

CAPTAIN GRAY'S COMPANY;

Crossing the Plains and Living in Oregon.

By Mrs. A. J. DUNWAY, AUTHOR OF "JUDITH REED," "ELLEN DOWD," "AMIE AND HENRY LEE," "THE HAPPY HOME," ETC., ETC., ETC.

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Introduction.

Very nearly twenty years ago the author of the following story, having always lived upon a farm, and being wholly ignorant of all practical knowledge of the literary world, her associations confined to the illiterate and struggling pioneers of our State and Territory, conceived the idea of entering in some way the world's arena of letters.

Dedication.

To the Pioneers of Oregon, and to all friends of the great Northwest who desire to awaken an interest in our State and Territory.

CHAPTER XVIII. 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 suddenly heard footsteps upon the pavement. Herbert had arisen with the larks, and walked at a rapid pace through the city, trying to calm his nervous agitation, which he considered foolish.

"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.

"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 retraction is impossible.

"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 she proceeded to the academy.

"You were in Mrs. Card's saloon 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."

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interested in them and their amiable mother."

"Her 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 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 forever—yet the reflection of by-gones radiates around me, and seems to grow brighter every passing day.

"You are doing right, my dear. The only thing in which you are to blame is that you did not tell Henry from the first, of your early fancy."

"I intended to tell him, but neglected to speak of it at the proper time, and after we were engaged, thought it useless."

"Learn from this experience never to keep from your lover things that you would not wish him to learn as your husband. You saw, or thought you saw, in Henry Warren a man whom you could love and honor. Had you informed him of your early attachment no jealousy would have been awakened in his breast, had he really been worthy of your regard; 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.

"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 for this country I became acquainted with Mrs. Mays, a sister of my uncle, to whose kindly regard I owe all that I am or ever may be that is good and true.

"I am the dearest sister mortal ever had." "You're a successful flatterer. I believe I am the dearest sister you ever had, if I do admit it myself."

"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 to 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.

being living, but whether he is or not the Infinite knoweth."

"Do you believe that persons who truly love in life, and have perfect affluities 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.

"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 had saturated their cloaks and hoods, making fine fun for a few, and grumbling discontent for many.

"Why, sister! You must entertain a very uncharitable opinion of our press. I am certain that the American public are generally very lenient toward youthful writers."

"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."

"I have the kaleidoscope that enables me to see these things in your future. Haven't I told you 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 think its realization is very uncertain."

"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. Toole's. Here, lay your head on the sofa pillow, and I'll try my powers of mesmerism upon you. Igness the magnet in my fingers—as Dr. Muse calls it—can drive or allure the pain away."

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Maurice Stanton and listened to his songs could doubt his hand and head-work in that production."

"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 publish 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 care for criticism. One thing certain, her writings will all be of a moral nature."

"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 non 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-finders 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 the first efforts of youthful genius; their bitings being the more bitter because they have a remembrance of how and where they started."

"You've turned your tune since you warned me against a certain 'precarious enterprise' a moment ago. I should consider you very fickle, from your remarks, if I couldn't account for it by your being in love."

"The life of an authoress, though fascinating in its very excitement 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."

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"Miss Martha Martin? The prim young lady we saw in Platte River valley, whose friend was dying, and whose clothing looked so spotlessly plain 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 an attempt at an affectionate smile, which, though it played around the mouth, did not reach the eyes.

"She merely stated in her 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.

"She shall never know that I regret the turn matters have taken," he exclaimed, and returned Florence's letter immediately, enclosing the following note: "MISS WILLARD—I am sincerely obliged to you for wishing 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."

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 on 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 toward Florence's seat, saying in an undertone, "I will this time omit one of my strictures, and permit you to retire to the library, where you can read your note unobserved, without waiting till the school closes."

Her tone and look 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 of making a confidant of one's teacher," she thought, as she bowed a respectful "thank you," and left the 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 unsuspecting 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 motion 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.

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 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 rainy 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."

"The ball 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 I have broken my resolution under the very first temptation."

A maiden who had retired to the solitude of her chamber in a flood of expectant happiness, and a young man who walked the deserted streets toward 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. [To be continued.]

Slurs on Women. At a recent dinner in New York, at which no ladies were present, a man, in responding to a toast on "Women," dwelt almost solely on the frailty of the sex, claiming that the best among them were little better than the worst, the chief difference being in the surroundings.

At the conclusion of his remarks, a gentleman present arose to his feet and said: "I trust the gentleman, in the application of his remarks, refers to his own mothers and sisters, and not to ours."

The effect of this most just and timely rebuke was overwhelming, and the maligner of women was covered with confusion and shame. This incident serves an excellent purpose in prefacing a few words which we have for a long time had it in our mind to say.

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

MAY I? SHALL I? WILL YOU?

May I wait you a poem, my darling, From over the sea, moaning and wailing, As I toss the night lone on my pillow, In my lone hammock under the willow, My lullaby sung by the billow, As it chumeth the hymn of the free?

Shall I tell you I'm lonely, my darling, While the night-bird croaks a lay That thrills me with thoughts of caresses, Of a love that even absence impresses? With a rapture that quickens and blesses The hours that wait for the day?

May I whisper "I love thee," my darling, As I list to the moan, moaning waves, While the night-winds in frenzy are shrieking, And the burnt pines are dolefully creaking, And the surf its keen vengeance is wreaking On the rocks it remorselessly laves?

Will you come in the autumn, my darling? Will you join me out here on the sea? While the heavens above us are bending, And the stars like moonlight are blending, And the surf our trust is defending, Will you surfer a sweet tryal with me? August, 1855. A. J. D.

Tramps. "Goodness mercy!" exclaimed my friend, Mrs. Flareup, "what a fever is to be done with these tramps? They are a greater nuisance than the Woman Suffragists, and they are bad enough; but these tramps, they are at our back doors and front doors, on our porches and in our wood sheds, in our barns, in our stables, and always sticking out their dirty, idle hands begging for cold victuals, old clothes or money, morning, noon, and night, as if it were the business of us widows to keep free boarding-houses and old clothes stores for their laziness and profligacy. I can hardly get my own coffee poured out in the morning before I am called upon to heed their wants—the big, strong, impenetrable beggars. If I had my way, I'd have every one of them shut in the poor-house. I'd teach them to tramp to some effect."

"My dear Mrs. Flareup, why don't you have your way? These tramps do get their rounds, averaging two or three a day, are men; and I hear all the men complaining of scarcity of help—why don't you women join together and use your powers of persuasion to some purpose to abate this nuisance? They say women rule."

"Rule? I should think they did! Rule? Haven't I been talking and persuading for years about this thing, and the licensed dram-shops that help along all the trouble? And what good has come of it? Everything gets worse and worse, and I don't see any help for it."

"If all women could vote, do you think—?" "Oh, nonsense! Don't talk to me of women's voting; what good could that do? There are as many bad women as bad men; and the more bad we have at the political pump, the worse things will be."

"Are there as many women tramps as men?" "No, indeed; not one to ten, thank goodness!" "As many women drunkards as men?" "Of course not; the world would come to an end if there was."

"Do you not really think, Mrs. Flareup, that there are more good, virtuous women in every community, who would vote for good morals and good habits, than there are bad ones?" "Well, yes; but what then? That would not put the tramps in the work-house, or keep them off the streets?" "I'm not so sure about that. Bishop Haven says that 'only two-fifths of the legal voters stand on the side of temperance and good morals' in the United States, while four-fifths of the women would be counted on, always and everywhere, as the advocates of peace, sobriety, chastity, and all things good, so far as they know."

"Now, suppose all women had the right of suffrage, and the four-fifths of good women joined forces with the two-fifths of good men. Don't you see goodness would be in the majority? and in spite of the three-fifths majority of bad men, and one-fifth of bad women, we might hope for better things?" "Well, yes. It does look that way. But what has all that to do with tramps?"

"Only this: There is scarce a tramp in the nation but can vote, if he chooses to take the proper means to qualify himself. And there are said to be fifty thousand of them (and probably there are ten times that number) standing ready to sell their votes to the whisky party whenever occasions offer, while you and I, who labor and strive all the years, as best we know, to raise our sons and daughters as good citizens, have no power to preserve ourselves or society against this army of evil, only our influence, which you have declared is of no avail."

"You would, if you could, shut all the tramps out of the poor-house. You would make them in a few months legal voters, for every demagogue to use for his purpose on election days, to counteract all your efforts of reform, if he chooses so to do. And thus the lowest, vilest, most ignorant, can be made tools to destroy the work of the best and truest hearts of the nation. For any man citizen who is not an alien, idiot, lunatic or felon, may be taken out of these asylums called poor-houses, where your taxes and mine help support them, to vote for liquor-saloon and licensed brothels, or any other madness that our depraved civilization chooses to demand."