or part of it, more than six years before.

The stranger, a noble looking young man, apparently twenty-six years of age, silently took a seat, attracting no particular attention from any one but Effie. Hubert Munson had grown a little in stature, and his slender figure had

broadened into the symmetrical proportions of a well built frame. He sported the luxuriant whiskers of a foreigner, and had acquired something of the air of an Englishman, by a residence in London, where for several years, he had lived and dreamed and studied. He looked hard at Effie for a few moments and then his eye sought his father's who averted his face, though Hubert knew he had been recognised.

In compliance with his wife's request, Mr. Munson had once written to his son, stating a report which, to do him justice, had acquired something of the semblance of truth, that Effie was soon to be married to Ralph Holmes, a brother of Winnie's, a lawyer, who before Winnie's marriage and removal to California, had paid her marked attention.

Hubert was advised to write to her no more, for, his father stated, she was getting spoiled by flattery and attention, and his continued writing would only add to his causes for mortification, in the end.

Alas! for the boasted firmness of human integrity! Notwithstanding his protested faith in his betrothed, he had bitten his step-mother's bait from his father's hand, and had been caught in the net of distrust. Mr. Munson believed that what he had written would come true in time, for, to him, the idea that a city belle who received attractive offers of marriage almost daily, would reject them all for the sake of a first love, from whom she had heard nothing for years, was preposterous. He advised his son to settle in London, after his travels were completed, where he could have ample opportunity to drown his mortification in amusement and study. For three years, he had spent his time in making researches in the science of Astronomy, and had made discoveries in the starry world, of which he had never dreamed.

A sudden desire to visit his childhood's haunts had prompted him to seek once more the abode of his youth. After a brief sojourn in the interior of Vermont, where his mother had

lived and died, and a hasty visit among his college "chums" who yet remained in Philadelphia, he embarked for Oregon, little dreaming that the object of his former regard was yet awaiting his coming with longing eyes and aching heart.

Effie was too deeply absorbed in the one great idea of the *returned*, to pay much heed to the closing exercises of the day. As if fate had planned a romance of reality in which she was to figure as chief actress, the closing song of the day was assigned to her and Herbert; her part being to sing and play, while Herbert accompanied the performance with his flute. Her cheeks had assumed a crimson hue, and the fire of suppressed feeling had kindled a glow of excitement in her eyes, when she took her seat at the piano, facing the audience, and threw her soul into the old-fashioned song:

"Maiden wherefore weepest thou?
Weepest thou, weepest thou?
Maiden wherefore weepest thou?
Weepest thou so sore?
When at distance from thee parted,
I will ever prove true hearted;
Then dear maiden weep no more—
Maiden weep no more."

Flute and piano were scarcely heard in comparison with the deep, earnest, musical strains of the singer's voice, who, without an effort to act her part, warmed the subject with the fire of her own deep heart. Power and pathos, such as never before had so completely crowned her public efforts, were this time thrown into the spirit of her song, and the listeners were entranced until, at the close, instead of a shower of boquets and loud cries for more, old and young bowed their heads in silence, and the tears of feeling dimmed the eyes of many. To cover the silence which was beginning to grow embarrassing, Eliza Crandall, at a sign from the Principal, took the seat that Effie resigned, and played a lively air which gently lowered the listeners from the hight of feeling to which they had been carried.

A list of performances for the evening was read, and with many thanks to the audience, Mr. Barton dismissed them until evening.

As soon as Hubert could elbow his way through the throng of ladies and gentlemen, who were striving to gain admittance to the circle of successful students, he stepped up to Effie and offered his hand. He gazed earnestly into her eyes; a look that puzzled her, as she did not know that for years he had thought her married.

"When did you return?" she asked, hesitatingly.

"I reached the city about an hour ago."

"Why have you been absent so long?"

"No matter now. Is your brother present?"

"Excuse me; I had not thought but that you were acquainted. My brother, Mr. Munson."

Herbert looked surprised as he so suddenly confronted the intelligent looking stranger of whom he had heard so much, and the thought that his sister had made a good selection, crossed his mind, as he cordially grasped his hand.

"I will see you again, Miss Goodwin, at present, I must look for father," he said in an undertone, as he bowed himself away.

Eliza Crandall observed aside to Mr. Barton, that if he wanted to hear another romance of reality, he might hide behind a pillar the next morning, and she could entertain him with a story equal to the last one she had invented. "And," she added, "it isn't wholly an invention, either."

Hubert met his father at the door. A few words of greeting passed, and he asked him to step aside from the crowd.

"Father, why did you write me that Effie Goodwin was to be married, so long ago?"

"I wrote just what I had reason to believe, from Ralph Holmes's attentions and her manner of receiving them, would be the result of their intimacy."

"And when you found that the report was untrue, why didn't you inform me of the mistake?"

"I never thought it necessary. I dare say now, that she doesn't care a fig for you."

"That doesn't clear your skirts, dear father. How am I to face her and say that the blame of my misconduct rests upon my father's head?"

"Don't be concerned about that. You can tell her that your studies kept you away. If she cares anything about you, she'll be too happy to ask many questions; and if she doesn't regard you very particularly, you needn't tell her anything," he replied, turning, as if anxious to get away from the scrutinizing gaze of his son.

Hubert stationed himself at the door, intending to escort Effie to her boarding house, but Hugh Waters, whose matrimonial intentions were a secret to all but the one interested, had the post, and only stopping to receive an anxious smile from his betrothed, he turned away and walked rapidly towards his father's dwelling.

"Why, Hubert! you here?" exclaimed his step-mother, as he passed the carriage in which she was seated, waiting for her husband to get through a political argument with an aspiring political demagogue.

Herbert offered his hand.

"You got the mitten, did you?" she said exultingly.

"I didn't *forge letters!*" he replied indignantly, with marked emphasis. "Where is Allie?"

"There she comes."

Hubert turned and beheld the little creature, now over six years old, coming towards the carriage. She was tastefully and elaborately dressed, and as beautiful as childhood, innocence, and finery could make her. "What a pity it is that we can't always be children," he said bitterly, as he kissed his little sister, who seemed to know him.

"We have told her so much about you, that she considers herself acquainted," said her mother, wishing to turn his mind from the thoughts she knew he was indulging in regard to herself. He did not reply, but set the child in the carriage and continued his homeward walk. But few of his old acquaintances recognised him, and he had no further interruption until he reached his father's door. The old Irish cook admitted him with a "bless me soul, honey, how ye do change!" as she scanned his be-whiskered countenance.

He entered the garden, the "trysting place" of days gone by, and paced the gravel walks, in no enviable mood.

"Is this the reception I am doomed to meet, after so many years of absence," he said aloud.

He heard his father at the door, and entered the parlor just as Allie came in all smiles and happiness to greet him. His father asked him many questions concerning his travels and life abroad, but he was not in a conversing humor, and would only talk in monosyllables. He glanced at the mirror and started at the sight of his be-whiskered visage.

"While dinner is preparing, I believe I'll run up town and get shaved, father," he remarked as he left the house.

"This is an awkward business, Hattie," said Mr. Munson impatiently. "I'll never trouble myself with match-making or breaking, again, that is certain.

"Yes, it's awkward. That impudent jade will make out a great story upon her side. If Hubert could know her as well as I do, he'd change his mind about her artlessness, of which he has boasted so much.

"I don't know. If I had followed the dictates of my own conscience, I could now be prepared to welcome her as a daughter. As it is, I have hearkened to you, and cannot look either her or Hubert in the face."

"*I* can!"

"I pity you then!" he answered indignantly.

Hubert soon emerged from a barber's shop, and had started back to his father's, when he met Hugh Waters, who gave him his card, and joined him in his walk.

"Miss Goodwin commissioned me to inform you that she will be pleased to see you in the drawing-room of the —— hotel."

"Are you a friend of the young lady's?"

"I once wanted to be something more so, but she told me confidentially that she was engaged, and my fancy then wandered in another direction. I suppose the news will not spread very far, by us letting you into the secret."

Hubert felt a little vexed at the stranger's rudeness, and was about to reply, when Hugh informed him that they were opposite the hotel.

Fanny Waters and Effie were standing at a bay window, looking at the river, and talking in an earnest undertone.

Well, Mr. Run-away! Here have Effie and I been waiting for fifteen minutes, for you to escort us down to dinner," said Fanny to Hugh, before she noticed that Hugh was with him.

"Mr. Munson, my sister," said Hugh.

Effie offered a chair, and dropped into a seat, feeling deadly faint.

"I expect nothing else but that that greedy company will devour the last remnant of that savory meal. Come Hugh," and the brother and sister left the room.

The interview was painful to both the lovers, for a few moments, but soon, forgetful of all past doubts and troubles, Effie was pillowing her head upon his bosom,—happy as a mortal could be. "I always *knew* you would come," she said, lovingly.

"If I had not been a *villain*, I would have come *years ago!* Do you know why I staid away?"

"Your father told me one day last week, that you had

settled in Europe, and would never return. He didn't tell me why."

"Well, I will tell you. He wrote me, more than four years ago, that you were going to be married to Ralph Holmes. It was a rumor he had heard, and he never took the pains to correct it."

Effie started with surprise. "Would your father *do* such a thing?"

"Not of himself, my birdie. But in his case you know there is a power behind the throne, 'greater than the throne.' He is to be pitied, not blamed."

"I forgive him, with all my heart."

"I *said* that time would only clothe my peerless one with deeper loveliness, and, thank Heaven, the prophecy is fulfilled!" he exclaimed, as he caught her in his arms.

"I'm happy to say that I can return the compliment," was the blushing reply.

Footsteps were heard in the hall, and soon the room was filled with Effie's friends, all of whom were introduced to Hubert.

"Did you get enough to eat, Fanny?" Effie asked, making a merciful attempt to start a conversation.

"Pardon me, Miss Willard, but I wish to know if Michigan is not your native State?"

"It is, why?"

"You so completely resemble a maternal aunt of mine who married a Mr. Willard, in Vermont, and afterwards removed to Michigan, that I almost called you cousin."

"Is it possible? What was your mother's name?"

"Reynolds."

"The same. Isn't this like a story book? Rejoice with me, Effie, I have found my long-lost cousin Hubert!"

"She'll do that!" said Hugh, slyly; then aloud—"I'd like to see you get a straight thread out of this tangle."

"We are all interested," remarked Ada.

Florence withdrew a few paces from her cousin, and related the following story:—

"My grandfather Reynolds had two daughters. One of them married a Mr. Munson, and settled in the old Vermont homestead. The other married Mr. Willard, who removed to Michigan, and remained there until I, his daughter, was eleven years old. He then died of quick consumption, and my mother soon followed him to the grave. We wrote to Uncle Munson, but received no answer, and did not know where he had gone. A bachelor uncle, a brother of my fathers, brought me with him to this country, and I have this hour found a cousin, of whom I had not heard for twelve years. This is my romance. I might spin this 'untangled thread' into a skein three thousand miles long, if I had the patience to do so, and could get listeners," she said, turning to Hugh. "Now Hubert, we must hear your story."

"My father has been in Oregon ten years. He removed here shortly after his second marriage, for, like my cousin, I was left motherless at an early age. Our mothers were twin sisters. Floy's mother had just such ringlets as she has. Her eyes were as black and features as fair. Mine, though equally fair, had brown, glossy hair, and pale blue eyes. I was a frolicing youngster of five years when aunt Mildred was married. I saw her but seldom after her removal, but I remember her distinctly now, as the very image of my newly-found cousin."

"We'll have to call upon Eliza Crandall to weave a romance out of this meeting," said Herbert to his sister.

"I can *do* it!" exclaimed Eliza, roguishly, as she stepped from behind a screen, where she had placed herself without being seen by the others, much to the amusement of Mrs. Welden and Ada,

"You've dropped from cloud-land, haven't you?" Herbert was confused out of all thought of playful repartee, but Fanny came to the rescue.

"No, she hadn't dropped from cloud land, only stepped from behind a screen. Mrs. Stanton showed me her retreat and I've been aching to point her out for the last ten minutes.'

"Are you anxious to hear the story, Mr. Goodwin? I suppose I must call you *Mr.* in company, though you're plain *Herbert* at school."

"You needn't mind the story, or the '*Mr.*' either, for that matter. At present we will try to be satisfied with realities and consign romances to oblivion."

"The 'realities' were what I proposed to tell, but of course I shan't insist upon it. There is one married man in the company, and I'm going to talk to him awhile." She took a seat beside Maurice and was soon conversing upon a scientific topic with an interest that surprised him.

"I think," said Mrs. Welden, aside to Ada, "that Cupid is at work all around us. Miss Waters is the only person I see, who is not smitten."

"Do you think Miss Crandall has yielded to Cupid's machinations?"

"If you'll remark the glances between her and Hugh, you'll find out whether she has yielded or not. They studiously avoid each other, and long as we have known him, he has never hinted that he was acquainted with her."

"You're ahead of me in reading physiognomy, Meggie."

"Fanny, don't you ever get smitten with the Oregon mania of getting married?"

"Why, Mrs. Stanton! do you suppose anybody would have *me?* I'm twenty-two years old! There's no chance for me in this country, unless I marry some old widower with a house full of children, and spend my life in servitude, just for the honor of being a Mrs. My father can do better by me than any fellow can, who will *have* me," and she laugh-

ed a merry peal, that did not sound as though she regretted having lived single until grown.

"Ladies and gentlemen, you will please excuse me until the Institute bell rings. I promised my father to return to dinner, and have stayed until twilight," said Hubert, looking at his watch.

Something attracted Herbert's attention. "Mr. Munson will you please to let me look at that watch?"

"Certainly."

Herbert took the valuable gold repeater in his hand, while he trembled with emotion.

"What's the matter, brother?"

"Look!" and he pointed to the initials engraved upon the inside of the case. "*G. H. G.*—George Horace Goodwin; my father and grandfather's name."

"But perhaps there is some mistake," and Effie grew as deeply excited as her brother was.

"No, here's a scratch that I made with my penknife, before mother sold it. I did it purposely, for I felt that I should sometime see it again."

"I purchased it at a pawnbroker's shop in New York at a reduced price. I have carried it ever since I arrived at New York, when I started upon my long travelling expedition,—more than six years ago. I bought it before I had been in the city an hour." and he loosed the chain from its intricate loopings at his side, telling Herbert to keep it until he was ready to pay for its cost, adding that its use had been compound interest on the money invested in its purchase.

"Be sure to come back in time to go with us to the Institute," said Florence, as he moved away.

"Trust me for that. I couldn't be hired to remain away." with a meaning smile, that was half directed toward Effie, who grew very deeply interested in the newly-found watch.

"Miss Martin you must be taking items, you have nothing to say," said Mrs. Welden, with a smile.

"There is material for 'items' here, that is certain. I was just now remarking the healthy bloom upon Mrs. Crandall's cheeks. We don't often see such rosy faces among the married ladies of Oregon."

"The farmer's wives are overworked in-doors, and the city ladies too little exercise in-doors or out. I turned a new leaf under Mrs. Stanton's directions, and from a nervous, half-sick, dependent creature, I have become—through the blessing of God, and the free use of His mountain air—restored to perfect health."

"I have frequently written to my friends in the East about the poor health of Oregon ladies."

"If you had written respecting our pure country air, which the farmer's wives are generally too badly overworked, to enjoy, and had used your influence to induce those in need of employment, who would gladly work in our kitchens, if they could get the chance, to come to us, your letters would have done more good."

"I thank you for setting me right, for I had concluded that women could not be healthy in this country, at all."

"We are *not* so strong as our mother's were, but if we will live and work, in proportion to our strength, and use proper exercise and healthy food, we can have uninterrupted good health. I have too much faith in God to believe that He would send sickness or early death upon us if we did not violate his laws."

"But there are places where, if we live so nearly to the rules for life and health, we will be sick, because the air is impure. Who makes that impure air?"

"God makes the *cause* that produces the *effect*. The *cause* is the necessary decay of vegetation, or oft-times, the stagnation of standing water, &c. But our natural senses imme-

diately warn us to keep away, when we enter the vicinity of such places, or to render the air pure by drainage and fires. In our eagerness to amass riches, we settle in such places and cannot take the time to drain the marshes and destroy decaying matter. Again, in Milwaukie, and other places I could name, where ague is prevalent, a company of speculators, with more enterprise than discretion, form huge mill-dams, which they can't afford to drain occasionally, lest their work should stop, and the water becomes diseased, poisonous. Sickness is a natural consequence; an effort of nature to throw off the impurities that are constantly inhaled, eaten or drank. Doses of calomel and quinine are administered, that appear to check the progress of disease for a while, but a permanent cure is not effected. The patient worries through a few miserable years; blames the country and his God; nature gives up the struggle, and he dies. Mankind is the author of much mischief and misery that are attributed to mysterious Providences."

"But why are women more subject to disease than men?"

"Because they get less pure air, and let men say what they will to the contrary, they endure more slavish toil than they do. Whoever heard of Gregon men working like slaves all day, and then sitting up till midnight to sew, without having scarcely tasted the unadulterated nectar of God's pure atmosphere for weeks?"

Mrs. Welden had become so interested with her theme that she did not notice the attention she was attracting. Dr. Stanton eyed her curiously over his spectacles.

"Madam, where did you get your skill?" he asked, when she had ceased.

"From common sense, from experience, and from your son and daughter," she replied, promptly.

"Did you *ever!* Here are two women and an M. D., discussing hygiene, as though life and death were at stake this moment and they were judges of the wager," said Hugh.

"Health and life and death are very nearly allied, Hugh," said Mrs. Welden.

"O, if I'm going to get a charnel-house lecture, I'll say no more," he replied, trying to laugh.

"Why, brother! how *can* you be so rude to ladies, and speak so jestingly of horrible things," said Fanny.

"They are not 'horrible' to those who keep accounts balanced between themselves and God," said Ada, with a radiant smile. "I hope you will 'consider,' Hugh. What is horrible, is the manner in which such things are spoken of."

"I'm not in the humor to hear theological points discussed just now, and you will pardon me for changing the subject."

"I will dismiss it, Hugh, but let me first tell you that you can't *always* change it."

Hubert re-entered at this moment, the college-bell began to toll, and a general harry of preparation among ladies and children, changed the current of conversation.

"I think you'll have company without me, won't you, Floy," whispered her cousin, playfully.

"Certainly, I'm not in the habit of going without an escort. I'm certain I shan't need *your* services," and cast a roguish glance into his eyes as Herbert took his place by her side.

Effie looked more lovely than she had ever appeared before. The sudden excitement that had kindled the glow upon her cheeks, served to keep it there; and her bright, blue eyes emitted a beaming light of awakened happiness.

Hubert whispered, "I am proud of you," a dozen times, during their walk. Hugh took his place beside Eliza, to whom he had been engaged for a year, but whose company he had never kept in public, until now.

"A married man has to perform double duty, five times told," laughed Maurice, as he escorted Fanny, Ada, Mrs. Welden, Miss Martin, and the six children into the street.

"No one is better suited to the task," said Hugh. "Besides, you will soon have help," he continued, as Dr. Stanton, sen'r., took his grand-children each by the hand, repeating endearing coaxings and jests.

"What did you really *think* of Mrs. Welden's talk this evening, Hugh?" Eliza asked.

"It's important, I suppose. But when health, death, or Providence, is the theme of conversation, I always want to be away. I must apologise to the ladies though, for my thoughtless talk."

"Hugh; I begin to think seriously of serious matters. My school-days are now over, and I am going to see if I can't live as Mrs. Stanton and Mrs. Welden do. I'm afraid of them for I'm not so good as they are. Effie and Florence also, belong to their stamp. I looked at them to-day, when you thought I hadn't a serious or solid thought in my rattle-pated cranium, and secretly resolved, with the help of God, to do and be like them."

"If you are going to be 'good,' I'd rather see you imitate them, than many others I could name, who profess to be religious, but deep-toned morality, I confess, always stifles *me*."

"I hope you'll talk differently from this, before long, Hugh. If you knew how I desire to see you lay aside your clownishness, I believe you'd try to do it."

"Physician, heal thyself, I might say, but there is more sense in your fun than mine; I'll have to admit that."

"I'll try to quit it, if you will."

"I want you always to be cheerful, dear. Christianity would take better with the world, if those who profess it, would be 'not as the hypocrites are, of a sad countenance,' that takes the form of a holy horror, whenever their particular views are contradicted."

Holy and contented joy beamed in the breasts of each of our friends, on that happy evening.

"Loving and beloved." Than this there is not a more hallowed bliss, this side of Heaven. And if such union of feeling causes so holy a sensation in our souls upon earth, will we not realize and enjoy it to a still greater extent in the bowers of Paradise? We honestly believe that those who ridicule this holy joy upon the earth, are they who will be "least in the kingdom of Heaven."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE DOUBLE WEDDING.

Hubert Munson determined to live the life of a farmer. His father was horrified at this determination, and done everything in his power to induce him to follow his profession.

"Why, father, there's more lawyers in the country now, than there are cases to be tried. The whole territory is overrun with them."

"But you surely would not stoop to a plebian vocation?"

"Farming is the most honorable employment in the world. What do I care, if snobs think differently? Have you read Frank Soule's poem upon labor? California's poet speaks my sentiments."

"I have not seen it."

"Here it is," pulling a journal from his pocket and reading:

Despise not labor! God did not despise
The handicraft which wrought this gorgeous globe;
That crowned its glories with yon jeweled skies,
And clad the earth in nature's queenly robe.
He dug the first canal—the river's bed;
Built the first fountain in the gushing spring,
Wove the first carpet for man's haughty tread,
The warp and woof of his first covering.

He made the picture painters imitate ;
  The statuary's first grand model, made,
Taught human intellect to recreate,
  And human ingenuity its trade.
Ere great Daguerre had harnessed up the sun,
  Apprenticeship at his new art to serve,
A greater Artist greater things had done,
  The wondrous pictures of the optic nerve.
There is no deed of honest labor born,
  That is not Godlike, in the toiling limbs,
Howe'er the lazy scoff, the brainless scorn,
  God labored first—toil likens us to Him.
Ashamed of work! mechanic with thy tools?
  The tree thy axe cut from its native sod,
And turns to useful things—go tell to fools—
  Was fashioned in the factory of God.
Go build your ships,—go build your lofty dome,
  Your granite temple that through time endures,
Your humble cot, or that proud pile of Rome,
  His arm toiled there in advance of yours.
He made the flowers your learned florists scan,
  And crystalized the atoms of each gem,
Enobled labor in great Nature's plan,
  And made it virtue's brightest diadem.
Whatever thing is worthy to be had,
  Is worthy of the toil by which 'tis won,
Just as the grain with which the fields are clad,
  Pays back the warming labor of the sun.
'Tis not profession that enobles men,
  'Tis not the calling that can e'er degrade,
The trowel is as worthy as the pen,
  The pen more mighty than the hero's blade.
The merchant with his ledger and his wares,
  The lawyer with his cases and his books,
The toiling farmer with his wheat and tares,
  The poet by the shaded streams and nooks,
The *man*, whate'er his work, wherever done,
  If intellect and honor guide his hand,
Is peer to him who greatest state hath won,
  And rich as any Rothschild of the land.
All mere distinctions based upon pretence,
  Are merely laughing themes for manly hearts,
The miner's cradle claims from men of sense,
  More honor than the youngling Bounaparte's.
Let fops and fools the sons of toil deride ;
  On false pretensions brainless dunces live,
Let carpet heroes strut with parlor pride,
  Supreme in all that indolence can give,
But be not like them, and pray, envy not
  These fancy tom-tit burlesques of mankind,
The witless mobs in idleness who rot

  Hermaphrodite twixt vanity and mind.
Oh, son of toil, be proud, look up, arise,
  And disregard opinions hollow test,
A false society's decrees despise,
  He is most worthy who has labored best.
The sceptre is less royal than the hoe ;
  The sword, beneath whose rule whole nations writhe,
And curse the wearer while they fear the blow—
  So far less noble than the plough and scythe.
There's more true honor on one tan-browned hand,
  Rough with the honest work of busy men,
Than all the soft-skinned punies of the land,
  The nice, white-kiddery of 'upper ten.'
Blow bright the forge—the sturdy anvil ring,
  It sings the anthem of king Labor's courts,
And sweeter sounds the clattering hammers bring,
  Than half a thousand thumped piano-fortes.
Fair are the ribbons from the rabbit-plane,
  As those which grace my lady's hat or cape,
Nor does the joiner's honor blush or wane,
  Beside the Lawyer with his brief and tape.
Pride thee, mechanic, on thy honest trade,
  'Tis nobler than the snob's much vaunted pelf,
Man's soulless pride his test of worth is made,
  But thine is based on that of God himself.

"Mr. Munson listened in silence until the poem was finished; then, taking the journal from the hand of his son, he read it over aloud with a satisfied air, which was a greater eulogism upon its merit, than the high-sounding, many-worded praises that most persons are wont to bestow upon genius.

"It will do, my son, still I must own that I am disappointed. Your bride elect will honor you in any station, by her sense, accomplishments and beauty, and a farm is not the place for her."

This was the first praise that Hubert had heard his father lavish upon his beloved, since his return, and a tear of emotion glistened in his eye.

"She desires to live upon a farm, near her brother and Floy, and if Herbert Goodwin can be a farmer, Hubert Munson is not too good to follow the same vocation. He says that folks have often told him that he'd make a mark in the world, and he's going to do it now in the shape of furrows."

"Well, it's of no use to argue the point with you, and I hope you'll succeed in what you design to undertake."

"Thank you, dear father, I hope yet to be a *man*, worthy of the name."

In compliance with the request of their friends, Effie and Florence agreed that the double wedding should take place at the house of Maurice Stanton, upon the first day of October. His lovely country seat was now furnished and neatly fitted up throughout. As an example of what diligence and economy may do in a new country, we will notice his success in seven years of toil and pleasure. He had lived in accordance with his principle, that none need be discontented because his ambition is clogged by poverty. He began with almost nothing, but instead of not allowing himself to *live* while preparing himself a comfortable home for the future, he "*lived all the time.*" While many who began with better prospects than Maurice did, but were not content to *work and wait*, spent the same number of years in constant anxiety and toil, always moving from "post to pillar," and engaging in this scheme and that, prospered slowly or not at all, *he grew up with the country.* These migratory, notional, scheming persons cannot *live*; they *exist*, it is true, but so fluctuating is their business, and so futile many of their speculations, that wholesome quietude is something unknown or unexpected at least with certainty. But to return to the wedding:

It was evening, A gay company of happy persons, young and old, were collected in Ada's pleasant and ample parlor. Conspicuous among the most honored guests, were Farmer Gray's folks, Daddy Green's family, and Sam Green, with his freckly-faced wife and numerous progeny. Herbert said that they were too kind to his mother, when she needed their help, for him to neglect them, if they *were* coarse and unrefined. The contrast between them and a few chosen,

aristocratic guests from the cities, was amusing, but Maurice, Ada and the brides and grooms elect, did not appear to discern the difference. The hostess introduced them to her most distinguished guests, told how they became acquainted, and caressed Polly's awkward, sun-burnt, tow-headed children, as though their clothing was muslin and embroidery, instead of blue-drilling and calico.

"Mrs. Stanton exhibits shocking bad taste!" said Mrs. Warren, whom we recognize as Augusta Morton. She had caught Florence's discarded lover, and this was the commencement of a wedding excursion from Portland to Corvallis. George Danvers, with whom we also became slightly acquainted at Mrs. Card's soiree, was present with his bride, Delphine Howard that was, who looked upon the rustic company with a curling underlip. They were not invited guests, but had made it convenient to be at Vally Brook upon the wedding occasion, Effie thought, from prying curiosity.

"When I saw Mrs. Stanton at Oregon City last summer, I didn't think she had such neighbors as these. I should think she'd be ashamed of them! She knows we never stoop to associate with such folks," said the amiable Mrs. Warren.

"Oh, she's as independent as Herbert and his sister, or Eliza Crandall. I believe Floy Willard is just such a creature, as great a lady as she must consider herself to be. By the way, do you know when Eliza is going to be married? I hear that Hugh Waters is paying particular private '*dis-esses*,' to her," replied Mrs. Danvers.

"Pshaw! he won't have her! He's a gentleman, but she is many removes from a lady."

"Hush! we'll attract listeners. We don't know what kind of company we're in."

A stir was occasioned by the arrival of two ministers, who entered the front parlor, with pleasant smiles and agree-

able words for all. Folding doors, that communicated with a richly furnished boudoir, were opened and the brides elect appeared, looking like spirits from cloud-land, and leaning upon the arms of their noble looking suitors. Fanny Waters and Eliza Crandall were the bridesmaids, and Hugh Waters and George Crandall, a brother of Eliza's lately returned from California, were the chosen groomsmen. Dresses of white gauze, tastefully trimmed with blue, flowing vails and wreaths of orange flowers, draped the exquisite forms of the brides with aerial loveliness. Mrs. Gray thought it was "mighty extravagant, but as they didn't *owe* nothin' she guessed it wasn't nobody's business."

The bystanders scarcely breathed during the short doubly-spoken ceremony; and the prayer, so appropriate, so touching, caused the tears to fall from many eyes. If Herbert looked noble, as he held the hand of his beautiful, marble-faced bride, Hubert looked none the less so, as he gazed upon the glowing cheeks of his chosen one.

The wedding banquet, being a novelty in its way, should not be overlooked. Instead of a vast amount of enticing and indigestible knick-knackeries, a well filled board of healthy food was presented without apology or comment to the wondering guests. Tropical fruits of the most delicious kinds, and the native productions, both wild and tame, so common in the territory, were prepared in a manner that reflected great credit upon Mrs. Stanton's culinary skill; while choice viands of many descriptions, which she knew contained no unhealthy ingredients, were bountifully provided.

"The health of the bride! Let's say with Mr. Toots,—what *is* it, Ada? I've forgotten," said Maurice, as he poured from a decanter a ruby liquid, which caused those who knew his habits to stare.

"You'll have to consult 'Dombey and son;' you can't prove it by me," she said, with a laugh as amusing as his own.

"Rather than a toast shall be missed because ye ain't smart enough to get one off, I'll propose this one—May their shadows never be less!" said Farmer Gray, adding to the humor that Maurice had started.

The glasses were filled, but a few were too temperate to partake of the convivial cup. Ada looked archly at Maurice. "shall I tell the secret?"

"Certainly, they'll be the wiser for it."

"To those of you who are not acquainted with the mysteries of my kitchen craft, I have a secret to communicate. This wine, which you appear afraid to touch, is the pure, unfermented, unadulterated juice of Oregon berries. The strawberries, salmon-berries, dew, or black-berries, thimble-berries and whortle-berries, have all contributed their luscious juices to form this concoction, which is flavored by a little lemon juice."

"Why, how do you keep it from fermenting?" asked one, beginning to taste the delicous beverage.

"I pour it while boiling hot into stout glass or earthen jars, and seal them immediately, setting them in the dairy, bottom end up; they will keep for years, that is, if we'll let them alone, which is rather doubtful."

"How did you *learn* to do this?"

"It's an invention of my own; and if I were not a very accommodating personage, I'd make a monopoly of my discovery," with affected naivette.

The evening, which gave promise of being so pleasant, was taking its departure in a driving rain. Those who lived within six or eight miles of the mansion, had expected to return home, but the storm beat piteously against the windows and howled through the now almost denuded branches of the kingly oaks, warning them to stay in doors, and wait for its fury to abate. Music, repartee, conversation respecting gold mines, farming, stock, race-horses, high-schools, the

weather; the grass, the fern, the fir timber, new buildings and politics, were the amusements until late. The rain had ceased to fall in torrents, and a fine, driving mist filled the air, and a 'darkness that could be felt,' obscured the nearet objects. Going home was impossible, and there were not sleeping accommodations enough in the house for others than the many who had come from a distance. Maurice was at a loss but Ada's quick wit soon drove away his perplexity.

"I can manage this dilemma to a nicety, Maurice. The barn is full of sweet hay, upon which the men can sleep, and I can make family beds over the carpets for the ladies and children."

"It takes a woman to make the best of an emergency. This is the very thing. Come, gentlemen, there are not more than twenty of you; I can stow you away in the hay as snugly as mice," and he lighted a lantern, buttoned a great coat under his chin, and led the van of retreating sleep-hunters.

"Why don't you go too?" said Ada, aside to Herbert. "Nobody wants you here," and she listened to the many retreating footsteps.

"I would have gone, but Hubert wouldn't go with me. He's my partner."

"*Is* he? shall I bear that in mind?"

"Do just as you please. I've been expecting a volley o jokes from you for the last two hours. The next time yo get married, I'll see if *I* can't have some fun."

"I sha'n't invite you to the wedding," and she flitted awa like a girl of sixteen.

The men in the barn had an inspiriting time. Every cou try Oregonian carries a blanket, and, in case of an unexpec ed bivouac, his Spanish saddle serves as a pillow. A ma who cannot sleep comfortably when thus equipped, is laughe at more than pitied. The men from the cities were pleas with the novelty of a "sleep in the hay," and a blanket fro

Ada's ample store, for each pair of them, was bed-clothing sufficient for the occasion. Mrs. Gray was sorely troubled. "No-body ever hearn of a weddin' on a stormy night that turned out well, and she was mighty 'fraid there was other storms a brewin'."

"Don't be alarmed, Mrs. Gray, there'll be no storms that won't blow over, I'll guarantee that," said Eliza.

The morning, pleasant and clear, dawned before much sleep was thought of. Choice leavings from the nuptial banquet were re-served for breakfast, and the clock pointed suggestively to the farmer's dinner hour, before the "Bounding Elk," was hailed by Warren and Danvers, who, with their brides, took a formal leave of the newly married pairs, promising to call upon their return from "up the country."

"Well," said Farmer Gray, "I believe we've troubled ye long enough. Sally, ye'd as well git ready while I yoke up the Durhams."

"Do you still work oxen, Farmer Gray?" Effie asked.

"Of course I do. D'ye s'pose I'd have horses here, when I never had none in Suckerdom. The roads in my burgh ain't fit for horse wagons, no how. If the old woman can't ride behind my steers, she can walk or stay at home."

"You could afford to purchase horses, couldn't you?"

"I reckon I *can* afford it! I sold six thousand dollars worth of apples a month ago, an' didn't owe a dollar afore that."

"Have you *buried* the money?" Effie asked involuntarily. She looked with amazement at his coarse cassimere coat, cowhide boots, and home-made straw hat, and then glanced at the garb of his wife, who was attired to suit her idea of economy, in a dark delaine dress, and checked gingham apron.

"Don't accuse *me* of buryin' money! I bought another section o' land for me an' Sam, an' two thousand dollars worth o' cattle."

"Have you built a new house?"

"Well I have? It's a better house than I had in Illinois. The logs is hewed, an' there's no mud in the cracks. I lined it inside an' out, with shaved cedar lumber. But I shan't tell ye any more about it. Ye can come an' see for yerself how we're a swimmin', for I tell ye, hard times is over with us."

"I guess we will call and see you the day after to-morrow; we are going to see my new sister's uncle, and can go by your house."

"That's all right. We won't be at home afore to-morrow evening', but Sally 'll have lots o' good fodder fixed up afore you git there."

Polly joined in urging them to visit her, and they were all soon homeward bound; Sam, Polly and the children riding in the wagon with their parents and Charlie Graves, while Daddy Green's folks galloped ahead on horseback.

"Well," said Herbert, watching the slowly retreating wagon, "I do wonder what that man wants with so much land. Twelve hundred and eighty acres, and anxious to get more!"

"Land will be worth ten times its present value in Oregon, before ten years," said Ada.

"Yes, when he's under the sod, and his heirs are qurrelling over it. I'm going to see how I can make my farm of one hundred and sixty acres appear and 'pan out.'"

"Effie, are you going to live upon a farm?" said Maurice.

"That is our intention. Mr. Munson thinks he'll like to live upon a farm near brother and Floy."

"I am not going to *let* them go away, Mr. Stanton. They must live with us until their house is done. This little lilly of the valley shall not be transplanted to a mountain top," said Florence turning her fingers in her sisters glossy hair.

"You speak in riddles, dear Florence."

"Which I can easily solve, sister. We are going to keep

you in your native element. You are delicate now, and will not thrive in the city, where you can't smell wildwood flowers, and romp over grassy meadows."

"What have you to say about it, Hubert."

"I agree to their plans, I hate to be a drone in society, and I am going to work. Like Herbert, I intend to see what I can do to beautify a farm. Unlike Farmer Gray, I think more of my eye than my pocket, but I believe if Stanton can get along so well as a farmer, *my* pockets won't suffer, either, for I believe I am about as clever as he is. Come Mr. Stanton, tell us the secret of your success. Effie tells me that you began here, seven years ago, without friends or money. Now, you have a healthy wife, so uncommon a sight in these days, beautiful children, and everything around you that heart can wish."

"My wife has done the work of two or three women in the time you speak of. The simple reason why she stands it so well, is because she never works unless she is able to do so. The most useful machine on a farm should certainly be kept in repair. If she gets a little sick, I put her on a horse and turn her out in the hills, doing the housework myself, until she gets well. It's all nonsence that a man hasn't the *time* to do so, which is the common excuse. Such men find time to bury their wives and hunt others when they die."

"Hubert, you and I must take pattern after him in our new relations. I hope scores of years will pass away before my Floy's animation leaves her. I'll do what I can to make her life a pleasant one."

"I hope, Herbert, that your regard for my welfare will not exceed mine for yours."

"If you don't take good care of my brother, Floy, you and I will quarrel as Mrs. Gray and Mrs. Green used to."

"What shall I say to you about taking care of my worthy cousin, you saucy sprite?"

"I'll give you liberty to scold me, whenever you think I need it, Floy."

"I'll remember that; but don't you believe that George Crandall and Fanny Waters are on the high road to matrimony?"

"There'll be a double swapping of brothers and sisters at Portland and Oregon City before long."

"We know now," Herbert observed, "how it was that Eliza Crandall always discovered so much about what was occurring among the residents of the two cities. Hugh and Fanny always supplied her with the news. How I pity married men!" he exclaimed, as Florence gave his whiskers a wicked pull, which was followed by an amusing scuffle.

"I command the peace!" said Maurice.

"Now listen!" exclaimed his wife with a silvery laugh. Maurice is '*Squire*, and wants you all to know it."

"Yes, and I'll fine you for contempt of court."

"I'll pay the fine."

"Let's see you."

She bounded into his lap, giving him a saucy kiss, accompanied by a box on the ear. "Now! I *said* I'd pay it!"

"Come, ladies," said Herbert, rising, "Tom is out here with the horses, and we can have a ride."

Oregon ladies are generally practised equestrians. Ada left her children with her father-in-law and was free as the rest. Effie was mounted first.

"Good bye, Hubert!" and waving her pocket handkerchief, she bounded away upon her graceful steed, who seemed to know that his fair rider gave him no discredit.

"You can't leave me," said Ada, with a peculiar chuck to Flaxy, who though getting old in years, was young as his mistress, in high glee she darted past the company and was soon waving her handkerchief in Rocker's eyes, who exerted himself to do double duty, not fancying Flaxy's near approach, and for fifteen minutes the almost even race continued. At length, the road left the prairie, taking a course through a dense fir forest. They did not wish to get lost from their would-be escorts, and reined up the horses to wait for them.

"Here they are! Why, ladies! what circus have you left?" said Hubert, as he came up, in admiration of Effie's skill in horseback-riding.

"The circus of the prairies, at your service, sir," she replied, pointing to the plain through which they had almost flown. "Where's Herbert and Floy?"

"Here they all come," said Ada. "Which way shall we go, Maurice?"

"If we follow the road through the timber, it will lead us to an exposed mountain side, where we will have a view which will repay us for the trouble."

Their progress through the timber was necessarily slow. They rode more than an hour before they reached the mountain's base, and the ascent was somewhat difficult. When they reached the table-land to which Maurice had guided them, the sky had become so completely overcast with clouds, that the view of distant mountains they had hoped to get, was obscured. A hard shower came, however to the rescue, and when its half hour's work was done, the heaviest cloud bore away to the east, leaving gorgeous piles of dark, purple and golden ones, boiling up majestically in the sun-illumined west. Herbert, who, as the reader has seen, had a great taste for repeating appropriate poetry that he had somewhere read, drew Florence to his side, under a sheltering fir, and repeated, dramatically:

"'Land of the forest and the rock!
Of dark ravine and rolling river,
Of mountains reared on high to mock
The storm's career and lightning's shock,
My own green land for ever!

Florence replied:

"Oh give me back my native hills,
My dasied meads and troubled rills,
And groves of pine.
O, give me too, the mountain air,
My youthful days without a care,
When rose for me a mother's prayer,
In tones divine."

"You have the 'mountain air,' 'dasied meads,' 'troubled rills' and 'groves of pine,' in Oregon, dearie. But the days that are gone, and your mother's fireside, you cannot recall, here or elsewhere. Do you really desire to go back to your native home?"

"Not now. I love *somebody* better now than my native land, but I have wished that vain wish a thousand times."

But where was Effie? She had taken a small book from Hubert's pocket, and while the others were talking of the storm, she was writing of it, while sitting upon a rock by Hubert's side, sheltered by an overjutting cliff. Maurice and Ada were standing a little apart from them, watching the changing clouds and diversified scenery, in sympathetic love of the beautiful.

"Well, I'll give it up! Here is a married pair who have had opportunities to quarrel every day for more than six years and the honey-moon hasn't waned yet!" said Herbert.

"Yes," said Ada, "we are happy. We have toiled together for our daily bread, have known parents' solicitude for precious little ones, have lived in adversity and prosperity, and have never had an angry dispute. We have a pleasant part to contemplate and look forward to the future with as much pleasant anticipation as you do. This is putting a bright face upon matrimonial life, but where folks are properly mated, it's a true one."

"You can prove all this by me," said Maurice, with a smile.

"Effie, what are you writing?" Ada had just discovered what she was doing.

"You can see for yourself." Ada took the book and read:

Lo, o'er the mighty mountain top,
O'er rolling plain and towering tree,
O'er crags, æries, 'domes of rock,'
'O'er air and earth, and sky and sea,'
The storm-god moves apace.
How hushed and still is Nature's pulse:
How bird and beast, and leaf and flower,
As though they dread the wind's outburst,
All bow their heads in this grand hour,
Before the dark clouds face.

The storm car rolls with greater speed,
The lightning flashes rend the air,
And I, with awe and pleasure heed
What many watch in fell despair,
As they with quailing eyes,
Watch the grand looming of those piles
Of fleeces, amber, black, and gold,
And purple tints arranged in files,
Shaped in Dame Nature's choicest mould,
'Beneath the arching skies.'

O God! protect the seaman bold,
On the Pacific's storm-tossed waves,
Who with terrific whirlwind's hold
Communion o'er the deep's deep graves,
Scarce heeding power divine,
As *up*, *aloft*, to furl the sail:
Facing the blinding lightning's flash,
Bending and toiling in the gale,
They save themselves from shipwreck's crash,
During this war of Thine.'"

"Let me look at that, if you please." Maurice glanced at the composition a few moments, then read it aloud. "That will do, beauty. I see by the quotations that you don't claim credit for what is not your own. Why don't you sometimes get your poems printed?"

"Because I dread it. The most peaceful way to live, is to keep out of the newspapers."

"Sister, it seems to me that the good Book says 'Let your light shine.'"

"Somebody would blow it out, if I should."

"You'd have that risk to run."

"But I shan't run it. I write, for I cannot *help* it, but my

work shall not be published while I live, unless I write without a signature for the 'Oregon Magazine.' Ada, when will that enterprise be a reality?"

"It depends upon circumstances. We must know what we can do before we rush into such an undertaking. I may not get it to going for a year or two. Certainly not, unless I can publish a periodical equal to any ladies' magazine in the East, and at their prices. Western folks pay too highly for printed matter. No wonder they send to the States for so many papers and magazines, when one dollar there will purchase as much as five will here."

But western papers never have wide enough circlation to pay expenses, if the rates are not high."

"Let them give as much and as good reading for the money as eastern editors give, and we'll see if their circulation is not rapidly extended. They blame the people; I blame the press."

"And you are right," said Hubert. "My father takes a dozen eastern publications, and gets them for less money than three Oregon papers would cost; and the difference in the amount of reading matter is more than one half. It is true that expenses of paper, printing, &c., are higher in the west, but not so much so, as to make all this difference in the prices."

"Well," said Ada, "we have worn this matter threadbare; let's go home. Flora and Henry will think the time long," and suiting the action to the word, she mounted Flaxy, who was champing the bitt in his eagerness to go.

They called upon Mrs. Welden, as they returned. She was sitting in the portico, engaged in sewing, while Celia was reading aloud from a new publication, in which mother and daughter were alike interested.

"O, Meggie!" said Ada, as she alighted, "you ought to have gone with us. We were in a most refreshing storm,

and after that was over, the splendid view of gorgeous clouds, snow-crowned mountains, and wide-spread valleys and forests, was most enchanting."

"I should have gone, but I have lonely freaks, when company is almost intolerable. Such a spell crossed me to-day and I felt as though I could not enjoy the excursion."

"You mustn't be unhappy, Meggie."

"I am far from that; but I am sometimes a little dull."

Howard had built the kitchen fire, and Mrs. Welden arose to prepare tea.

"No, don't think of such a thing. Father and the children will be looking for us. I told the children that I would be at home before tea, and I never break a promise with them."

Some refreshments in the form of apples, pie and cake could not be refused, and after a half hour's pleasant chat, the equestrians took their departure.

"This country is an excellent place for poor folks if they have thrift enough to manage anywhere," said Herbert, when commenting upon the widow's success.

"Why don't she get married, Mrs. Stanton? She is beautiful, accomplished and good. It's strange that some lucky customer has not carried off the prize before now," Hubert remarked thoughtfully.

"She doesn't remain single from want of opportunities to marry. Her union with her husband was rather unhappy until the last month of his life, and she looks forward to a future meeting, saying they will understand each other in Paradise. Whether her theory is correct or not, I don't pretend to say, but she is conscientious in it, and that, I suppose is sufficient."

"I know a man who would just suit her," observed Herbert.

"Let a newly-married man alone for making matches," laughed Maurice.

"When you get to Heaven won't you want to see your friends there?"

"Most certainly. But I shall desire them to choose their own locations."

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE WEDDING EXCURSION.

"I WISH you a happy visit," said Ada, as the quartette mounted their restless steeds, bound for a trip to the mountains.

"O, Ada!" replied Effie, pushing her pretty riding-hat to one side of her fairy-like head, and peeping from behind her breeze-tossed ringlets, "I do wish you were going with us! We have been troubling you with our presence for more than a week, and now we are going off upon a tour that you can't enjoy."

"Birdie," looking archly at her lovely friend, "if you say another word about *trouble*, you and I will quarrel, 'that's a fact.' I *shall* enjoy the trip, for I will often think of the pleasure you are seeing."

They parted with their friend, and proceeded a short distance, when they met Maurice. He had been to see the wife of Silas Hill, who for weeks had not been expected to live. She had adopted Ada's mode of life during the early part of summer, and for a while, all had been well; but her husband began to think that so much out-door "play," as he called it, was useless, and as she no longer complained of the racking pain in her side, he had ceased to be attentive

about the children. Harvest time brought a dozen men to cook for; the weather was hot and the baby fretful. Before harvest was over, she had worked herself into a dangerous fever, and for two months, eschewing Maurice's advice, she had been taking medicines prescribed by Dr. Stanton. She arose from the bed of sickness with diseased lungs and worn out constitution. For a while she resumed her duties, but was compelled to give up again, and for a fortnight her death had been daily expected.

Query. Does it cost as much to hire a cook as to pay a doctor? Or will all the hoarded gains of a lifetime atone for the suicide of a mother? What will it profit a man if he raises hundreds of acres of grain and loses his wife, or how will the vacancy be filled when she has departed?

The doctor had been sent for in the night, and as he had not returned, Maurice had gone at dawn to see if they needed assistance. The invalid was in a death stupor, and Maurice was returning homeward to inform Ada of the looked for decease of her neighbor, when he met the gay quartette.

"What news, Mr. Stanton?"

"The worst. I am going to make an entry in my diary of 'another victim to over-work!'"

"Is she so far gone?" Florence asked.

"I am sorry, no, *glad* to say that she is."

"Why, Mr. Stanton!"

"I *am* glad; *fact!* For her life has been a constant scene of toil and suffering, and she'll rest when in the grave. She says that death has no terrors."

"We ought to stay, Floy, and see if we can't be of service to them," said Effie, forgetting her anticipated pleasure in the hope of doing good.

"It isn't necessary. Her mother and enough of kin-folks to nurse her to death are there now."

"I must see her," interrupted Hubert. "Was her name Peggy Norris, before marriage?"

"I believe so; they were married about four years ago. Silas had been a bachelor neighbor to us before that time."

"That girl lived a year at our house as a domestic," pursued Hubert. "I remember her as a healthy looking, awkward child, who was willing to do whatever she could, but was so ignorant about work that my step-mother finally bade her leave the house. She afterwards lived with Mrs. Clinton, who kept her until her father, who was a machinist in the city, moved on a farm. I wonder if she will know me."

The short ride of two miles was soon completed, and the party halted at the stile. Hubert alone entered the house, thinking it best for Mrs. Hill not to see the strangers.

"Mrs. Hill; Peggie; do you know me?"

The invalid had momentarily awakened from the death lethargy and was gazing with a mother's fondness upon her babe.

"O, Hubert Munson!" she gasped as he took her hand. "Have you come to see me die? I little thought when I saw you last, that in this time I would be as you see me now. Silas says you are married. O, Hubert! take care of your wife, for a life of suffering is before her at best."

She stopped exhausted, and Hubert, no longer able to bear the scene without tears, turned silently away. He said but little during the forenoon's ride. Occasionally, when Effie, in her winning way, would ride close to his side and utter some endearing word, he would press her hand and say something equally affectionate, but his thoughts were with that morning scene, and when he looked at his rosy-cheeked darling, fair as the fairest lilly, and blushing as the sweetest rose, fancy would picture her in that dying mother's place.

"Marriage is something very important, dearie. I used to boast that ladies thought fifty times of matrimony where

it once entered the minds of men, but I don't blame them so much for it now. There is a risk to run when a dependent creature trusts herself, happiness, life, love, everything, in the power of a husband, that few consider properly."

"Whether I 'considered it properly' or not, I think I made a good selection," said she, gazing into his eyes with an affectionate smile.

Herbert and Florence rode ahead, gaily and happily, as they felt. As they had not seen the dying woman, they had no lasting serious thoughts about her.

"I wonder if that is Farmer Gray's house?" said Herbert.

"I guess so; the house looks just like him, and his folks do. I wonder if Polly's boys will have clean faces?"

"We had better wait here for Hubert and Effie. They are as steady as clock work," Herbert said, as they reined up under a huge fir tree, out of sight of the house. They were soon overtaken. "What are you waiting for, brother?"

"For Birdie and her cavalier. Here is Farmer Gray's house, I am certain."

"How do you know it is?"

"Don't you see that old-fashioned well-sweep, and hear the spinning wheel?"

"It *does* look decidedly Grayish. If we are not near there, we ought to be, for I am very tired."

"They'll hear us talking," said Florence in a warning tone.

They dashed up to the door in Oregonian style and found as they had conjectured, the abode of their rustic friends, who had been expecting them for an hour.

"Well, la! bless us! Effie, yer cheeks looks 'most *too* rosy? I don't b'lieve ye can stand the fatigue of a twenty mile ride like 'Erbert's wife can," said Mrs. Gray, patting her flushed cheeks and loosing her hat and riding-habit.

"I feel very tired, but hope I'll get used to such rides before long. I lived in the city too long. We never thought

of riding over four or five miles there. I have a severe headache."

Mrs. Gray begged her to lie down, and she reluctantly consented to go up stairs and try to sleep. Hubert saw her safely ensconced in Charlie Graves' bed-room. "Now, pet, when you have slept an hour, you may get up. But you must rest while that headache lasts. Are you subject to such attacks?"

"Yes; I have been ever since I lived at your father's. I believe I caught it from the constant inhalation of camphor and ammonia."

"I wish I had removed you from there before I went abroad."

"Don't reproach yourself for it, dear. I'll be better presently." He kissed her fevered cheek and went below.

A substantial dinner was served in the kitchen, to which the visitors paid ample justice. Florence soon became well acquainted with the family, and her inspiriting conversation speedily engaged the admiration of her host and hostess, though they had declared upon the wedding day that she was "too proud to notice common folks," an epithet, which to Mrs. Gray's imagination, implied a good deal that was bad.

"Why don't you have honeysuckles, wild roses, and morning-glories growing around your house, Mrs. Gray?" she asked, as they were inspecting the various improvements of the door-yard and its vicinity.

"Joseph says that shade 'll *rot the house down*," was the reply.

"I guess I *won't* have no vines a ruinin' of my house. There's Maurice, he's a pretty smart feller in some things, but he exposed a tender spot in his head when he sold off half his land to build a fine house; that's failin' number one. Then them oak trees an' vines 'll rot it down in fifteen years unless he paints it over every other summer. Ye don't

catch me sellin' land to pay for a fine house, nor I don't intend to have this one *spilt* by shrubbery."

"I believe Birdie's awake," said Hubert, as he heard a light tread upon the stairs. When she saw him coming to meet her, she withdrew again to the bed-room, inviting him to the open window to look upon a blue-grass meadow surrounding a little pond, where scores of ducks and geese were at play. The balmy October breeze played upon her cheeks and she looked the image of spiritual beauty, as she sat silently in her husband's arms, watching the playful maneuvers of the aquatic fowls.

"How would you like to live as these farmers do, dear?"

"If I had no ideality, I should enjoy it well enough, perhaps; but in my eye, there is so much to live for besides what we eat, and the clothes we wear, and the work we do, that I could not be contented with such a life. "Here is Polly with six children. She is happy in her way, but if I had those dirty-faced awkward young ones, and that spinning wheel and loom, I wouldn't live a month—wouldn't want to. She has a constitution like an ox, but was married when but sixteen, and the hardship she endures will cut down her strength in the prime—or what ought to be, the prime of life. She doesn't look at it this way, and

'Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise.'

"She'll live a few years longer, and then, like Silas Hill, Sam and the children will be left widowed and motherless. He will think the Invisible Hand has bereft him, mourn for her a while, and then marry somebody who will live off Polly's industry."

"Are you turning prophetess, pet?"

"It requires no great degree of critical acumen to prophesy that, my dear."

Florence entered the room. "Do I interrupt a *tete a tete?*"

"Not at all, Floy. You are one of those true friends who never interrupt the felicity of a private chat."

"Thank you, sir; but our hostess wants to know if Birdie won't have a slight repast? She says, and there is more truth than poetry in the assertion, 'that young husbands had a plaguy sight better think of givin' their wives something substantial to eat, than to be feedin' on love an' duck pon's" said she with a roguish laugh.

"*Look* at the 'pond' and those ducks and geese, Floy," said Effie, interrupting a playful answer that was forming upon Hubert's tongue.

"I can see those sights without you, sis. You go to the kitchen and eat that delicate dinner. Hubert may go with you, if he'll promise not to eat all the 'goodies' himself."

The dinner had been prepared with care. A piece of chicken broiled to a delicate brown, a piece of toast and a baked apple, from which a pale amber foam was oozing, were set before her, upon the end of the long dining table, which had been covered with a snow-white table-cloth.

"I hope, Effie, that you can make out a dinner. I told Polly we must have everything nice. I have the nervous headache myself sometimes, an' can't eat like common folks for two days afterwards."

"Thank you, Mrs. Gray. This looks like my mother's work. I've had the headache two or three times every month for several years. I hope life in the country, and cessation of studies will cure me of such attacks."

Hubert thought of the long years of his desertion, and of the many times she had suffered from these attacks when he could not be with her. Mrs. Gray left the room. "I don't see how you can love me," taking her hand.

"Why, dear?"

"Because I neglected you so long."

"It was not your fault."

"Yes it was. If it had not been for false pride I would have written you, and ascertained the truth years ago. But

I believed you false, notwithstanding your innocent pledge and honest letters, to say nothing of my boasted faith in my chosen one."

Effie stopped eating, suddenly pressing her hand to her throbbing temples.

"I fatigue you with my talk, dearest. Come into the other room with me and sit upon the lounge. You can rest that aching head upon my bosom."

The evening was growing cool, and Mrs. Gray built a cheerful fire. The lounge was set before the broad fireplace, and Effie disposed herself upon it, resting upon her husband's breast. Florence procured a napkin wet with cold spring water, and laid it upon her head.

"What, Effie! Can't ride from here to Stanton's without gettin' sick? I wouldn't own it, that's a fact," said Farmer Gray, as he and Herbert came in from "staking out" the horses.

"Hush, Joseph," said the old lady. "The poor child can't eat bekase her head hurts so, an' we want her to rest."

"I wouldn't give a *snap* for a sick wife," he answered, with a benevolent grin.

The next morning they were on the way to Uncle Willard's, by sunrise. The rapid riding of the day before was exchanged for a more gentle gait on Effie's account, and at noon they reined up in front of Mr. Willard's corral. His band of cattle had become so large that the said corral was extended over the entire front clearing, and they reached the cabin by letting down two pairs of bars, a business they by no means fancied. Mrs. Willard appeared glad to see Florence, but cast a half shy glance at the other visitors and a weary one towards the children, who had retreated to the chimney corner under the overhanging cliff of newspapers. An infant a few weeks old was sleeping in the cradle. Mrs. Willard was pale, thin, and slovenly. The drudgery and

suffering of years had worn out her animation by degrees, until she now cared nothing about practising what little she knew. The old, smoky cabin was dismally dirty; the children more so. Florence was at first much embarrassed, but as her companions were too well bred to betray surprise or dissatisfaction, she gradually grew more at ease.

"Where is Uncle Willard?"

"He's off a huntin'. He'll be in before long. We have to keep six or seven men to help herd the cattle, and they all come into dinner at one o'clock."

"How old is this baby?"

"Three weeks."

"And you're doing all this work? Why don't Uncle stay in the house, or hire somebody to help you?"

"He'd rather hunt. And then he reads when he is in the house, and I have to keep the children away from him. He's either tired of his slave, or he thinks she can't die."

A few years' experience had evidently taught her a startling truth. Florence wondered that she had never pitied the poor uncultivated creature before. And the disgust they had all felt for the woman when entering the house, gave way to commiseration. Florence and Effie helped her to prepare the dinner. There was not food enough ready for so many, and Florence made biscuits, Effie pared apples and potatoes, and Mrs. Willard pounded a fresh supply of steak.

"Yonder comes the men," said she, turning to the baby, who was beginning to cry. At Florence's request she sat down with the baby, while she and Effie proceeded to lay the table-cloth and take up the huge plates full of bread, beef, apple sauce and vegetables.

Gustavus Willard appeared glad to see them. He had been invited to the wedding, but could not leave his possessions to go on a pleasure excursion. They all remarked that affable as he was with them, he did not once deign to

notice his children, and the only words addressed to his wife were, "I should think you could do the work yourself, instead of compelling visitors to prepare their own dinners."

Florence wondered more than ever that she had not thought of the unenviable situation of her Uncle's wife while living with them. Mrs. Willard did not reply, and she answered with spirit, "I should think you'd do the work yourself, 'instead of compelling' your wife to do it, when she ought to be in bed?"

"That's what I keep her for," he replied' evidently intending to originate a witty remark.

"You'll not keep her long at this rate; mind it Uncle."

"The little work that she accomplishes isn't going to hurt her," he answered impatiently, and Florence said no more, intending to give him a lecture upon the following morning, when they would be ready to return home.

A light beamed in the ignorant woman's eyes that since her marriage they had seldom emitted.

When the time for their departure came, she burst into tears and told her friends that life had been such a burden before they came that she had wished herself dead, and now she would feel worse than ever.

Hubert asked Mr. Willard to accompany them for a few miles, as they would like to see his valley land. With a feeling of pride, he piloted the quartette around his handsome prairie grounds.

"Why don't you *live* here? You are amply able to move into the valley and fit up in style."

"Mr. Munson; you know my wife; you know her to be a coarse, ignorant woman, and if I should move out of the mountains and begin to live like a white man, the sight of her would be insupportable.

"You have come to the wrong man to get sympathy, Mr. Willard. Though you did wrong to marry that child, even

if you had gained a kingdom by the alliance, you do still worse to keep her living as you do. She has a soul to save and a heart with which to love. Do you ever tell her that you love her in return for all the toil and pain she endures for you?"

"I'm not in the habit of uttering falsehoods."

"Do you ever tell her that she is bound for eternity?"

"She would not understand it, if I should."

"Do you ever treat her as an equal?"

"Why do you ask?"

"I have noticed that you consider yourself a superior being and regard her as a slave. Pardon my plainness, but as you have made known your case to me, I must tell you of the exact location of the malady before I prescribe. I believe she would outweigh you now, in the scale of worth. If she were a squaw or a negress, I would pity her more than you."

"That is a broad and bold assertion."

"And a true one. She works like a slave that you may live in comparative idleness; she bears you numerous children; she studies your most trivial wants, and *loves* you with unrequited affection. Now, tell me, would you have taken a refined and intelligent girl into those mountains and kept her there as you have this one? A slave—a worse than slave?"

"Of course I wouldn't; but she knows of nothing better."

"And you do; therefore you are most to blame."

"What would you have me to do?"

"Sell off a large drove of cattle, take the money and expend it in building and furnishing a good house in the prairie, and fix up a handsome farm. Hire somebody to take care of those children and teach them manners until they are old enough to attend school. Take pains to teach your wife and elevate her mind. *Love her*, cherish and comfort and protect her, as you vowed before God and man to do, and you need not long be ashamed to introduce acquaintances to 'Mrs. Willard.'"

"If I had begun this when we were married, I might have succeeded; but it is too late to begin now."

"It is never too late to do good, my dear sir."

Mr. Willard went home an humbled man, with good resolves beginning to form in his breast. He actually nursed the baby while his wife washed the dinner dishes, and then brought two pails of water from the spring without being asked, and when his wife, encouraged with this unlooked for aid, came out of the kitchen attired in a clean dress and a collar that Florence had presented, he kissed her fervently.

A hard day's ride brought the tourists to Oregon City, where Mr. Munson had prepared a fashionable banquet in honor of the nuptials of his son and neice.

Unavoidable business had kept him from the wedding, which his wife was unwilling to attend. He had ruled about a complimentary feast, and Mrs. Munson, with whose real character few were acquainted, treated her husband's relatives with apparent graciousness.

A week later, and the quartette were in their new home. A gothic cottage with venetian blinds and trellised portico, too recently built to be vine-covered, adorned a gentle eminence in sight of Valley Brook. The rich, unpretending furniture of the various apartments and the elaborate hangings of the arched windows threw a shade of luxury around the beautiful dwelling, which was reflected upon the glowing faces of the four happy inmates, rendered brighter still by the ruddy blazes of the cheerful parlor fire around which they sat and sang, read and chatted.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

IMPROVEMENT OF OREGON LITERATURE.

HUBERT'S COTTAGE was finished and furnished complete by the following July. Effie was delighted with her new abode. The country air and out-door exercise had given her perfect health. which she well knew how to appreciate.

She had been installed for a week in her new home, when upon a warm, sultry afternoon, Mrs. Welden, Mrs. Stanton, and Florence, paid her a surprise visit.

"I have a whole catalogue of news and some little gossip for your entertainment," said Florence, at the tea-table, when Maurice, Hubert, and Herbert were present. "You remember Miss Martin. She is to be one of our neighbors."

"Indeed; I had not heard it. Is she married? Where is she going to live?" Ada asked, as though excited.

"You seem very anxious to know," replied Florence.

"Simply because I was interested in her. I wanted to gain her confidence, for I am certain that a well-spring of her inner being has either been wasted upon an unworthy object or that she has been the victim of circumstances.

"The latter supposition is right. I would not abuse her confidence, but to reconcile you to an announcement that may surprise you, I will read yon a letter of hers that I received to-day."

"Dear Pupil and Friend:—

I am coming to live near you. I have studied a dozen ways to break the news 'gently,' but at last it has dropped from my pen, just as you see it: *Willis Stokes is dead.* I received the intelligence a few months since in an Eastern newspaper. I will not comment further upon that circumstance at present. It is a relief to know of a certainty what has become of the object of 'love's young dream.' 'Where

will you live?' I hear you ask. Do you know Mr. Silas Hill? Don't start and object and say 'he worked his wife to death,' and a dozen other disparaging things. He needs a wife, and needs a mother for those helpless little ones. 'He might have had a wife if he had taken care of her!' I hear you say, indignantly. Now don't be rash. He has come to me and said the same himself, with the sincerity of deepest regret. She was a thorough-going woman, too much so for her strength, and he was *thoughtless*, not *cruel*. I blame him it is true, but can forgive him, for I believe he is penitent. A true marriage, as I told you once, is not for me. I can be useful in the life I have chosen; can think well enough of my husband to live with him agreeably, and my yearning heart has so long sought something to love that those pretty bright-eyed children already seem as near to me as though they were my own. God helping me, they shall never know the want of a mother's love. There will be some scandal, a nine day's wonder, and any amount of curiosity about the match, but I don't care. As Mrs. Stephens says, 'I have lived long enough to fear nothing that is.'—

"This is an age of progress," interrupted Effie. "I've heard of marrying for love, for a home, for beauty, for money, but the idea of marrying for the sake of a widower's children, is something new under the sun."

"That clears the mystery," said Ada. "Silas has been building additions to his house, and has furnished it tastefully. I suspected that a match was brewing, but had I been trying to select his bride, Miss Martin is the last person I should have guessed."

"Read this, Floy," said Herbert, handing her a copy of the Oregon ——, and pointing to a paragraph—

"MARRIED:—Upon the 3d inst., at the house of the bride's father, by the Rev. ——, Mr. Hugh Waters, of Portland, to Miss Eliza Crandall, of Oregon City. Also, on the evening of the same day, by the same, Mr. George Crandall of Oregon City, to Miss Fanny Waters of Portland.

"I wonder why we were not invited. I don't care for the weddings, but don't fancy the slight." Florence was angry. "I don't see why they should slight us, when they were our bridesmaids."

Herbert drew a letter from his pocket. "Here Floy, this will tell you about it. She opened the letter and glanced at the contents.

"This is too bad!"

"What, Floy?" said Effie, as she looked over her shoulder. "Why this letter should have been received a week ago. We were all so cordially invited, and they will think our absence was intentional. I should have been so glad to have been there."

"O, well; we'll not fret over it, sister. But who is coming?" A carriage was winding slowly up the avenue.

"It's Silas Hill!" said Ada. He went below a week ago, and I see he has a new carriage. Meggie, ours have come into port, for they were all to come together from the East."

"He isn't alone, is he? There is Miss Martin, or as I must call her, Mrs. Hill, now," and Florence ran to the gate."

They alighted a few moments, and then drove away, promising to visit them all, after they first had been called upon.

A week passed and the carriages were received. The four families prepared for a ride to Silas Hill's; Florence, Effie, and their husbands going on horseback, while Mrs. Welden's family, and Maurice's, gave their new carriages "the christening ride." Howard Welden, now a noble boy of twelve years, drove his mother's ponies, with the pride and dignity of a nabob.

Well might the mother be proud of her children whom she had supported through years of privation and toil, and who, when prosperity had dawned upon her days of widowhood, was permitted still to enjoy their society, respect and affection. She had not been able to live in the style which Maurice and Ada had adopted, but the neatness and comfort everywhere visible about her little farm, her friends told her looked as well as their own more ostentatious style. Her

heart beat with gratitude to the giver of these blessings, and the hymn of praise and prayer of thanksgiving ascended regularly from the home altar to the throne of God. Little Johnny, the native of a log cabin and offspring of poverty was the general favorite.

The greatest ambition of the family had been satisfied when the family carriage, which mother and children had alike striven to earn, was obtained. When they all neared the newly painted and furnished home of Silas Hill, they were pleased with the sight of three neatly clad, pretty children, playing in the verandah.

"I'll give it up," said Maurice to his wife. "Miss Martin had a noble work to do. Silas might have had everything comfortable in his first wife's time, if he had thought so, and she had insisted upon it. He seldom originates an idea, but yields readily to the influence of others."

The children's faces were clean, an unusual occurrence in their worn out, sick mother's day. Ada stopped to caress them, and the new Mrs. Hill came out to meet them with pleasant words and happy smiles. Silas was called in from his work in the orchard. He came with a cleanly shaven face, and arrayed in decent clothes, which were as new to Maurice and Ada as was the tidy appearance of the children. Silas talked much about his first wife; appeared very sorrowful about the course he had allowed her to pursue, but slightly excused himself on the ground of ignorance. Miss Martin's "withered heart" had found objects to love in the little children, and she was contented, if not happy.

A carriage rumbled at the gate. Effie was sitting in the verandah, playing with the children. She looked up as the vehicle stopped, and saw a boy of apparently twelve years of age, jump to the ground. He was at her side in a half moment.

"Effie, do you know me?"

"Jamie Clinton! can this be you?"

"You better believe it is! I told ma we'd find you, certain."

"Where have you been for so long?"

"O, you see we got home from New York last week, and ma called to see Mrs. Munson. She told her that you had married, and I teased her and pa till they brought me to see you. We couldn't find you at your cottage, but I thought we were on your track."

The impulsive boy was standing with his arm round her neck, and she was almost weeping for joy. Mrs. Clinton watched the scene with pleasure.

"Did you *ever?* I had forgotten everybody else but Jamie," Effie exclaimed, as she jumped down the steps and ran to meet her friends in the carriage.

A hurried explanation of their long absence followed.—They had remained in New York until Mrs. Clinton's father was dead, and had returned on account of her health. Mrs. Clinton dreaded the journey either by land or water, but having tried both, she preferred the water route as being more expeditious, not so fatiguing, and no more dangerous than the overland journey. They returned home with Hubert and Effie, and for three days they were welcome guests. The visit then came to a close, and with many promises of future intimacy, they parted in pleasant spirits.

"I wonder, Floy, why your uncle doesn't visit us?" said Hubert, one afternoon, just after harvest. "I hear that he has built him a new house, hired a domestic (isn't that singular?) engaged a governess for his children, and begun to treat his wife as an equal. I saw Hugh Waters to-day, and he told me that he had been at his house and found this true."

"I wrote last week, inviting them to visit us, but don't suppose uncle will think he can spare the time for a visit."

"You're mistaken," said Effie, rising, "for they are coming now."

Sure enough, there was a two-horse spring wagon full of juvenile faces, each trying to outgaze the other in their eagerness to see their relatives. Mrs. Willard had improved in person and address. Her health had become comparatively good, and her children were tidy and polite. Mr. Willard was sincere in his thanks to Hubert for the task he had assumed in awakening him to a sense of duty.

"I told you that your wife would be no disgrace to you, if you would discharge your duty as well as she did hers. I pity the mountaineers who married squaws when there were no white women here, much more than I pity those who married children to save a half section of land."

"I tell you, Munson, a half section of beautiful prairie, joining a bachelor's half of the best of timber, looked very tempting, though I acknowledge that if I had been living among genteel people, I would have scorned the idea of marrying to secure it. I was little better than a savage myself, before I saw you."

Effie took Mrs. Willard's eldest children home with her, and Florence and her aunt were enjoying a private chat.

"Gustavus began to treat me better after you was there last fall. I don't pretend to say he ever was cross, but he didn't used to care how much I suffered, or how hard I worked. Now, he won't let me sell any more butter, and keeps a man and woman hired to do the hard work. And we have got the loveliest girl to teach the children and help me sew. He says he'll get me a sewing machine next summer. We go to church every Sunday, and I am just commencing to live."

It was evening in Herbert's cottage home, and Maurice, Ada, Mrs. Welden, Hubert and Effie had assembled to spend the evening there, attracted by two new pianos, belonging to Effie and Florence, which had been received and carried first to Herbert's house, that their respective merits could be tested when together. The music was sounding its sweetest, when a loud "woa" was heard in the highway. Farmer Gray was going to the city to sell butter and eggs, and made it convenient upon such occasions to visit his friends.

"I thought may-be ye'd like to hear from Ike Hammond. I got a letter from Tom Simmons, the old woman's brother, an' he says that the rascal is dead, and his still-house burnt

down, and his wife run away, and the children bound out." This was the first news of the old homestead that the brother and sister had had for years.

"God forgive me for the way I hated that man!" said Herbert, with emotion. The remembrance of old scenes caused Effie to sigh, and lean her head upon her hand.

"An' there's suthin' else. There's going to be a big emigration acrost the Plains next summer. I wish I had that trip to go again. I'd leave the Missouri by the fifteenth of April, an' take good healthy fodder along an' show folks that crossin' the Plains is no hazardous trick at all, if they'll have any sense about fixin' for it an' startin' early. The reason folks was sick so much when we crossed was 'cause the buffler was all skeered from the road an' it was hog meat from beginnin' to end. An' then, folks started so late that so many cattle starved, and the stench of dead oxen was enough to kill skunks. If they'd strike out by the middle of April, grass or no grass, they'd *find it* in a few day's travel, an' a hundred or two miles along 'll be a good deal in a emigrant's favor this side o' Fort Hall."

"The gold excitement here and hard times in the States will cause many to undertake the journey, and I apprehend no danger at all from Indians if the emigration is large. The eastern papers all contain horrible accounts of Indian outbreaks, but if the editors knew how few of their awful communications are true, they'd learn to swallow them like we do gold news. I have no donbt but that gold mines of value exist in the British Possessions and other places much nearer to us, but the stories of collecting it by handsfull, are all humbug," said Herbert.

"That's sense, boy. But I want to hear some o' that music. Of course I think pianers is all nonsense, but I don't mind to hear from 'em once in a while."

Florence was seated at her instrument, carelessly and lightly drumming the keys. When Farmer Gray spoke of wishing to hear music, she involuntarily struck the tune of "My Mother's Grave." As if an unseen spirit possessed her, she broke forth in singing:

"I love to stay where my mother sleeps,
And gaze on each star as it twinkling peeps,
Through that bending willow which lonely weeps,
O'er my mother's grave; o'er my mother's grave,
Through that bending willow, o'er my mother's grave.

"I love to kneel on the green turf there,
Afar from the scenes of my daily care,
And breathe to my Savior my evening prayer,
O'er my mother's grave; o'er my mother's grave;
Through that bending willow; o'er my mother's grave.

"I well remember how oft she led,
And knelt me by her as with God she plead,
That I might be His when the clods were spread
O'er my mother's grave; o'er my mother's grave.
Through that bending willow; o'er my mother's grave.

"I love to think how, 'neath the ground,
She slumbers in death as a captive bound,
She'll slumber no more when the trump shall sound,
O,er my mother's grave; o'er my mother's grave;
Through that bending willow; o'er my mother's grave."

The mournful tones of the singer's voice mingled with the clarion strains of the instrument, sounded as a sad, contented wail.

"I didn't bargain for anything that solemn," said Farmer Gray, "still it sounds glorious."

The tears, which for a year Effie had scarcely shed at all to her mother's memory, dropped upon her husband's cheek. Hubert kissed the marble forehead of his wife, who was pale with emotion. A lark, the prince of Oregon songsters, broke out in an entrancing trill of melody while sitting in the branches of an old oak tree that stood near an open window.

Eyes looked to eyes, while listening, and memory reverted to a distant scene. Mrs. Welden grasped Ada's hand. She was thinking of *another time* when a merry songster had been a comforter, and blessed the mission of the happy bird.

"This reminds me," said Maurice, "of a poem I noticed in one of our weeklies, to-day. I intended to show it to Ada before, but forgot it until this moment.

"Who is 'Viola?'" Ada asked, glancing at the signature.

"A lady whose only fault is that she so seldom writes. But the poem—Oregon literature is beginning to look up, and whenever I see signs of its elevation, I get deeply interested." Ada took the journal and read it aloud:

Beauteous child of melody,
Singing from out that old oak tree,
Perching thyself on the topmost bough,
Who can rival thy music now?

Scattering song on the morning breeze,
Like a shower of rain-drops from the trees,
Telling the listener's heart of Spring,
Gilding with hope-light everything;
Hopping about in the sunny hours,
O'er the yard's gay carpet of yellow flowers,
Thyself as like thou wert hardly seen,
If thy feathers were only tipped with green;
But the russet brown of thy humble wing
Is like leaves that grew in a former Spring,
They are withered now, and lie scattered round,
Enriching and shielding the fruitful ground,
And thy coat is so like those dead leaves, sere.
That thy voice must tell us when thou art near.
Cheerily now thy warblings fall
On my list'ning ears, and I treasure them all
Up in the choicest nook of my heart,
That their gladness and sunshine may never depart.
Often I wake in the cool Spring night,
And listen to thee with deep delight,
Breaking out in a thrill so long,
Filling the still night air with song,
Waking the echoes of midnight hours,
Shaking the dew from the sleeping flowers,
As if thou wert waking from some bright dream,
Or gazing with joy on the moonlit scene.
A treasure thou art, of worth untold,
Yielding us music that never grows old.
But say, sweet lark, why so happy thou art,
Why so gay thy song and light thy heart?
Why not grieve for plumage more rich and rare,
And complain to thy Maker of 'nothing to wear,'
How darest thou be seen in the summer light,
When so many are dressed in colors more bright?
The bird flitted by, but sang as he went
'I'm teaching a lesson of sweet content.'

Ada's earnest voice vibrated musically through the cheerily lighted room. Mrs. Welden sat gazing into the fire, her lips compressed and eyes aglow with feeling.

Effie's face grew radient. "If we're nothappy on this green earth, the Creator can't be blamed," she exclaimed.

"Well, it's strange what notions folks can conjure up now-a-days. Who'd a thought that anybody would try to draw poetry from a bird's noise? The poets are immortalizin' *everything* in song," said Farmer Gray by way of comment.

FINIS.