

MRS. TABITHA BROWN.

*"Honor to whom honor is due."*

MRS. F. F. VICTOR.

Longfellow has sung :

*"Lives of great men all remind us  
We may make our lives sublime."*

And it is a truism that needs not to be sung in poets' numbers. But great men have a fair field and always plenty of praise; and it is of great women, whose deeds of heroism most often go unnoticed, that I propose to place a few things on record, in the hope that by so doing

*"Some forlorn and shipwrecked stranger  
Seeing may take heart again."*

On the 1st day of May, 1780, there was born in the town of Brimfield, Mass., to Dr. and Mrs. Joseph Moffat a girl babe, to whom they gave the very unmelodious name of Tabitha—Tabitha Moffat. The name certainly was not pretty, but the girl was, and she had, besides, the privilege of changing it partly. However, it so happened that she did not make much of her privilege, for when she was nineteen years old she resigned the best part of hers for the common and inelegant one of Brown, and now she was Tabitha Brown, wife of Rev. Clark Brown, of Stonington, Conn., a clergyman of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Like most ministers in those times, Mr. Brown was poor. He had a treasure, though, in his wife, which made his modest living seem better than other men's affluence.

In the changes of his ministerial life Mr. Brown was called to reside in Maryland, where he died, leaving Tabitha, his wife, a widow with three children. Mrs. Brown was the right woman in the right place. She was living in a community where school-books were about as scarce as they were in Oregon under the Provisional Government; but she got together a large school, and, with such books as could be picked up around the country, taught it with profit to the students and herself. For eight years she continued this kind of labor, and when there was a boy too poor to pay his tuition, she gave him a chance to earn it by performing slight services for her, giving one young man his entire education in that way.

Feeling the necessity of her boys acquiring some trade by which to get an honest living, she apprenticed them both, but they ran away and went to sea,

as so many boys did in those adventurous days of the Republic. Then, seeing that the best way to cure them of this fancy was to give them enough of sea life and at the same time keep them within her reach, she purchased a schooner for them and set them up in business. Probably they did not get rich at their new business, but the family struggled along, Mrs. Brown's head always above water, during the eight years first subsequent to Mr. Brown's decease. Then, there being a tide of emigration setting towards Missouri, and hoping to do better in that country than in Maryland, she sold off all her effects except such as could be carried in a two-horse wagon and started for the then land of promise, with her two boys, her one girl and her mother, who had long been dependent upon her for support. On the way her mother died and was buried in a lonely grave beside the road, which was then through a wilderness a great part of the way.

In Missouri she lived many years, and her children married, and she became grandmother to grown up boys, but all the time using her unflinching energies in good works.

In 1843 one of her sons, Mr. Orris Brown visited the much-talked-of Oregon country, returning to Missouri in 1845 and emigrating to Oregon with his family the following year. The account of the Wallamet valley which he brought back decided Mrs. Brown, then in her sixty-sixth year and lame from a badly set fracture of one of her limbs, to accompany him to the sun-down shores of the Pacific. It was at first expected that both her sons, as well as her daughter and son-in-law, Virgil K. Pringle, would remove to Oregon; but when it came to the point of departure, only Orris and Mr. Pringle made the start. Orris, having been twice over the road, was appointed pilot, which kept him at the head of the train and deprived his mother of his services. It was not, however, as a dependent in any way that Mrs. Brown was emigrating. "I provided myself," she says, "with a good ox-wagon team and a good supply of what was requisite for the comfort of myself, Capt. Brown and my driver. Uncle John insisted upon coming and crossed the plains on horseback." [Capt. Brown and Uncle John were the same person—an older brother of her husband.]

All went well and Mrs. Brown enjoyed the journey as far as Fort Hall, which was the common experience of emigrants to the Pacific Coast. From that post, whatever route they pursued took them over barren plains, rough mountains and many dangers and hardships, which had to be encountered with teams already half worn out. It happened, too, that this year the new southern route was discovered by a party who went to meet the emigration and pilot them into the Wallamet valley, with the intention to avoid the difficulties and dangers of the passage down the Columbia, there being at that time no road over the mountains (Barlow's road was first opened that year) and no proper means of conveying passengers from The Dalles, where wagons were left, to Oregon City. Two circumstances operated against the perfect success of this enterprise—a very dry summer, which parched the grass and dried the streams, and the early rains which followed, as usual, the extraordinary drought.

Mrs. Brown's and Mr. Pringle's wagons were among those that took the southern route, which, owing to the causes just named, proved hard upon the cattle, reducing their strength and causing their owners to relieve them by a considerable waste of other property. Remaining too long in the Rogue River valley to recruit, the fall rains set in with great violence, and in passing through the Umpqua canyon, which the rains had flooded, much loss and suffering resulted. Winter overtook the emigrants in the Umpqua valley, and but for the relief which was sent by the people in the Wallamet valley on their situation becoming known, they must have perished of cold and starvation. Some trifling incidents will display the courage and endurance of my heroine. After Mrs. Brown had been compelled to abandon her wagon, and the last scanty allowance of food had been parcelled out: "In the after part of the day Capt. Brown complained of sickness, and could only walk his horse at a distance behind me. He had a swimming in his head and a pain in his side. About two or three hours before sundown he became delirious and fell from his horse. I was afraid to jump down from my horse to assist him, as it was one a woman had never rode before. He tried to raise upon