



Current Literature.

KEEP AT IT.

One step and then another, And the longest walk is ended; One stitch and then another, And the largest rent is mended; One brick upon another, And the highest wall is made; One flake upon another, And the deepest snow is laid.

So the little coral-workers By their slow and constant motion Have built these pretty islands In the distant dark blue ocean; And the distant dark blue ocean; And the distant dark blue ocean; Man's wisdom hath conceived, By oft-repeated effort Have been patiently achieved.

Then, do not look disheartened On the work you have to do, And say that such a mighty task You never can get through; But just endeavor, day by day, Another point to gain, And soon the mountain which you feared Will prove to be a plain!

Little Ruth.

AN OLD MAN'S STORY.

I know I was a selfish old fellow, now, when I look around me and see the mercies given me in my helpless old age, feel the warm love around me on all sides, and realize the desolation my own hand reached forth to grasp; but I was blind to the future in those days when I so nearly wrecked all its happiness.

This was how it happened: After Martha died—my wife, I mean, with whom forty happy years of my life were spent—and all my children were dead or married, excepting Ruth, there fell upon me the heavy misfortune that has chained me to this chair or my bed for fifteen weary years. I had been a hard working man all my life—a wheelwright by trade—with a large family to rear, to clothe, to feed, to educate, and, oh, me! one by one to bury in the old churchyard, till only Mary, James and Ruth, our baby, were left to me. Mary married and went with her husband to the far West. James took his small fortune of a few hard earned dollars, and left us for the golden land of promise, California, and only little Ruth was left to us. Then the angel of death came for Martha, and only six months later I was stricken helpless with paralysis.

I am reconciled now to my hard fate, and can sit here happily, glad that my eyesight is still good, my right hand free, and that I have learned in my old age to love books, to enjoy reading and even writing, as I never did in the hard working days of my youth. But in those first months of helplessness, when even to toss and turn in my nervous torture was denied me, my sufferings were simply horrible.

But even at that time of rebellious murmuring, of bitter repining, there was some consolation. First, there were the house and five acres of land, my very own, free of debt or mortgage and a small sum in the bank, the interest of which lifted us above actual want. Then I had Ruth.

She was just twenty when her mother died, and others besides her father thought her face the fairest one for miles around. She had the bluest eyes, like the little patches of Summer sky, and hair that was the color of corn silk, and nestled in little baby curls all over her head—rebellious hair that would never lie straight under any coaxing, but kinked up in tangles that were full of sunlight. Her skin was white as milk, with cheeks like the heart of a blush rose, and her smile showed the prettiest rows of pearly teeth I ever saw.

She coaxed from me my wicked repinings by coming to me for directions making me feel that my head was still needed to direct the work, though my feet would never move carry me over the door sill. Then she fitted up for me a large back room that overlooked most of the farm, and Silas, our head man, lift me up every morning and put me in a deep cushioned chair by the window, where I could see the barn, the poultry yard, the well, and the fields of waving corn and wheat. She made me feel myself of importance by giving me thus the mastery over my own little domain; and she brought up her own meals to eat with me in the room where my infirmity held me a prisoner.

She taught me to use my right hand without my left; and if you want to appreciate the difficulties, tie your left arm down for one single hour, and try how often it will unconsciously strain at the cords. She brought me books from the village library, and opened to my eyes and brain a field of pleasure never before explored. I had read my bible and the newspapers all my life, but I never even knew the names of books, now my greatest treasure, till Ruth thought "reading would be company" for me.

She devised little dainty dishes to tempt me to eat; she put saucers of flowers on my table, that I might cheat myself into fancying I was out doors, as their perfume crept on the air; she assured me, petted me, loved me, till even my misfortunes seemed blessings, drawing us nearer together.

And when she was all the world to me, all that saved me from misery, John Hayes asked me to give him Ruth for his wife. I could have struck him dead when he stood before me, a young giant in health, with his handsome sunburnt face glowing with health, and wanted to take away my one blessing, my only home child.

"I will be a true son to you, Mr. Martin," he said, earnestly. "I will never take Ruth from here; but let me come and share her life, and lift some of the burdens from her shoulders."

I laughed bitterly. I knew well what such sharing would be when Ruth had a husband,

and perhaps children, to take her time and her love from me. But I was not harsh. I did not turn this suitor from my house, and bid him never to speak to Ruth again, much as I let him go from me to Ruth; and when he left her and she came to me, all rosy with blushes to tell me, with drooping lids and moist eyes, of her new happiness, I worked upon her love and sense of duty till she believed herself to be a monster of ungrateful wickedness to think of leaving me or taking any divided duty upon her hands.

I wept, asking her if she could face her dead mother after deserting her helpless father. I pointed out to her the unceasing round of wifely duty that would keep her from my side, and proved to her that the duties of wife and child must clash, if undertaken under such circumstances as were proposed.

The loving, tender heart yielded to me, and John was tearfully dismissed. Through the warm Autumn months, when the corn ripened and was garnered—when our crops were blessed, and the little bank fund was increased by the price of the farm product—Ruth grew very quiet and subdued. She was not sad, having always a cheery word and a pleasant smile for me; but the pretty rose tint left her round cheeks, and I no longer heard her singing at work.

The Winter came in early that year, and before Christmas everything was frozen up tight, and the cold was intense. We piled up coal in the stoves, listed doors and windows—that is, Ruth did the work and I enjoyed the result; but there came a cold day—one Friday—when it seemed no coals, no listing, could conquer the cold. Children froze on the way to school that day, and were found, stiff and stark, leaning against the fences. Food froze on the tables. Ask anyone in Maine if they remember that Black Friday, and see if some mother's eyes will not fill as they think of the little scarlet hooded figures brought to their doors, white and rigid, that had lifted rosy, round cheeks for a kiss only a few hours before.

On this cold Friday, Ruth hurried through her work in the morning, making my room the warmest place in the house, covering my arm chair with soft woollens, and moving it near the stove. I would have it face the window, for my glimpse of outdoor life was too precious to resign; but I was not, as usual, fear it, for Ruth said there might be a draught.

When all was done indoors I saw from my chair Ruth, with a scarlet cloak and hood thrown over her, going to the well with an empty bucket. She stepped along quickly over the hard, frozen ground, and I was admiring her trim little feet and dainty figure: when I saw her slide to the two steps that were above the well walls and fall. She had slipped, and she lay doubled up between the two wooden steps and the rough sides of the well, in such a way that she could not rise. Two or three times her hands clutched the lower step, she raised herself half way up only to fall back again, as if her limbs would not support her.

And I could only look on, powerless to move to help her. Oh, the agony of it. To know she was hurt, unable to rise, and I helpless as a log, I screamed and called for help. Silas was somewhere, I could not tell where, and I called loudly for him. I could see, after a time, that Ruth, after her frantic struggles, was growing drowsy with the death sleep of cold. The scarlet hood dropped more and more, till it rested against the well-side, and the blue veined lids closed over her eyes. The sight called from me such a cry of agony as I thought must be heard for miles.

It was heard. A moment later John, Hayes, panting and eager-eyed, burst open my door.

"What is it?" he cried. "I heard you calling from the road."

"Ruth! Ruth!" I screamed. "She is freezing to death by the well."

He stopped to hear no more. Out upon the hard, slippery ground, down the steps with swift, rapid strides, and then I saw him lift the little scarlet cloaked figure in his strong arms, and come swiftly back, bending his face down over the senseless one on his arm while hot tears rained down his cheeks. He put her on a lounge near my chair, and then dashed out for snow.

"Rub her! rub her!" he said. "I am going for the doctor and my mother."

Before it seemed possible he could have crossed the lots to his home, his mother was with me, and lifted Ruth away from the fire to the bed. The doctor came, and then the two worked until my heart sank with utter hopelessness before the blue eyes opened again or the breath fluttered through the pale lips.

But it did at last, and John joined me in a fervent "Thank God."

But Ruth had broken her leg, and we knew she must lie helpless for many weeks before she could be our own active, bright, girl again. It was an appalling truth for me to face, but she was not dead, or lying frozen against the well curb, and I could not but feel thankful, far, far above the pain of knowing her suffering. I was trying to settle it in my mind; to understand the doctor's words, while Mrs. Hayes and the doctor lifted Ruth to her own room, that opened into mine. They were away a long time, and John sat beside me holding my hand in his, comforting me, as if I had not taken the very hope of his life from him.

"Don't grieve so," he said gently. "She will live."

"Thanks to you," I said. "Oh, John, if she gets well, she is yours. Give her your strong arm for life, John, instead of my helplessness. I see to-day where my selfish love has nearly cost her her life."

"Do you mean that?" John asked, with a little trembling in his voice; "do you really mean that?"

"I do indeed. Let her stay here, John, I will not be a burden to your purse, for the house and farm and all I have saved are

Ruth's; but let her give me what time and love she can spare from you." "Gladly," he answered; but we will not wait till she is well, Mr. Martin. Let me have Ruth for my wife now, to-day." "With a broken leg, sick and helpless?" "Does she not need me the more? Give her to me now."

But he had to wait till the bans were called in church three times, though he came to us that day caring for me with the tenderness of a son, while his mother nursed Ruth.

They were alone together, as we were, and they had shut up their house and come to live with us, never to leave again. For one morning, propped up with pillows, Ruth was dressed in white by Mrs. Hayes, and we had a wedding in the little room. My chair was moved in, and the neighbors came from far and near to hear the solemn words that made John and Ruth man and wife.

THE WHEAT GROWERS' ASSOCIATION.

Articles of incorporation of the Wheat Growers' Association of California were filed last week. The Directors are: A. C. Paulsell, San Joaquin county; H. M. La Rue, Sacramento county; W. B. English, Contra Costa county; A. D. Logan and J. C. Campbell, Colusa county; Thos. Upton, Merced county; L. M. Hickman, Stanislaus county; E. Jacobs, Tulare county; John McPike, Napa county. The corporation has no capital stock. The declaration of purposes is in effect as follows: To bring the grain growers of the State into closer communication, with a view of securing concerted action when deemed necessary. To provide means for collecting and disseminating information concerning crop prospects of the grain producing districts of the world, the probable demand and consumption, the available tonnage for moving the surplus product of this coast to market, and such information concerning storage facilities, railroads and inland water transportation as shall enable the members of the association to act intelligently; also, to discourage all practices which may tend to lower the standard of California wheat in the markets of the world, and to endeavor to enhance the value of our wheat and increase the producing capacity of our land; also, to provide a method to enable the grain growers of California to promptly and efficiently act when their interests are threatened.

THE AGREEMENT.

The following is the form of agreement: We, the undersigned grain growers in the State of California, believing that our interests can be promoted and our business made more profitable by a concerted effort to overcome the great and well known disadvantages under which we now labor, do hereby agree to associate ourselves together in an incorporation (without capital stock) to be called "The Wheat Growers' Association of California," and to be governed by the rules, regulations and by-laws of said incorporation, adopted for the promotion and protection of the interests of the members.

THE MEETING ON MONDAY.

The Wheat Growers' Association met in the Grangers' building Monday, Oct. 10th. A. C. Paulsell, of San Joaquin, presided, in the absence of H. M. La Rue, the Chairman. A. W. McCarthy, of Modesto, acted as Secretary.

Chairman Paulsell, for the Committee on Organization and By-Laws, reported that articles of incorporation had been prepared, and the certificate thereof was expected to be received from the Secretary of State in a very few days. A code of by-laws, said the Chairman, have been prepared in accordance with the desire of the grain growers, as expressed at their last meeting. The law required notice to be made by publication in a daily newspaper before the by-laws can be adopted. Hence they would only discuss and not adopt them to-day. The objects of the association were not as yet generally understood. Last year there was not a man in the State who knew the amount of wheat in store by 400,000 tons, and if it had been known, the grain growers would not have carried their wheat at a loss, as they did. The necessity of an association has been apparent. The information now furnished the farmer is not reliable. Crop products, shipments, tonnage, bags, every subject connected with the sale of wheat crops can be furnished.

After the reading of the articles of incorporation, Mr. Paulsell, continuing, said that in order to have a live institution they should have at least 500 members, because the expense would be at least from \$5,000 to \$5,000 a year. A committee should be appointed to solicit membership, so that at the meeting in January, when the by-laws are adopted, if the membership justified it, they could employ a competent person to compile a publication giving them the necessary and reliable information.

W. L. Overheiser, after an inquiry as to who should be eligible to membership, said he would be in favor of having the meeting of the association secret, so that the information furnished the society should not be furnished to business men, whose interests were against those growing wheat. They had had experience with speculators in wheat and tonnage, and he wanted none of them with him in the organization.

H. J. Ostrander, of Merced, J. L. Crittenden, of Hill's Ferry, and Chairman Paulsell, each in turn expressed his opinion as to whom should be solicited to become members, and whether business men interested in grain growing should be admitted as well as farmers. It was finally agreed to leave the matter to the good sense of the committee. The meeting then adjourned until the second Monday in January.

The imports of gold and silver coin and bullion for the twelve months ending August 31st, show an excess of \$86,224,747, being \$6,765,316 more than the same time in 1880.

An orchard of 32 acres near Santa Clara, Cal., sold recently for \$10,000. The trees are but one year old.

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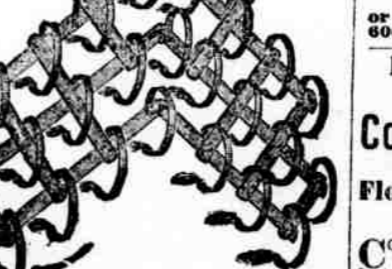
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