The New Northwest.

FRIDAY.....JULY 2', 1872.

The Old Mill.

BY GEORGE COOPER.

It stands in rustic beauty there,
Crowning the valley rich and fair,
And wheel and flume are still.
Dark rafters tilt from wall to floor;
Creaks in the wind the battered door
Of the old, deserted mill.

Rank herbage clogs each crannied nook,
And straggling branches overlook
The haunts of rat and owl;
It leans beside the mossy way,
Like some lone friar in hooded gray
With earth-averted cowl.

Hushed is the clatter which it made,
And merry forms that round it played
Have vanished, one by one!
Yet stands the old, deserted mill,
Breathing its happy memories still
Of days forever gone.

Soft, silvery laughter peals around,
And lover's footsteps press the ground
At eve's first pearly star;
The miller's carol, blithe and clear,
Borne on the fragrant breeze I hear,
Echoed o'er woodlands far.

And through the doorway once again—
Like phantoms through a madman's brain—
Glide forms of long ago!
Once more I hear the busy hum
Of voices as they go and come,
Melodiously low.

Again the stream, in pure delight,
Leaps to its work with hands of might
And twirls the ponderous wheel;
While every impulse of my youth,
Each faded joy, in love and truth,
Again, again I feel!

All vanishes, like morning mist
By the warm sunbeams fondly kissed—
However it may be.
Oh, there are hearts that I have known,
And they, each hope and passion flown,
Seem like this mill to me!

For still the busy hum goes on
Till each allotted task is done,
Our passing years to fill;
And then the waiting flood-gate drops,
And Death, the miller, kindly stops
The old, deserted mill!

JUDITH REID;

A Plain Story of a Plain Woman.

[Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1871, by Mrs. A. J. Duniway, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington City.]

CHAPTER XII.

Year after year rolled on, bringing to our isolated home but few incidents of note with which to mark the unvaried monotony of my aimless existence. Wearily, hopelessly, mechanically, I performed prodigies of drudgery in which my mind felt no interest, but to which the ties of filial duty closely bound me. My father depended upon me for the gratification of the most trivial wants, and I humored, petted and spoiled him as though he had been a baby.

The veritable John Smith who had crossed the Great Plains with us as teamster, and in whom seemed embodied all the diversified peculiarities of the proverbially prolific "Smith family," had availed himself of the Donation Act, which entitled all early settlers of Oregon to a half section, or three hundred and twenty acres, of land; or, if the squatter were married, the couple by joint occupancy would have and hold for his or her assigns double the amount allotted to the single man, or six hundred and forty acres.

Of course an opportunity for the ownership of such a vast display of broad acres was not to be overlooked by a young man of practical business ideas; neither could it be expected that such a man, although possessing the strength of a buffalo and the spirit of a wild boar, could engage in the culinary preparation of his own dinners. Therefore this sagacious young Hercules occupied, claimed and possessed, in fee simple, the fine, rolling square mile of land adjoining my father's and mother's donation claim, and in order to save himself and hired men the trouble of preparing their own food while "residing upon and cultivating" his land according to the requirements of the law, a cabin was built for him upon the line between the two sections, into which we all removed, for the purpose of giving "Small Potatoes" the highly agreeable privilege of performing the drudgery of two households.

Marriageable girls were at high premium in the matrimonial market, and my two younger sisters, aged respectively fourteen and sixteen years, had invested in the current stock and embarked at that tender age in a precarious hymeneal enterprise.

Offers of marriage I had by the dozen, some of them from men who now hold high judicial and official positions—men who in after years failed to recognize the bent form of the overtasked woman who trudged to market with her butter and eggs. But I could not endure the idea of matrimony. Down deep in my heart of hearts slumbered the never-dying memory of that solemn promise, "I'll explain," which all the while kept up its sweet accompaniment to that sharp staccato, "Wait."

The hopeless burden of unnumbered household duties pressed heavily upon me. The girls of the household, upon whom I should have depended for help, had escaped the burdens at home for the more serious ones abroad. My sister Sarah, with her growing family, was thousands of miles away, and to no human being upon the earth could I look for one particle of appreciation or one ray of sympathy. Hopelessly I toiled and moiled. My father became exacting, petulant, childish. The land mania had seized him and was his constant hobby. John Smith, whose habits of industry were only equaled by his burly manners and herculean strength, was in danger of losing the beautiful and desirable "half section" which up to a certain date he was permitted to hold in prospective for the fortunate (?) woman with whom he should all his worldly goods endow. Why I did not decide to "jump the claim" which he was thus holding for the benefit of his future wife, I cannot now imagine. Woman's rights were at a very low ebb in those days, and though I now believe I might have secured the land without the incumbrance—woman that I was—it is certain that it did not then occur to me. The softer sentiments and better nature of this man John Smith seemed for a time to gain the mastery over his sensual appetites. He watched for opportunities to lighten the heaviest of my burdens, often carrying water for me up the hill from the spring, which a little extra labor would have brought to the kitchen door, lending a hand at digging potatoes, wielding the heavy churn dash, or even rubbing at the wash-board when my strength would fail. The thought that he entertained matrimonial intentions and was skillfully playing his cards never once crossed my brain, else I should have repelled his kindness and waited upon myself. But he daily grew in my esteem, until at last I would sometimes speak to him of my many and hopeless burdens. At such times he manifested such interest in my sorrows that I might have guessed his intentions had it not been for his merciless yet good-natured raillery, of which I was the constant recipient whenever he had other listeners than myself.

Squatters had occupied the once vacant land for many miles around us. The time was near at hand when John Smith was to relinquish his right to hold a claim in prospective for the mythical Mrs. Smith.

One evening, after a hard day's work, I wandered from our rude cabin home to the yet ruder cabin where my mother had spent the last lonely months of her life. Sitting down in the rude doorway upon the accumulated rubbish of the passing years, with my form flooded by the lambent moonlight, I bowed my head upon my hands and wished, Oh, so earnestly! that I might die.

A rustling in the bushes near me arrested my attention. Emerging from the covert near the doorway and coming forward to where I sat weeping, John Smith spoke tenderly, respectfully and hopefully. Sitting down beside me, he told me how for many years he had longed to make me his wife; how he had worked and waited, knowing as he did my deep and bitter disappointment, but if I would be his wife and try to love him *just a little*, he would devote his life to my happiness.

"I cannot love you, John," I answered dreamily, while in my ears that solemn promise, "I'll explain," kept up as ever the sweet accompaniment to that sharp staccato, "Wait."

"You shall learn to love me, Judith dear," was John's passioned reply, and drawing me to him in an embrace I could not resist, he whispered, "Be mine, my darling, and I shall never be jealous of your buried love."

"My love is not buried, John," I answered, with a wail. "But, Oh! if you can take me as I am, with my worse than widowed heart, and will ever let me feel that I have somebody to cling to for support and sympathy, I will be to you in person, if not in spirit, a true and faithful wife so long as we both shall live."

"I accept the compact, Judith," was the quick reply, and this strange betrothal was completed.

Slowly we wended our way homeward in the limpid moonlight. The moaning winds sighed through the branches of the dark pine forest through which lay our path. John, for once in his life, was subdued and solemn. He scarcely spoke to me, but with my toil-hardened hand clasped in his own, he walked dreamily on, his head bowed down in meditation. I seemed oppressed by some strange dread.

"John," said I at length, "do you think that it is right for me to take this step? Do you think it is right for me to become your wife when I cannot love you, and when, if our married life should prove a disappointment, I should *hate* you?"

We had emerged from the timber into the open prairie and were flooded by the limpid moonbeams.

"Judith," was the sad reply, "I, too, have a tale of madness to unfold. You think because I am brusque and rough, and because I always wear a cheerful countenance, that I have never known trouble. You are altogether in error. The same man that blighted your early years also blighted the best hopes of my life."

"Oh, John, what can you mean?" I asked in horror. The shadow of some great terror loomed up, which caused me to sink, almost fainting, on the grass.

"William Snyder, whose name I never meant to pronounce again, stole the affections of my affianced wife. He charmed her just as he charmed you, Judith, and married her just on the eve of his arrest for forgery."

"Oh, John!" I said, reproachfully, "why did you never tell me this before?"

"I did not dare to tell you, Judith. You must permit me to be candid with you now, for you are my affianced wife. You well know your former reputation for possessing a wild cat's temper. Happily you have outlived all that, or I should never want you for a wife. I did not dare to encounter your displeasure by speaking the truth about the man who had so deeply wronged us both."

I rose to my feet and, grasping the stalwart arm of my future husband, we moved slowly on. At length I managed to articulate:

"John, who was your affianced wife, and how did all this happen?" I was hardly able, from sheer astonishment, to realise the facts.

"You know Snyder had a singing school on the other side of the settlement, about ten miles from our neighborhood, and that he taught there on alternate evenings during our school term. Well, I had a sweetheart over there. She was as handsome as a rose and as wild as a deer. She was an industrious, good girl, too; and I'd a been rich by this time if she only been true to me. But that cursed ruffian—"

"Don't curse him, John, or I shall go mad!" I said, wildly.

"Well, I *won't* curse then, but I'll think *d—n it* mighty strong!" he replied vehemently, as he loudly gritted his firmly set teeth. "That devil," he continued, "made a bet with some scalawags at Longbob that he could win any girl he might take a fancy to. He soon had such good luck in winning my pretty Rose that he offered to double the bet and double the adventure, agreeing to marry two girls the same evening and leave them both at their father's door."

By this time we had reached the low, rude cabin which for years had been the home of both of us. Sitting down together on the rough door-sill, for some moments we remained in silence. The thoughts of each were far away. Of ourselves we did not care to think or speak.

"That sinner," said John, resuming his strange story with evident dislike to further allude to it, "went through the farce of marrying my Rose just one hour before he played the same deep game with you."

"Then he was not married legally at all!" I shrieked. "Oh, tell me that he was not a bigamist, John, and I can bear the rest!" laying my head upon his shoulder and sobbing aloud.

"I don't know what else in thunder you'd *call* it!" said he, roughly. He got license to marry both and *did* marry both, and that 'pears to me like bigamy, or Brigamy, if you like the word any better."

"But what became of your wild Rose, John?"

For a moment he did not reply. In my heart I pitied the strong man, who had felt the intensity of such poignant grief and borne it all in silence for so many years. Why should we not become much to each other when each had known such anguish?

At length he said, in a hollow voice, "My wild Rose *died!* Yes! died in three days after the cruel blow. Her strange adventure was known to but few persons. A few minutes before her death I was called to her bedside. She told me the whole, sad story of her broken heart, and her last words were, 'Forgive him, John!' I s'pose I have forgiven him, but I wasn't one mite sorry when he was made to change that splendid broadcloth for the prison uniform. I hope he died and rotted in the penitentiary!"

"Don't John, for the love of Heaven, talk like that!" I begged. "*I* can never hate William Snyder, let him wrong whom he will, and I cannot bear to have you hate him!"

Again, down in my heart of hearts, that solemn promise, "I'll explain," attuned itself as a sublime accompaniment to that sharp staccato, "Wait."

"Release me from my promise, John," I urged. "I do not feel that it is right for me to become your wife."

"Release you? Not if I know myself! A bargain's a bargain, whether made with man or woman, and I know that you are not the woman to go back on your promise!" was the curt reply.

"Well, John, remember if I marry you it will be under protest, and because you will not yield me back my troth."

"A bargain's a bargain!" was the uncouth rejoinder, and we parted without exchanging the slightest expressions of affection or regard.

Was ever such another wooing? My feelings may not be imagined by the blushing and happy betrothed, who retires from an interview, which she feels that she would have enjoyed had it continued forever, to the shades of her own apartment, to dream of endearing words, unutterable tenderness and fervent kisses that were to be all her own henceforth; but to the sad, disappointed soul, whose love has all been tutored to bitterness, the fruit of which has been naught but Sodom apples, I need not give further explanation. Alas, she knows it all! Worn out as I was by fatigue, astonishment, dread and sorrow, I was not long in relapsing into slumber.

"*I had a dream which was not all a dream.*" I seemed suspended in mid-air upon a gauzy stratum of fleecy cloud, which the west winds wafted on until my filmy couch floated in aerial laziness right over the barn-yard of my father's farm, wherein a herd of swine was feeding. Corn had been deposited in the fermenting manure heaps, and into these the swine were burrowing. Presently, soaring from afar over the bold Cascades, I saw a graceful eagle, and she shaped her course directly toward the herd of busy swine. As she drew nearer I could see that her wing was weary and sore. Some sportsman's bullet had inflicted a well nigh mortal wound, and her long flight and intense suffering had proved too great a tax upon her weary wing. "Ah, suffering bird," I seemed to say (yet my words were aerial, like the cloud), "you, like myself, have felt the cruel blow of fate."

Wearily the bird soared on, and when directly above the busy herd she tried to poise herself, the bruised wing refused to do her further bidding, and down she fluttered among the frightened swine. I looked for her to be torn in pieces, but even while I gazed a sagacious young boar came forward and offered his assistance. Miss Eagle was too far gone to refuse the attentions of kind-hearted Mr. Swine, and he, with unusual tenderness and respect—qualities which I did not recognize as by any means general among the swine family—escorted her to the welcome shade of some green weeds, and offered her food and water. Miss Eagle appeared intensely grateful, and as the time wore on—for thus in dreams we see the work of years accomplished in a single hour—she became interested in a degree that astonished me in the various occupations of the busy, grunting swine. The use of her wing was lost, and it seemed that she considered it wisdom to make the best of circumstances; and I thought, as I noticed the cheerful good-will with which she accommodated herself to circumstances, that humanity might learn many lessons from her example.

There was a great consultation held among the more important members of the swine family. All they said I could not hear, but I gathered from detached words and sentences that they were debating some momentous question. After a while the same young Mr. Swine who had first won the esteem of Miss Eagle, by acts of kindness in her dire necessity, left the grunting council and, seeking the corner of the barn-yard where grew Miss Eagle's home of weeds, he approached her, hesitatingly, deferentially, but with the air of a patron, and requested a matrimonial alliance. He explained to her that, as she was crippled, she could no longer hope to scale the breezy mountain heights or soar abroad into the blue empyrean; that, as her lot had been cast with them, it was her duty to accept it cheerfully. To my surprise and intense indignation, Miss Eagle languidly consented to marry Mr. Swine!

I made great effort to arouse myself and protest against such a horrible union, but was unable to stir. A light west wind came round again, and catching up my aerial couch, wafted me gently away.

I seemed to track wide realms of air. Finally, after the seeming lapse of years, the same mild zephyrs wafted me back to the barn-yard and its strange associations.

Mrs. Swine was now a mother, but her children, as I saw in my dream, were eagles instead of swine. And as the years rolled on they plumed their wings and soared away, leaving the sad, hopeless mother bereft indeed. Mr. Swine was evidently unhappy. He had done what he could to lighten and cheer the hopeless life of his strange wife, but his ideas were swine's ideas, and his toil availed the eagle naught. She seemed to struggle hard with destiny; and, as I gazed, she often toiled at swine's work, though she loathed the tasks which most delighted them, and when they wallowed in the mire she sought in vain for running water to cleanse her tarnished plumage.

Morning came at last, and, to my intense relief, I awoke to find that my strange vision had been all a dream.

Ah, *was* it all a dream?

(To be continued.)

Women's Department.

BY ANNE E. M'DOWELL.

Two or three weeks ago we received several letters relative to the Woodhull and Claflin scandal, asking: "What do you think of the female aspiration for the Presidency in view of the expose made of her private life by her own mother and sisters?" We knew nothing at that time of the matter, save what we had learned from the newspapers, and we so told our correspondents, but we promised, as we were about visiting New York, to call upon the female bankers, and, if possible, hear from their own lips their side of the story.

In pursuance of this promise, soon after our arrival in New York, we called upon these "birds," whose plumage had been, by one correspondent, pronounced very "black." We stepped into their office, at No. 44 Broad street, and, upon inquiring for Mrs. Woodhull, were ushered into a large and handsome reception room in the rear of the business office, and were there greeted very gracefully and courteously by one of the most beautiful women we have ever seen, and who proved to be Victoria C. Woodhull. After asking us to be seated she inquired our business, and when we, presented our card, declared our only business was to "interview" her, she, in a very pleasant manner, professed herself willing to give us any information we might desire, either upon matters connected with their office or those of a personal character, saying: "Interrogate me as you please, madam. I am truly very anxious to answer any questions you may desire to put to me."

Thus encouraged, we remarked: "You aspire to the Presidency of the United States, Mrs. Woodhull, and as all candidates for that office must expect to have their past record investigated, you cannot hope to evade the curiosity of your friends and supporters, or to be exempt from the scandal of your enemies. The moral character of male aspirants for the office for which you are a candidate is, it is true, generally overlooked, it being tacitly acknowledged that the chastity or unchastity of a man cannot affect his qualifications for office. It is otherwise with the women who would rally to our standard. They feel that their candidate should be a good woman. Now, the report is that you are the wife of two husband's, living in the house from whom you have been divorced, as well as with the other to whom you have since been married. This is scarcely consistent with propriety. Is it true?"

"Yes," she responded, "it is true in part. I will give you a brief sketch of my history. When but fourteen years of age, I married Dr. Woodhull, of New York. He soon became a confirmed drunkard, and, for eleven years, I can safely say he never drew a sober breath. When I was fifteen years of age I gave birth to a son who has proved to be an entire imbecile. After years of sorrow, toil and penury, years of agony, weariness, sometimes of absolute hunger, I resolved to cut loose the ties which bound me to a life of misery and to paddle my own canoe over the rough waters of life. I did this. I obtained a legal divorce, and, taking my two children, I separated myself from Dr. Woodhull, and entered upon a life of independence. I have worked since that time at many avocations, all honorable, and though, after a time, I married again, I stand where I do to-day solely by my own exertions. I have lived right here in New York for fifteen years, and my life, during that time and previous to it, is open to public inspection. I court investigation. I deny even malice to point out a single flaw or blemish upon my moral character. I claim to be a pure woman with a clear record. Perhaps I am thus above many others because my life has been so sorrowful; it has been saddened almost untaught."

"But if this be so," we asked, "how are we to regard the affidavit of your mother, who has testified that you sustain marital relations both with Dr. Woodhull and Col. Blood?"

"Oh," she responded, "my poor, dear mother was quite innocent of that infamous oath. It was fabricated by wicked people to ruin us. My mother can neither read nor write, and knew nothing about what she was swearing. She loves all her children dearly, and, to keep the family together, Tennie and myself have labored for years. Recently, some members of it, fancying that we were coining money, have become exorbitant in their demands, and we, to save ourselves from ruin, have been obliged to tell them that beyond a decent support we would do nothing for them. This exasperated them, and they so prejudiced mother against Tennie and myself as to induce her to believe that we intended to turn them out of doors and send her as insane to Blackwell's Island. These representations threw her mind off its balance and made her an easy tool in their hands. One morning, a brother-in-law, whose entire family, including himself, we supported, and whose boot bill of ninety-six dollars we had paid only the day before, burst into Tennie's room and demanded one thousand dollars. This my sister flatly refused, when he threatened if she did not give it to him he would publish to the world such a tale of infamy as would forever blast the reputation of Woodhull & Claflin. This excited the ire of Tennie, and she bade him go and do his worst. The world knows how religiously he *endeavored* to carry out his threat, but it does not know how signally he failed, and only succeeded in impelling toward us thousands of, until then, unknown friends and supporters.

"Our poor mother has come to her senses, and deplores most deeply having become unwittingly a party to a plot intended to ruin her children. She declares most earnestly that she had no idea of the falsehoods to which she testified."

"But about the two husbands? What of them?" we inquired?

"Why," she said, "although I was divorced from Dr. Woodhull I did not become his enemy. He was poor, and his excesses had made of him a confirmed invalid, and I sometimes saw and assisted him. He was the father of my children, and had a right, or so I conceived, to see them. Consequently, both before and after my marriage to Colonel Blood, he was an occasional visitor to my home, as I was to the home of his relatives. He lived at times with these relatives, and at others with strangers, and when in New York stayed at my house as the guest of his children, and for some time past he has been here attending to some business in connection with a property he has lately inherited. It has been with the entire consent of Col. Blood that he has visited as a friend at our house, and though it may shock sticklers for the conventionalities, I shall do what my conscience approves in this matter, regardless of popular clamor."

"This is my story in brief, but if you want to hear more of its details, and will call upon me at my residence, after business hours, I will be glad to furnish any further information that you may wish."

So ended our first interview with Mrs. Woodhull. We are so satisfied with the woman, and so convinced that she had been scandalously wronged by malicious stories, that we felt impelled to speak of the favorable impression she had made upon us to every other woman with whom we came in contact. A day or two after, upon repeating the story to a literary friend in New York, she asked, "Did Mrs. Woodhull tell you that she had deserted her husband at St. Louis and eloped with Colonel Blood, who left behind to starve or become dependent upon public charity, a wife and several helpless children; and did she say further that acting upon her own theory that love should be free from matrimonial fetters, she disdained legal ceremony, and has ever since been living in a state of concubinage with Col. Blood?" "No," we responded; "she did not tell us this, nor we do not believe it. Slandered and maligned as she has been by a venal press and knavish relatives, we believe her to be what her clear, true eyes proclaim her—a good woman—and this, too, in spite of her absurd theories as promulgated in her own paper and her injudicious cards published in other New York papers." We parted from our friend, resolved to call upon Mrs. Woodhull, repeat the story we had heard, and ask her if it had any foundation or truth.

So deciding, we visited her in the evening at her palatial residence, in Thirty-eighth street, east of Fifth avenue. The house was the most elegant of a very elegant block, and was furnished with the utmost magnificence. Upon entering the drawing-room, we found quite a number of guests, several of them distinguished in literary, military and business circles. We were made very welcome, Mrs. Woodhull receiving ourself and escort with the most flattering politeness. Both herself and Tennie were attired in a manner calculated to add to the attraction of the magnificent homestover which they presided. We speedily made known the purpose of our coming to see them.

Mrs. Woodhull, in reply to this story, said: "I did leave Dr. Woodhull at St. Louis, and after I had been divorced from him some two and a half years made the acquaintance of and married Col. Blood, who had also been divorced some years previously. I am legally married to my present husband and perfectly content with my condition as the wife of an educated, considerate and gentlemanly man."

"Why, then, being legally married," we inquired, "did you not assume the name of Blood?"

"Because, for one reason," she answered, "that I was known in business circles by the name of Woodhull, and for another because I did not care to have my sanguinary name made a target for the wit of smart newspaper reporters."

With Miss Tennie we had no conversation, she being too much engaged with entertaining other guests to give us the benefit of her company, and for this cause we obtained no definite impression regarding her.

We have given Mrs. Woodhull's story in substance, and as nearly in her own words as we can remember. We have taken pains to hear her refutation of the popular scandal because we desire every prominent woman of the country shall be given the same chance in the struggle for honorable distinction that is given to men, and this women cannot have unless their moral record is clear.

Because we have given our favorable impressions of Victoria C. Woodhull we do not desire to be considered as endorsing any of her theories regarding free divorce, free love, or temporary marriage. All these things were utterly repudiate and condemn, as do most of the prominent leaders in the Woman's Rights movement. The present editor of the *Revolution*, Miss Larned, declares that she would resign her position and ignore the woman question in toto rather than affiliate in any degree with women who hold the free love doctrines.

A CARD.

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