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CAPTAIN GRAY'S COMPANY; OR— Crossing the Plains and Living in Oregon.

By Mrs. A. J. DUNWAY. AUTHOR OF "SOUTH BIRD," "ELLEN DOW," "AMIE AND HENRY," "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 possessed of all practical knowledge of the literary world, her associations confined to the illiterate and struggling pioneers of the land of her adoption, 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 Washington Territory in the minds of the thousands of dwellers in the frigid climate of Eastern winters and the torrid temperature of Eastern summers, this revised recollection of the reminiscences of her youth is respectfully dedicated.

CHAPTER XXI. THE DOUBLE WEDDING.

Hubert Munson determined to live the life of a farmer. His father was horrified at this determination, and did everything in his power to induce him to follow his profession.

"Why, father, there's more lawyers in the country now than there are cases to be tried. The whole territory is over-run with them."

"But you surely would not stoop to a plebeian vocation?"

"Farming is the most honorable employment in the world. What do I care, if snobs think differently? Have you read Frank Soule's poem upon labor? California's poet speaks my sentiments."

"I have not seen it."

"Here it is," pulling a journal from his pocket, and handing it to his father, who read it over aloud with a satisfied air, which was a greater eulogium upon its merit than are the high-sounding praises that most persons are wont to bestow upon genius.

"It will do, my son; still I must own that I am disappointed. Your bride elect will honor you in any station, by her sense, accomplishments and beauty, and a farm is not the place for her."

This was the first praise that Hubert had heard his father lavish upon his beloved since his return, and a tear of emotion glistened in his eye.

"She desires to live upon a farm, near her brother and Floy, and if Herbert Goodwin can be a farmer, Hubert Munson is not too good to follow the same vocation. He says that folks have often told him that he'd make a mark in the world, and he's going to do it in the shape of furrows."

"Well, it's of no use to argue the point with you, and I hope you'll succeed in what you design to undertake."

"Thank you, dear father; I hope yet to be a man worthy of the name."

In compliance with the request of their friends, Effie and Florence agreed that the double wedding should take place at the house of Maurice Stanton, upon the first day of October. This lovely country seat was now furnished and neatly fitted up throughout. As an example of what diligence and economy may do in a new country, we will notice his success in seven years of toil and pleasure. He had lived in accordance with his principle, that none need be discontented because his ambition is clogged by poverty. He began with almost nothing, but instead of not allowing himself to live while preparing himself a comfortable home for the future, he "lived all the time."

While many who began with better prospects than himself, but were not content to work and wait, spent the same number of years in constant anxiety and toil, always "oving from 'post to pillar,'" and engaging in this scheme and that, prospered slowly or not at all, he grew up with the country. These migratory, scheming persons cannot live; they exist, it is true, but so fluctuating is their business, and so futile many of their speculations, that wholesome quietude is something unknown or unexpected, at least with certainty. But to return to the wedding.

It was evening. A gay company of happy persons, young and old, were assembled in Ada's pleasant and ample parlor. Conspicuous among the most honored guests were Farmer Gray's folks, Daddy Green's family, and Sam Green, with his wife and numerous progeny. Herbert said that they were too kind to his mother, when she needed their help, for him to neglect them, even if they were coarse and unrefined. The contrast between them and a few chosen aristocratic guests from the cities was amusing, but Maurice, Ada and the brides and groom-

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elect did not appear to discern the difference. The hostess introduced them to her most distinguished guests, told how they became acquainted, and caressed Polly's awkward, sun-burnt, tow-headed children, as though their clothing were muslin and embroidery, instead of blue-drilling and calico.

"Mrs. Stanton exhibits shocking bad taste!" said Mrs. Warren, whom we recognize as Augusta Morton.

She had caught Florence's discarded lover, and this was the commencement of a wedding excursion from Portland to Corvallis.

George Danvers, with whom we also became slightly acquainted at Mrs. Card's soiree, was present with his bride, Delphine Howard that was, who looked upon the rustic company with a curling underlip. They were not invited guests, but had made it convenient to be at Valley Brook upon the wedding occasion, perhaps, from prying curiosity.

"When I saw Mrs. Stanton at Oregon City last summer I didn't think she had such neighbors as these. I should think she'd be ashamed of them! She knows we never associate with such folks," said the amiable Mrs. Warren.

"Oh, she's as independent as Herbert and his sister, or Eliza Crandall. I believe Floy Willard is just such a creature, as great a lady as she must consider herself to be. By the way, do you know that Eliza is going to be married?"

I hear that Hugh Waters is paying particular attention to her," replied Mrs. Danvers.

"Pshaw! he won't have her! He's a gentleman, but she is many removes from a lady."

"Hush! we'll attract listeners. We don't know what kind of company we're in."

A stir was occasioned by the arrival of the minister, who entered the front parlor with pleasant smiles and agreeable words for all. Folding-doors that communicated with a richly furnished boudoir were thrown open, and the brides elect appeared, looking like spirits from cloud-land, and leaning upon the arms of their noble-looking suitors. Fanny Waters and Eliza Crandall were the bridesmaids, and Hugh Waters and George Crandall, a brother of Eliza, lately returned from California, were the chosen groomsmen. Dresses of white gauze, and wreaths of orange flowers, draped the exquisite forms of the brides with aerial loveliness. Mrs. Gray thought it was "mighty extravagant, but as they didn't owe nuthin'," she guessed it wasn't nobody's business."

The bystanders scarcely breathed during the short, doubly-spoken ceremony; and the prayer, so appropriate, so touching, caused the tears to fall from many eyes. If Herbert looked noble, as he held the hand of his beautiful, marble-faced bride, Hubert looked none the less so, as he gazed upon the glowing cheeks of his chosen one.

The wedding banquet, being a novelty in its way, should not be overlooked. Instead of a vast amount of enticing and indigestible knick-knacks, a well-filled board of healthy food was presented without apology or comment, to the wondering guests. Fruits of the most delicious kinds, both wild and tame, so common in the territory, were prepared in a manner that reflected great credit upon Mrs. Stanton's culinary skill; while choice viands of many descriptions, which she knew contained no unhealthy ingredients, were bountifully provided.

The evening, which gave promise of being so pleasant, was taking its departure in a driving rain. Those who lived within six or eight miles of the mansion had expected to return home, but the storm beat pitiously against the windows and howled through the now almost denuded branches of the kingly oaks, warning them to stay in doors and wait for its fury to abate. Music, repartee, conversation respecting gold mines, farming, stock, race-horses, high-schools, the weather, the grass, the fern, the fir timber, new buildings and politics, were the amusements until late. The rain had ceased to fall in torrents, and a fine, driving mist filled the air, and a "darkness that could be felt," obscured the nearest objects. Going home was impossible, and there were not sleeping accommodations enough in the house for others than the many who had come from a distance. Maurice was at a loss, but Ada's quick wit soon drove away his perplexity.

"I can manage this dilemma to a nicety, Maurice. The barn is full of sweet hay, upon which the men can sleep, and I can make family beds over the carpets for the ladies and children."

"It takes a woman to make the best of an emergency. This is the very thing. Come, gentlemen, there are not more than twenty of you; I can stow you away in the hay as snugly as mice."

And he lighted a lantern, buttoned a great-coat under his chin, and led the van of retreating sleep-hunters.

The men in the barn had an inspiring time. Every country Oregonian carries a blanket, and, in case of an unexpected bivouac, his Spanish saddle serves as a pillow. A man who cannot sleep comfortably when thus equipped is laughed at more than pitied. The men from the cities were pleased with the novelty of a "sleep in the hay," and a blanket from Ada's ample store for each one of them was bed-clothing

sufficient for the occasion. Mrs. Gray was sorely troubled. "Nobody ever heard of a wedding on a stormy night that turned out well, and she was mighty 'fraid there was other storms a-brewin'."

"Don't be alarmed, Mrs. Gray; there'll be no storms that won't blow over; I'll guarantee that," said Eliza.

The morning, pleasant and clear, dawned before much sleep was thought of. Choice leavings from the nuptial banquet were reserved for breakfast, and the clock pointed suggestively to the farmers' dinner hour, before the "Bounding Elk" was hailed by Warren and Danvers, who, with their brides, took a formal leave of the newly-married pairs, promising to call upon their return from "up the country."

"Well," said Farmer Gray, "I guess we've troubled ye long enough. Sally, the Durhams."

"Do you still work oxen, Farmer ye'd as well git ready while I yoke up Gray?" Effie asked.

"Of course I do. D'y'e s'pose I'd have horses here, when I never had none in Suckerdom? The roads in my burg ain't fit for horse-wagons, no how. If the old woman can't ride behind my steers, she can walk, or stay at home."

"You could afford to purchase horses, couldn't you?"

"I reckon I can afford it. I sold six thousand dollars' worth of apples a month ago, an' didn't owe a cent before that."

"Have you buried the money?" Effie asked involuntarily. She looked in amazement at his coarse coat, cow-hide boots and home-made straw hat, and then glanced at the garb of his wife, who was attired to suit her idea of economy, in a dark delaine dress and checked gingham apron.

"Don't accuse me of burying money! I bought another section o' land for me an' Sam, an' two thousand dollars worth o' cattle."

"Have you built a new house?"

"Well, I have. It's a better house than I had in Illinois. The logs is hewed, an' there is mud in the cracks. I lined it inside and out with shaved cedar lumber. But I shan't tell ye any more about it. Ye can come an' see for yourself how we're a swimmin', for I tell ye, hard times is over with us."

"I guess we will call and see you the day after to-morrow. We are going to see my new sister's uncle, and can go by your house."

"That's all right. We won't be at home afore to-morrow evening, but Sally'll have lots o' good fodder fixed up afore you get there."

Polly joined in urging them to visit her, and they were all soon homeward bound, Sam, Polly and the children riding in the wagon with their parents and Charlie Graves, while Daddy Green's folks galloped ahead on horse-back.

"Well," said Hubert, watching the slowly retreating wagon, "I do wonder what that man wants with so much land. Twelve hundred and eighty acres, and anxious to get more."

"Land will be worth ten times its present value in Oregon, before many years," said Ada.

"Yes, when he's under the sod, and his heirs are quarreling over it. I'm going to see how I can make my farm of one hundred and sixty acres appear and pay."

"Effie, are you going to live upon a farm?" said Maurice.

"That is my intention. Mr. Munson thinks he'll like to live upon a farm near brother and Floy."

"I am not going to let them go away, Mr. Stanton. They must live with us until their house is done. This little lily of the valley shall not be transplanted to a mountain top," said Florence, twining her fingers in her sister's glossy hair.

"You speak in riddles, dear Florence."

"Which I can easily solve, sister. We are going to keep you in your native element. You are delicate now, and will not thrive in the city, where you can't smell wild-wood flowers and romp over grassy meadows."

"What have you to say about it, Hubert?"

"I agree to their plans; I hate to be a drone in society, and I am going to town. Unlike Farmer Gray, I think more of my eye than my pocket, but I believe if Stanton can get along so well as a farmer, my pockets won't suffer either, for I think I am about as clever as he is. Come, Mr. Stanton, and tell us the secret of your success. Effie tells me that you began seven years ago without friends or money. Now you have a healthy wife, so uncommon a sight in these days, beautiful children, and everything around you that heart can wish."

"My wife has done the work of two or three women in the time you speak of. The simple reason why she stands it so well, is because she never works unless she is able to do so. The most useful machine on a farm should certainly be kept in repair. If she gets a little sick, I put her on a horse and turn her out in the hills, doing the housework myself until she gets well. It's all nonsense that the man hasn't the time to do so, which is the common excuse. Such men find time to bury their wives, and to hunt others when they die."

"Hubert, you and I must take pattern after them in our new relations. I hope

many years will pass away before my Floy's animation leaves her. I'll do what I can to make her life a pleasant one."

"I hope, Herbert, that your regard for my welfare will not exceed mine for yours."

"If you don't take good care of my brother, Floy, you and I will quarrel as Mrs. Gray and Mrs. Green used to."

"What shall I say to you about taking care of my worthy cousin, you saucy sprite?"

"I'll give you liberty to scold me whenever you think I need it, Floy."

"I'll remember that; but don't you think that George Crandall and Fanny Waters are on the high road to matrimony?"

"There'll be a double swapping of brothers and sisters at Portland and Oregon City, before long."

"Come, ladies," said Herbert rising, "Tom is out here with the horses, and we can have a ride."

Oregon ladies are generally practiced equestrians. Ada left her children with her father-in-law, and was as free as the rest. Effie was mounted first.

"Good-bye, Hubert!" and waving her pocket-handkerchief, her graceful steed bounded away.

"You can't leave me," said Ada, with a peculiar chuck to Flaxy, who, though getting old in years, was as young in spirit as his mistress. In high glee she darted past the company, and was soon waving her handkerchief in Rocker's eyes, who exerted himself to do double duty, not fancying Flaxy's near approach, and for fifteen minutes the almost even race continued. At length, the road left the prairie, taking a course through a dense fir forest. They did not wish to get lost between their would-be escorts, and reined up the horses to wait for them.

"Here they are! Why, ladies, what circus have you left?" said Hubert, as he came up, in admiration of Effie's skill in horsemanship.

"The circus of the prairies, at your service, air," she replied, pointing to the plain through which they had almost flown. "Where's Herbert and Floy?"

"Here they all come," said Ada. "Which way shall we go, Maurice?"

"If we follow the road through the timber, it will lead us to an exposed mountain side, where we will have a view that will repay us for the trouble."

Their progress through the timber was necessarily slow. They rode more than an hour before they reached the mountain's base, and the ascent was somewhat difficult. When they reached the table-land to which Maurice had guided them, the sky had become so completely overcast with clouds, that the view of distant mountains they had hoped to get, was obscured. A hard shower came, however, to the rescue, and when its half hour's work was done, the heaviest cloud bore away to the east, leaving gorgeous piles of dark, purple and golden ones, boiling up majestically in the sun-illumined west. Herbert, who, as the reader has already seen, had a great taste for repeating poetry, drew Florence to his side, under a sheltering fir, and repeated, dramatically:

"Land of the forest and the rock,
Of dark ravine and rolling river,
Of mountains reared on high to mock
The storm's career and lightning's shock,
My own green land forever."

Florence replied:

"Oh give me back my native hills,
My daisied meads and troubled rills,
And groves of pine.
Oh, give me too, the mountain air,
My youthful days without a care,
When rose for me a mother's prayer,
In tones divine."

"You have the 'mountain air,' 'daisied meads,' 'troubled rills,' and 'groves of pine,' in Oregon, dearie. But the days are gone, and your mother's freckle, you cannot recall, here or elsewhere. Do you really desire to go back to your native home?"

"Not now. I love somebody better now than my native land, but I have wished that vain wish a thousand times."

But where was Effie? She had taken a small book from Hubert's pocket, and while the others were talking of the storm, she was writing of it while sitting upon a rock by Hubert's side, sheltered by an overjetting cliff. Maurice and Ada were standing a little apart from them, watching the changing clouds and diversified scenery, in sympathetic love of the beautiful.

"Well! well!" said Hubert. "Here is a married pair who have had opportunities to quarrel every day for more than six years, and the honeymoon hasn't waned yet!"

"Yes," said Ada, "we are happy. We have tolled together for our daily bread; have known parents' solicitude for precious little ones; have lived in adversity and prosperity, and have never had an angry dispute. We have a pleasant past to contemplate, and look forward to the future with as much pleasant anticipation as you do. This is putting a bright face upon matrimonial life, but where folks are properly mated, it's a true one."

"You can prove all this by me," said Maurice, with a smile.

"Effie, what are you writing?"

Ada had just discovered what she was doing.

Lo, o'er the mighty mountain top,
O'er rolling plain and towering tree,
O'er crags, arctic, 'domes of rock.'
"Over air and earth, and sky and sea,"
The storm-god moves apace.
How hushed and still is Nature's pulse,
How bird and beast, and leaf and flower,
As though they dread the wind's outburst,
All bow their heads in this grand hour,
Before the dark cloud's face.

The storm-car rolls with greater speed,
The lightning flashes rend the air,
And I, with awe and pleasure heed
What many watch in fell despair,
As they with quailing eyes
Watch the grand looming of these piles
Of ice-caps, amber, black, and gold,
And purple tints arranged in files,
Shaped in Dame Nature's choicest mould,
"Beneath the arching skies."

"Let me look at that, if you please."

Maurice glanced at the composition a few moments, and then read it aloud.

"That will do, beauty. I see by the quotations, that you don't claim credit for what is not your own. Why don't you sometimes get your poems printed?"

"Because I dread it. The most peaceful way to live is to keep out of the newspapers."

"Sister, it seems to me that the good Book says, 'Let your light shine.'"

"Somebody would blow it out if I should."

"You'd have that risk to run."

"But I shan't run it. I write, for I cannot help it, but my verses shall not be published while I live, unless I write without a signature, for the 'Oregon Magazine.'"

"Well," said Ada, "it is time to start home. Flora and Henry will think the time long;" and sitting the action to the word, she mounted Flaxy, who was champing the bit in his eagerness to go.

They called upon Mrs. Welden, as they returned. She was sitting in the parlor engaged in sewing, while Celia was reading aloud from a new publication, in which mother and daughter were alike interested.

"Oh, Meggie," said Ada, as she alighted, "you ought to have gone with us. We were in a most refreshing storm, and after that was over, the splendid view of gorgeous clouds, snow-crowned mountains, and wide-spread valleys and forests, was most enchanting."

"I should have gone, but I have lonely freaks, when company is almost intolerable. Such a spell crossed me to-day, and I felt that I could not enjoy the excursion."

"You mustn't be unhappy, Meggie."

"I am far from that; but I am sometimes a little dull."

Howard had built the kitchen fire, and Mrs. Welden arose to prepare tea.

"No, don't think of such a thing. Father and the children will be looking for us. I told the children that I would be at home before tea, and I never break a promise with them."

Some refreshments in the form of apples, pie, and cake could not be refused, and after a half-hour's pleasant chat, the equestrians took their departure.

"This country is an excellent place for poor folks, if they have thrift enough to manage anywhere," said Herbert, when commenting upon the widow's success.

"Why don't she get married, Mrs. Stanton? She is beautiful, accomplished, and good. It's strange that some lucky customer hasn't carried off the prize before now," Hubert remarked thoughtfully.

"She doesn't remain single from want of opportunities to marry. Her union with her husband was rather unhappy, until the last month of his life, and she looks forward to a future meeting, saying they will understand each other in Paradise. Whether her theory is correct or not, I do not pretend to say, but she is conscientious in it, and that, I suppose, is sufficient."

"I know a man who would just suit her," observed Herbert.

"Let a newly-married man alone for making matches," laughed Maurice.

[To be continued.]

Cannot Afford to Marry.

There are 25,000 young men in Chicago who cannot afford to marry—that is, they cannot afford to marry the average city girl, with her passion for dress and bonnets and jewelry. That is what they say. Possibly a frank consultation between the two would pave the way to explanation and satisfactory arrangements; but how to have such consultation? There's the rub. Because there is not a particle of doubt that the thousands of girls and of least a goodly number of young men would be willing to make some personal sacrifices to attain marriage. Thus, if they could only frankly approach the subject, Henry might say to Amelia:

"It's too bad; but the fact is, a young man cannot afford a wife now-a-days."

Amelia would very likely respond: "I can't see why they cannot as well afford them now as a few years ago; and they used to get married, you must admit."

And Henry rejoins: "Women are so expensive now. That's the trouble. I look at it. I get \$1,200 a year. Now, how the deuce can I support a wife on \$1,200? Why, it costs me all that to live myself."

"But see how you live," responds Amelia.

"Not extravagantly," says Henry. "I pay \$8 a week for board; that's—let me see—eight times two are sixteen; eight times five are forty, and one is forty-one—four hundred and sixteen dollars a year."

"Which leaves you," interrupts Amelia, "with a year. Now, what on earth do you do with the remainder?"

"Well," says Henry, "there are my clothes—and—and—"

"Cigars," adds Amelia.

"Yes, and buggy-rides."

"And drinks."

"Ah—tut—hardly ever anything of that kind, you know," says Henry.

"Well, I hope not. But what do you do with the money otherwise? A man's clothes don't cost him much."

"Don't they?" exclaims Henry. "You just try it."

"Well," says Amelia, "how much now?"

"Well," says the young man, thoughtfully, "there's an everyday suit for winter, say \$30. There's a dress suit for parties and the opera, say \$75. There's two suits for summer and fall and spring, \$80. There are hats, caps, gloves, hosiery, etc., \$40; boots and shoes, \$35; and—well, how much is that?"

"Two hundred and ninety dollars," says the ready Amelia.

"Say three hundred," responds Henry. "Very well; that leaves \$494. What do you do with the rest?"

"Well, there's car-fare, say \$50."

"Yes."

"Theater tickets, \$100."

"Yes."

"And—well, let me see—church donations, say \$25."

"Yes, we'll say \$25. Well."

"Carriage hire, \$80."

"Well."

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Women Are Not Protected.

Recently the community was startled by the claim of a young lady to a certain man as being the father of her child, when some comrade of his, to screen his friend, swore that he had participated in the affair. The same community is again shocked with the tidings that another young lady has been seduced, and has fallen a victim to this hopeful number two, who also refuses to marry her, making a similar charge against her.

Now, while society and the law screen these apologies for men, society and the law set their seal of denunciation upon the victims of such villains. And so long as men, shielded by the law, can thus play into each other's hands, bidding defiance to woman, so long it is cowardice in her if she does not join hands with others and rise up against such injustice, arming with a six-shooter, even, if driven to that emergency. Give us the noonday "tramp" and the midnight assassin rather than such legalized villainy. These have not the power to spread a disgrace in our pathway, which a respectably worse than the serpent's sting, pestilence, famine, or sword.

While woman is compelled to pay, either directly or indirectly, for the protection she is presumed to receive, she never been consulted about the protection that her necessities require. She has, indeed, she has always been treated legally as though the only protection she needed was on man's account; just enough of this to keep her in working order for his varied purposes as "an help-meat for him."

Objections are made to woman's demand for protection as tending to "free love." But this demand is farthest from it possible. While matters remain as now, an unprincipled man who has brought ruin upon a woman's household from an unmarried man proceed from house to house. But recently the last son died of a man who had three victims, at one time, on the hands of the community, all of whom he had engaged to marry. But the law had held him as if it should, married to the first, it would have saved him from disgracing himself; or else would have consigned him to the punishment of a bigamist.

This would not be a very desirable liability to dog his footsteps; yet it should be attached to every legally married man who should proceed to offer the evil disposed, who can never be restrained except through some stringent measure which the well-being of society demands.

No law was ever too sacred to be improved by man's or woman's hands; else statute law would never have been inaugurated because a natural law preceded it in all things, which can not be blotted out; so it is possible for man, if he have his wife about him, to improve upon "God, there's car-fare, say \$50."

"Theater tickets, \$100."

"Yes."

"And—well, let me see—church donations, say \$25."

"Yes, we'll say \$25. Well."

"Carriage hire, \$80."

"Well."

"Cigars! I am pretty moderate there—say \$100. How much does the total amount to now?"

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