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Correspondents writing over assumed signatures must make known their names to the Editor, or no attention will be given to their communications.

Mount Shasta.

A POEM WRITTEN BY JOHN ROLLIN RIDGE IN 1852.

Behold the dread Mt. Shasta, where it stands Imperial midst the lesser heights, and, like Some mighty, unassum'd monarch, companionless And cold. The storms of Heaven may beat in wrath Against it, but it stands in unimpeded Grandeur still; and from the rolling mists up-heaves Its tower of pride even purer than before. The wintry showers and white-wind-whipped tempests leave The frozen tributaries on its brow, and it Both make of them an everlasting crown. Thus doth it, day by day and age by age, Doth each stroke of time: still rising higher Into Heaven!

ELLEN DOWD, THE FARMER'S WIFE.

PART SECOND.

(Entered according to the Act of Congress in the year 1873, by Mrs. A. J. Denney, in the office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington City.)

CHAPTER VIII.

As the heroine of our narrative had become a member of the fashionable world, her hours of quiet chat with particular friends were liable to constant interruption. Before the mystery surrounding Edgar Worth had become sufficiently unraveled to satisfy her intense desire to hear more, a concourse of other company appeared upon the scene, and her dark-eyed visitor took his leave, promising to return on the following afternoon. It seemed to Ellen that her feet had found themselves wings. Never before had birds sung so sweetly or the fine face of Nature looked so serenely bright. She flitted about among her guests like one inspired. Her children wondered at her animation, and had good reason to appreciate the bounteous love bestowed upon them. Another day folded its dead hours out of sight and crept back forever into the shades of the Departed; and again Ellen found herself at her favorite window. Her invalid charge glided into the room and silently sat down beside her. "My poor child," she said feelingly, "may the God of all justice grant that your last days may be better than your first, and that the darkness which clouded your bright young life may only be remembered in the days to come as a disordered dream."

were leading their strange existence on the D'Arcy estate, he had been away at school. His mother, bearing her maiden name of Brandon, for his sake, and aided by an ungenerous aversion to the old man, her husband, suffering the constant fear that she, though married, was not a wife, and that her idolized son, though born in wedlock, was illegitimate, had yielded to the intense strain upon her reason, and for years had been a lunatic. But now old man Worth, alias Killingsworth, was dead. The valuable D'Arcy homestead, which his cunning wiles had wrested from the possession of the weak grandfather whom political associates had ruined, had long before been sold, that he might glut his growing avarice upon the sight and sound of gold. He had immured his wife within the walls of a private asylum during one of her attacks of lunacy, and through all his remaining life gave her no opportunity for escape. The son, long grown to man's estate, saw his mother but seldom, and never, while his father lived, except in the presence of the matron of the asylum or her aids. Edgar Worth was unhappy. Some dark mystery surrounded his family. Of that he felt certain, but he could get no real clue to it; so, partly to quiet his constant apprehensions of evil, and partly to gratify his love for adventure, he had betaken himself to the busy West as soon as his college days were over, where he first met Ellen Dowd, and where he had acted as her juror in a most revolting case of legal inhumanity. He had studied for the ministry, and had been for years an active, zealous worker in the Church. During Ellen's stay in her Mississippi Valley home, after her awful trial had awakened her to a knowledge of herself, she had not met him except upon an occasion she longed to forget—a dismal day when he, as clergyman, had joined in legal marriage the author and abettor of so many of her woes with one who, though an unfortunate sufferer from the base deeds of man, was in her relations to Peter Dowd as guilty as herself. The ceremony being over, the dark-eyed stranger clergyman had gone, and Ellen had almost ceased to think of him. Life, she had found it, had had too many hard and practical realities to allow her time for romantic reveries, and if, in times past, the earnest eye that now thrilled her as they gazed into her own had possessed a hidden charm, she had as suddenly dispelled it. The mother of Edgar Worth, of whom she had been excessively fond, possessed that peculiar sagacity so common with the partially deranged. After having told her story, during the recital of which Ellen had stood dumb and bewildered, her wrinkled features broke into a meaning smile, and rising from her chair she said significantly: "Life is before you, children. It is behind me. You do not need my presence; neither do you desire it. I will go."

"But when will you go, my mother dear?" said Ellen quickly, while a bright blush mantled her beaming face. "You surely do not mean to leave my roof. Remember that my own mother died when I was born. I have never known a mother's love. Will you let me love you, and will you love me in return?" "Slaking her thin finger at her hostess, the woman answered: "Don't talk of love to me. 'Tis a sweet word, but I've lived three score years without it. You may love Edgar. Then I shall be satisfied. I see how things are going. Don't detain me. I will go!" "But I entreat you not to go," said Ellen earnestly. "There is room in my home and room in my heart. Abide with me and I will make your life a grand perpetual joy if act of mine can do it."

"Who said that I would leave your house, you silly, adobe-brained child? I am only going to my room to give my son and daughter an opportunity to settle their private affairs. Do you think I have lost my senses?" and laughing immoderately, she left the two alone. Gaining her chamber she threw herself upon the bed, and relapsing into silent reverie, lay quiet till the shades of evening settled over the house; then sinking into a peaceful slumber, in which Ellen many hours after found her serenely locked, she dreamed away the moments, while happy smiles played over her features and settled themselves in raptures around her firmly-closed mouth. Did seraphs hover near? For a few moments after his mother had left them, Edgar paced the room abstractedly, while Ellen sat in silence at the open window, gazing out upon the open lawn. The gorgeous clouds that had been hanging over the city, and dipping their dripping fringes into the shipping and the bay, had rolled themselves back and away into great mountains of sapphire, alabaster and pearl. The balmy sunshine had dried the rain drops from the shrubbery and lawn, and glistened now upon acacia blooms, and now again upon the fountain's silvery spray, around which singing birds flitted, and at whose base bright gold fish flashed in beauty. "Oh!" said Ellen, and her sudden exclamation arrested the abstracted walk of her companion, who turned, and seating himself beside her, said simply: "A penny for your thoughts."

"I was thinking, sir, that everything is happy except humanity. Look at that glorious landscape—how it rolls away into the dim distance, a thing of joy and beauty. Cooling streams flow from the hill sides; green trees flourish at their base; the cattle upon a thousand distant hills luxuriate in bounty and blessings; birds sing, flowers bloom, grasses grow, fruit trees yield their riches in their season, and amid all Nature's works man, only man is miserable. Do you think it was the design of the great Architect of all things to thus mar the happiness of sentient beings like ourselves?" "You ask leading questions, but I will try to answer them. That there is much more of misery than joy upon the earth among men and women I know to my own sorrow. But I am satisfied that this condition is not normal or necessary. Humanity chains itself to the dead customs of the past, foolishly presuming that those who lived before were wiser than the children of the present. Society sets itself up as a censor over everybody. Individual freedom is lost sight of. Everybody attends to the business affairs of everybody else. There is no such thing in practice as personal sovereignty."

"But do you think the world is ready for the idea that each should be a law unto himself? I, for one, can testify, and I believe you can bear me witness, that in more than one instance men who have acted thus were wholly unworthy of their power."

"The trouble is, my dear Ellen," taking her hand in the most natural way imaginable; "the trouble is, that as our laws and customs now are, none but bad, unscrupulous men and women will do exactly as they desire. The censorship of society, or the wish—often too intense—to avoid what a morbid, self-righteous, sin-steeped world calls the 'appearance of evil,' leads thousands yearly in the track which they feel was never made for them, and while they secretly long to work out ways for themselves, dare not do so because they have not moral courage sufficient to run the gauntlet of public misrepresentation."

"You are right," said Ellen heartily. "I knew years and years before I left the roof which my own toil had helped to rear to shelter Peter Dowd that God had never joined us; that our life was a mockery of the holy institution of marriage, and that the numerous children of our unlovely union were naturally rebellious and inharmonious, when they should have been happy-hearted, physically strong and mentally gifted; but I was driven to desperation before I could gain the moral courage to resolve to be just to myself, that I might thus have power to be just to others."