

AN OLD LETTER.

I found an old letter, long-lost, to-day;  
The ink is faded, the words are few,  
But they speak to my empty heart, and say:  
"One love in your life was deep and true!"  
And far away from this quiet room,  
Away from this working-day world of ours,  
My soul flies out through the twilight gloom  
To a land of temples and palms and flowers.

Once more I am watching the minarets shine  
In the last rich glow of a tropic sun;  
Once more I am clasping his hand in mine,  
When the sultry hours of day are done;  
The air is full of the balmy scent  
Of Orient blossom and shadowy tree,  
And I muse and rest in a still content  
On the heart that ever was fond to me.

Is but a dream that is far too fair!  
The voice is silent, the rich light dies;  
I am here in the dim old London square,  
He sleeps in peace beneath Indian skies;  
And I fold the letter and meekly pray  
For strength to suffer my life-long pain,  
Till I come at last to the quiet way  
That shall lead me home to my love again.

WILLOW GRANGE.

A STORY OF LIFE IN EASTERN OREGON.

BY BELLE W. COOKE.

AUTHOR OF "TEARS AND VICTORY."

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CHAPTER V.

The pleasure party was divided on its arrival at The Dalles. Some stopped at hotels, and some went to the houses of friends who were awaiting them.

The bride and her attendants were at a hotel, and, after supper, which was served at the very American hour of six, they procured a carriage and rode out on the hills back of the town for a view of the magnificent scenery. After ascending for several miles the smooth steep hills, they came out on the top of a range, where the whole country to the south for from fifty to seventy-five miles and west to the summit of the Cascades could be overlooked. Toward the south not a tree was visible. Smooth, rolling hills rose, one after another, covered with brown and yellow grasses, each top leveled off as though a huge flat-iron had been passed over it.

"Down there, toward the south," said Earle, "is Tygh Valley, a wild and picturesque nook in the foot-hills of the Cascades, inhabited by wilder people, many of them half-breed Indians. They will be our distant neighbors."

"Why," said Bertha, "I thought that your place was a hundred or two miles from there?"

"And so it is," said Earle; "but when one's nearest neighbor is twenty-five miles away, a hundred miles is not out of one's neighborhood."

"Is that not a cheerful prospect?" said Anice. "I am sure I am glad it is not I who is going into exile in this barren, forsaken-looking country. I could not endure to leave the luxuriant groves of the Willamette Valley to live in this treeless region."

"But it is not totally treeless," said Earle. "Down in the little hollows by the springs, and on the borders of the streams, there is willow and cottonwood, and occasionally alder; and in some locations there is quite a growth of juniper. And then, you do not know how their rarity enhances their beauty and value."

"I presume," said Anice, "that it is the same way with the neighbors. I do not know but it would pay one to live in such a country, after all, in added appreciation."

"Oh, we shall soon have neighbors," said Earle. "The country is fast settling up. Over in Antelope Valley there is a very nice family, lately come in, and I heard there was a German family settled on Willow Creek, only a few miles above us."

"I hope they will be good neighbors," said Bertha.

"You will appreciate them for all they are worth," said Anice, "before you have been there a year. But you had better rub up your knowledge of German, unless they have become well used to the English language, for I do think the Germans can outdo any other foreigners in mixing up their talk."

"Oh, I can understand almost anything," said Bertha. "You know I understand the Indians and the Chinese, when they can talk but little, far better than many do. Mother always has me come to interpret for her whenever they are about. As for the scenery, I think it is beautiful. One has such a sense of freedom, the country looks so large and open; and there we shall have so much more sunshine than we do in the Willamette Valley. I like sunshine."

"I see you are determined to be pleased with all of it," said Anice; "and I hope you will, I am sure, since it is to be your home."

As the little company turned to go back, they had a grand view of Mt. Adams on the one hand and Mt. Hood on the other, each tipped with the gold of the sunset's glory, which was soon changed to the hue of the rose-leaf, and glowed and faded as they rode along the crest of the hill, till just as they began to lose sight of the peaks, a thin, misty veil of blue crept up and over them, and seemed to fold them away for the night in a filmy covering.

Early the next morning the pleasure party started on their return trip, and the young hus-

band and wife took the stage that would convey them part of the way to their new home. Crossing the Dechutes and climbing and descending long reaches of dusty road, they finally arrived at a good stopping-place, where Bertha, at least, was glad to rest for the night. The following days were only a repetition of the first one—a windy, dusty journey, tiresome and monotonous.

The stage was exchanged for a private conveyance on the third day, and toward evening the little party arrived at the summit of a hill, from which they looked down into a pleasant valley, with green bushes and scattering trees skirting the stream that meandered through the center, and little triangular patches of verdure reaching their points up the gulches which held the springs that drained the hillsides. In one of these nooks, near a group of round-topped trees, Bertha was shown "the little cabin that was waiting for her."

"Oh, what a cozy little bird's-nest of a place it is!" said she. "I am sure it looks home-like. I know I shall love it," and she looked up in Earle's face with a happy, confident love in her eyes.

"Distance lends enchantment, you must remember, my dear. I fear you will find it a pretty rough nest, as it is not lined with either wool or feathers."

"I will line it," cried Bertha. "I am glad you left it for me to do."

"I am afraid it may not be as clean as you will wish," said Earle. "Charlie Cleveland, my head shepherd, whom I left in charge, is a pretty good cook, but he can't put things to rights like a woman."

"Well," said Bertha, "I can soon make that little nest clean, when I have rested a while."

"I fear you will be too tired to do anything but rest for some time," said Earle. "But we can give you a good soft wool bed, as good as any they can get down in 'the valley,' that is one comfort."

"And plenty of wool to make more, if they were needed, I suppose," said Bertha.

"Yes, indeed!" replied Earle. "Do you see that small house off to the left of the bird's-nest? That is half full of coarse wool, which was not fit to send away, or would not pay for hauling. You can have that to line our nest, with."

"I promise you I shall find use for some of it," said Bertha. "Now, if I could only spin and weave, I could use it up in making things useful, couldn't I?"

"I am sure you will have enough for one small pair of hands to do," said Earle, "without going into the manufacturing business right away."

That was well enough for our grandmothers, who were only educated in the three R's, and were not afflicted with literary tastes, and had but few of the accomplishments that take up the time of the women of to-day.

"I dare say," said Bertha, "our grandmothers were right noble women, and many of them possessed more literary taste than the world ever imagined; but they were not encouraged to cultivate it. So we have lost no end of fine books that they might have written, if it had not been for their using their manufacturing proclivities in other directions."

"I think it is barely possible that it would be better for the world if some of the writers of to-day, not only the women, but men, would exercise their talents in other directions," said Earle.

"No doubt it would be a great saving of paper and printers' ink," answered Bertha. "But, after all, don't you think that the privilege of writing books, expressing one's ideas, and following out one's fancies, is a tolerably harmless amusement, and in some cases a kind of safety-valve for people who become so full of thoughts and fancies that they need some kind of vent for the accumulated wisdom of their varied experiences?"

"I do not know but you are right," said Earle. "But here we are at Willow Grange! This is my name for our place; but you have called it the Bird's-nest. Which shall it be?"

"Can it not be both?" inquired Bertha. "I am sure a bird's nest among the willows is not uncommon. Willow Grange is the name of the whole ranch, and Bird's-nest the cottage home. Why not?"

"And why not?" echoed Earle, as the conveyance turned up and halted before the neat picket fence that ran in front of the cabin. A large willow tree stood on the south side of the little house, with a pretty group of alder and cottonwood only a few yards back of it. The spring that came sparkling from the hill-side made quite a rill down one side of the yard, that would keep its edges velvet green through all the dry days of Summer.

"Do the birds ever come here?" asked Bertha. "One has just arrived," laughingly replied Earle; "an imported nightingale or sky-lark. I am not sure which."

"You will find more of the sky-lark about me, I guess, or perhaps mocking-bird. But what kind do you have here?"

"The meadow-larks are the sweetest singers, and the sage-hens the sweetest meat, but neither are very plenty. We have wrens, too, sometimes, and they are splendid company."

When the new-comers entered the house, they found it scrubbed as clean as water and soap could make it. The large front room had a fire-place at one side, with a window on each side of it. A comfortable-looking bed stood in a back corner, covered with a clean white spread. A group of juniper boughs and berries was arranged over the mantle-piece, and a glass goblet held a cluster of delicate wild blossoms, mixed with sprays of green, that betrayed the presence of unmistakable good taste in arrangement.

"Why, Earle, you must have some one about who has a woman's taste."

"Yes," said Earle; "Cleveland has remarkably good taste. He is a pleasant fellow, and I am glad we have him for company as well as for help."

With the assistance of the teamster, the wagon was soon unloaded, and the big boxes and trunks almost filled up the room.

"We have too much!" cried Bertha. "We can never get it all into this house. We shall have to move up the wool-house and make an addition!"

"No," said Earle; "I am going to have another wing built on to the house right away. I would have had it done before you came, but I wished to superintend it myself, and I thought perhaps you would prefer to say where it should be."

"Oh, that will be nice!" said Bertha, as she peeped into the kitchen and saw a neat, shining stove and a brilliant array of tin-ware on the shelves. "All we shall need is a couple of bedrooms, I think."

"There is a little bed-room off the kitchen," said Earle. "Did you see it?"

"No; I never mistrusted it," answered Bertha. So she made a closer inspection of her kingdom, and found the additional room all neat and comfortable.

"I venture to say there is not a grander private house on Willow Creek," said Earle.

"That is not comparing it with very many, is it?" asked Bertha.

"About a dozen, are there not, Cleveland?"

"Two new ones are being built since you left," replied Cleveland. "One by the German Zimmerman, about four miles above here, and the other by a man named Sanders, ten miles below. These will make the number over a dozen, I think." By the way, Mrs. Russell, you had a caller the other day. Mrs. Zimmerman came down, and said she had heard there was to be a bride here, and thought perhaps you were already come."

"I did not expect any calls," said Bertha; "but they will not come amiss when we get our things arranged."

"The supper table will need some of the new dishes," said Earle; "so we had better unpack them at once, and see how many are broken."

"Oh, I would just as lief eat on the tin ones," said Bertha. "I am not too good."

"Indeed you are," said Earle. "Think of a bride-taking her first meal in her own house from tin dishes, especially when she has such a neat set, that only wants exhuming and a good hot bath to make it fit for a queen! Charlie, there is plenty of time and hot water, and we'll christen them, won't we?"

"Yes," said Cleveland. "It would be a pity not to begin in style, I am sure."

The pure white china looked almost out of place in the little rough kitchen. But Earle, following Bertha's directions, went to a trunk and took out a nice table-cloth, and when the dishes were washed and arranged on it, and the new forks and spoons, with their pretty silver holder, were brought out, the table began to assume quite an air of elegance.

"Shall I get out the castor?" asked Earle.

"Just as you please," answered Bertha. "You are the chief of the kitchen to-night."

"Not at all," said Earle. "Charlie has that honor, now and henceforth, always subject to your commands. But I'll get the castor. We might as well go the whole figure."

"Yes," said Cleveland. "I believe in good beginnings, let the endings be what they may."

"What do you mean about Mr. Cleveland being chief in the kitchen?" said Bertha, as he went out to get a bucket of water.

"I mean that he is to be chief cook," replied Earle.

"Is he willing to be?" asked Bertha.

"Of course. I would not require it of him if he were not," said Earle. "He has cooked for me for the last year, and he likes it better than being out all the time. He has the place of chief herder, and he oversees the other boys and helps plan and manage things, and then I have him for company wherever I go. You will see he understands his business."

"Oh, I did not doubt his ability," said Bertha. "But it is so good of you to think of having him to help me."

The supper was appreciated by the tired travelers. Three shepherd boys came in after the rest were through, making, with the teamster, six hungry men to be fed; and Bertha thought what a task it would have been had she been obliged to cook the supper for them and clear away and wash the dishes when she was so tired. She had never been accustomed to cooking, and had dreaded her new task more than she had dared to acknowledge even to herself. She left the kitchen, after eating her well-cooked supper, with a sigh of relief, and her husband never knew what a load was lifted from her heart. Not that she was indolent and desired ease or inaction, for she was industrious and energetic; but she mistrusted her ability to do well at once that which she had never learned to do, and rejoiced to think she could now have opportunity to learn by degrees as it would be required of her.

(To be continued.)

Those who think most require the most sleep. The time "saved" from necessary sleep is destruction to mind, body and estate. Give yourself, children and servants the fullest amount of sleep by compelling them to go to bed at some early hour, and rise in the morning the moment they awake of themselves, and within a fortnight nature will unloose the bonds of sleep the moment enough repose has been secured.

THE MANUFACTURE OF SLATE-PENCILS.—The process of making slate-pencils is thus described by the *American Stationer*:

Broken slate from the slate quarries is put in a mortar run by steam and pounded into small particles. Thence it goes into the hopper of a mill, which runs into a "bolting machine," where it is "bolted," the finer, almost impalpable flour that results being taken to a mixing-tub, where a small quantity of steatite flour, similarly manufactured, is added, together with other materials, the whole being made into a stiff dough, which is kneaded thoroughly by passing it several times between iron rollers. Then it is conveyed to a table, where it is made into "charges"—that is, short cylinders, some four or five inches thick, and containing some eight or ten pounds each. Four of these are placed in a strong iron chamber, or "retort," with a changeable nozzle so as to regulate the size of the pencil, and subjected to tremendous hydraulic pressure, under which the composition is pushed through the nozzle in a long cord, like a slender snake sliding out of a hole, and passes over a sloping table, slit at right angles with the cords to give passage to a knife which cuts them into lengths. They are then laid on boards to dry, and after a few hours are removed to sheets of corrugated zinc, the corrugations serving to prevent the pencils from warping during the process of baking, to which they are next subjected in a kiln, into which superheated steam is introduced in pipes, the temperature being regulated according to the requirements of the article exposed to its influence. From the kiln the articles go to the finishing and packing-room, where the ends are thrust for a second under revolving emery wheels and are drawn neatly and smoothly pointed ready for use.

KEEP STRAIGHT AHEAD.—Pay no attention to slanders and gossip-mongers. Keep straight on in your course, and let their backbiting die the death of neglect. What is the use of lying awake nights brooding over the remark of some false friend, that runs through your brain like lightning? What is the use of getting into a worry and fret over gossip that has been set afloat to your disadvantage by some meddlesome busybody who has more time than character? These things cannot possibly injure you, unless, indeed, you take notice of them, and in combatting them give them standing and character. If what is said about you is true, set yourself right; if it is false, let it go for what it will fetch. If a bee sting you, would you go to the hive to destroy it? Would not a thousand come upon you? It is wisdom to say little respecting the injuries you have received. We are generally losers, in the end, if we stop to refute all the backbiting and gossiping we may hear by the way. They are annoying, it is true, but not dangerous, so long as we do not stop to expostulate and scold. Our characters are formed and sustained by ourselves, by our own actions and purposes, and not by others. Let us always bear in mind that "calumniators may usually be trusted to time and the slow but steady justice of public opinion." And, oh! how much evil designers fear public opinion!

OLD LETTERS.—Never burn kindly-written letters; it is so pleasant to read them over when the ink is brown, the paper is yellow with age, and the hands that traced the friendly words are folded over the hearts that prompted them, under the green sod. Above all never burn love letters. To read them in after years is like a resurrection to one's youth. The elderly spinster finds, in the impassioned offer she foolishly rejected twenty years ago, a fountain of rejuvenescence. Glancing over it, she realizes that she was once a belle and a beauty, and beholds her former self in a mirror much more congenial to her tastes than the one that confronts her in her dressing-room. The "widow indeed" derives a sweet and solemn consolation from the letters of the beloved one who has journeyed before her to the far-off land from which there comes no message and where she hopes one day to join him. No photographs can so vividly recall to the memory of the mother the tenderness and devotion of her children who have left at the call of heaven as the epistolary outpourings of their love. The letter from a true son or daughter to a true mother is something better than an image of the features—a reflex of the writer's soul. Keep all loving letters; burn only the harsh ones, and in burning forgive and forget them.

It will be a surprise to a large number of our American women to be told that the white wax, of which they make such constant use when engaged in their household sewing, is the diseased secretion of a peculiar species of fly found in the eastern portions of Central China. Most of our country-women, if they have given a thought to the subject, have supposed that this white wax was some refined product of beeswax, an article that has about it the conditions of cleanliness and healthfulness, which is more than can be said of exudations of insects due to some bodily malady. These flies apparently become diseased from feeding on the leaves of a peculiar kind of evergreen tree or shrub, of which they are exceedingly fond. The twigs of these trees in certain seasons of the year are thickly covered with flies, which, in time, leave upon them a thick incrustation of white matter. When this has increased to sufficient size the branch is cut off and immersed in boiling water, which causes the wax to come to the surface in the shape of viscid substance, which is skimmed off, cleansed, and afterward allowed to cool in pans. The trade in this article is quite an extensive one, as it is estimated that last year the crop was worth not less than \$3,250,000.

HONESTY TESTED.—There was a lad in Ireland who was put to work at a linen factory. While he was at work there a piece of cloth was wanted to be sent out which was short of the length it ought to have been, but the master thought that it might be made a little longer by stretching. He thereupon unrolled the cloth, taking one end of it himself and the boy the other. He then said, "Pull, Adam, pull." The boy said, "I can't." "Why not?" asked the master. "Because it is wrong," and he refused to pull. Upon this the master said he would not do for a linen manufacturer. But that boy became the Rev. Dr. Adam Clarke, and the strict principle of honesty of his youthful age laid the foundation of his future greatness.

A noted cure for neuralgia is hot vinegar vaporized. Heat a flat-iron sufficiently hot to vaporize the vinegar; cover this with some woollen material which is moistened with vinegar, and the apparatus is then applied at once to the painful spot. The application may be repeated until the pain disappears.