

self was raving in the delirium of brain fever, and for weeks thereafter he hovered upon the brink of the grave. I never left him, for an hour, through the whole time; but my vigils, day and night, were shared by black Martha. She never spoke to me when she could possibly avoid doing so; but once, when I remonstrated with her, and strove to induce her to take some much-needed rest, she burst forth so suddenly as to startle me—

"Keep still; I'll not leave him; she loved him; even the dog loves him," pointing to Bayard, where he lay close beside the bed, "when he is well, or in his grave, I'll rest, and not before."

These words, succinct and decisive, silenced me, and I let black Martha alone, while I came to regard her with an awe that betook somewhat of reverence.

Weeks later, when Roy Mason came forth once more into the light of heaven's sun, with white hair and strangely aged face, Martha disappeared one night, without a word of explanation or farewell, and it was only by questioning the stage driver that I learned she had crossed the mountains on her way to Portland. We at once inferred that she was *en route* to her old Eastern home, and subsequent letters sent to that place proved the correctness of the inference. They were answered by an attorney, who announced himself as authorized to assume control of Mrs. Martha Johnson's affairs financial.

Edith Mason had left a will, in which her dusky, faithful old servant was remembered so generously as to enable her to end her days in independent comfort. The remainder of her possessions were bequeathed, without reserve or condition, to her husband, making him a wealthy man, but heaping coals upon the already undying fire of remorse.

"Oh, Blake," he said, piteously, "I must get away from here as soon as I am strong enough to travel; everything reminds me of her; even the birds and the mountain streams murmur reproaches as I pass, and the crags frown down upon me savagely. I think, sometimes, it will drive me mad. I must get away—away."

The words struck a pain through my heart, and involuntarily my eyes turned toward the white shafts of the little cemetery, on a gentle slope not far away. I remembered that she had journeyed thousands of miles for the privilege of dwelling in the wilderness beside his grave. Now, he would journey as far, doubtless, to get away from that little sloping mound of earth, and the scenes that must ever remind him of her.

"Verily," I thought, "she was right—there are, indeed, some strings in the harp of a woman's soul that no man's hand can touch."

The year was beginning to fade into the sere and

yellow leaf, when once more I wrung Roy Mason's hand, and saw him depart upon his wanderings, far from the little valley that nestles in the bosom of the Blue mountains.

The next day I went away, shaping my course over the mountain trail; and when I had reached the highest point overlooking the valley, I paused and looked down, with a queer sensation of pain at my heart, upon that little white shaft, gleaming in the autumn sunlight, and thought of the harp that lay shattered there, its unbroken strings vibrating with deathless melody down the ages of eternity.

I never again saw the little valley, nor the grave of the woman, who had been, in life and in death, "A Law Unto Herself."

More than a quarter of a century elapsed before I again clasped hands with Roy Mason. When I did so, we stood upon a thronged street of Oregon's metropolis. It was the eighth day of November, 1887. As my dear old friend extended me his right hand, I noted that in his left he held a ballot, to be cast for or against the issue of the day—the prohibition amendment.

For or against! Which would it be? I wondered, as my mind ran back over his darkened past. At length the question formed itself upon my lips—

"Which way do you vote, Roy?" I asked, but in an instant was sorry I had spoken, for he lifted his dim eyes to my face, with a pitiful look of reproach.

"Blake, that question from you?"

Then, baring his whitened head, he lifted his eyes to heaven, and added, solemnly—

"With a murdered wife and child looking down upon me from those eternal heights, is it likely that I can vote for the perpetuation of the curse that killed them?"

C. BLAKE MORGAN.

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NELSON BENNETT.

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AMONG the men who are most prominently connected with the development of the Pacific Northwest is Nelson Bennett, who has built more miles of railroad connected with the main line and branches of the Northern Pacific railroad, than any other one man. Under the firm name of Washington, Dunn & Co., he built two hundred miles of the main line, in Montana. Of the Cascade division he built one hundred and seventy-five miles. For the Oregon Railway & Navigation Company, he built the Pendleton and Blue mountain branch, consisting of twenty-eight miles, and also twenty-eight miles of the Palouse branch, running from Colfax to Farmington. In addition to the construction work on the main line