

THE RED CLOUD CHIEF

A. C. HOSKIN, Publisher.

RED CLOUD, NEBRASKA

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Driven From Sea to Sea; Or, JUST A CAMPY.

BY C. C. POST.

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CHAPTER XV.—CONTINUED.

The work of cutting through the hill into the neighboring gorge was begun at once. A large number of workmen were employed, and everybody who was directly interested turned out and worked with a will, rain or shine. A tunnel was driven into the side of the hill, and whole kegs of powder exploded therein, rending the earth and aiding greatly in the work of excavation, and at last the work was so far completed that a portion of the water and floating debris was turned aside into the new channel.

The rains, too, had now ceased, and the waters subsided the extent of the damage done could be positively determined.

In places, banks of sand and gravel many feet deep extended across roads regarded by their owners as the most valuable in their possession. In other places the channel of the little stream had been entirely choked up, and a new one cut by the waters through pastures and grain lands, and in yet others, where little of the material had been deposited, the long standing of the water had greatly injured vineyards and orchards, the vines and trees being thickly coated with the fine clay which the water had held in solution.

On the whole the damage was less than many had feared, and with the expectation of preventing any further injury by the erection of the dam, hope revived in the hearts of all, and they began repairing as fast as possible the injury already done, and the cultivation of their vineyards and fields for the coming season.

The Parsons ranch had suffered with the rest, but not more than many others. A hundred grape vines standing upon ground near the creek were killed or badly injured. Several banks of gravel, mingled with larger stones, were scattered about the fields, and the total injury amounting to a thousand dollars or more, in prospective, but not seriously affecting the immediate income of the family occupying the white cottage under the bluff, around whose open porch still clattered some bushes heavy with their weight of yellow, and red, and crimson blossoms.

As soon as possible after Johnny had been brought home from the shanty in the hills where he lay so many weeks, Jennie and Lucy had returned to school in San Francisco. Mr. Parsons being now more than ever anxious that they should not fail to obtain an education.

"If we leave them nothing else, John, let us at least give them an education," she had said to her husband, and he had made no objections, though the house seemed doubly lonely without them.

To help Mrs. Parsons with the letter work she secured the assistance of a young girl whose parents had moved into the neighborhood but the year before, and who, having but little to begin on, would not be unwilling that their daughter should have a home and a school.

The wedding was not to take place for at least a year yet. She told her mother in announcing the engagement, and Mr. Anselmy had agreed to mediate upon, but to this she had interposed a decided negative, and he had at last consented that she should remain at school a year longer, when they were to be married and he would take her to New York to reside.

This was not wholly unexpected by the family. They knew that Mr. Anselmy had followed the young ladies to San Francisco, and that he had been a frequent caller upon them while there. Jennie had even intimated in one of her letters to her mother that she thought Lucy and he would be married some day.

She said less of Ensign, who was almost as frequent a visitor as Anselmy.

In fact the two young men had made up their slight differences and frequently called upon the girls in company, or together arranged with the mothers to bring upon places of amusement; and if Jennie had chosen she could have informed her mother of the probabilities of another marriage, almost as certain of taking place as that of Lucy to Mr. Anselmy.

Jennie, however, was not formally engaged to Mr. Ensign, and she had her own way to make in the world, and had passed the age when men are apt to act hastily in such affairs. He meant Jennie to understand that he preferred her to all others, yet he did not think it well to bind her by formal engagement until he had something more ahead upon which they could begin life together.

Times for laboring men, and especially for skilled mechanics like Ensign, were good just then, but the standard of living for all classes was also high, and the art of carrying large fortunes out of salaries of thirty or forty dollars a week in private life is even yet not well understood except by a few railroad officials and presidents of savings banks.

Mr. Anselmy, infatuated with Lucy, was finding no necessity for delay on account of pecuniary matters, having proposed the moment he found his courage sufficient for the ordeal; and she, although knowing in her heart that she loved Erastus better, yet thinking he cared nothing for her, and that her parents desired her union with Mr. Anselmy, accepted him. But when he urged an immediate marriage, she heard her father and she begged for time, giving as her reason a desire to remain at school another year, and so fit herself the better to fill the position which she should occupy as the wife of one who had the entrance of polite society in the first city of the country.

In this Lucy was partially sincere. She did not greatly love the man to whom she had engaged herself. As an escort to places of amusement, or a companion upon days of merry-making, she would perhaps have chosen

a preference to any gentleman of acquaintance, and was not very fond of that which he promised to be his wife. She cried a little when she was told she was to marry Mr. Anselmy, and she told her father that she was doing it to save her father and the rest of the family from poverty, and because her heart was broken at Erastus' desertion of her for Julia Ennis; but when she had cried her cry out, she did not worry greatly about it, but began picturing her life as she would lead when she was the wife of one who could supply every want, without having to stop to consider whether something else would not do as well, and be more economical.

She honestly wished to fit herself as fast as possible to appear well in the society into which her husband would take her, and intended to study harder than ever, hoping thereby to accomplish it.

And so it had been agreed between them that Anselmy should go at once to New York, where his presence was desired by his parents, and that Lucy should remain in school another year, when he was to return, and their marriage be consummated.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DISAPPOINTED LOVER.

Of course, Erastus was told of Lucy's engagement to Mr. Anselmy. In fact, he learned it from Jennie in advance of any other member of the family.

As they were driving home from the landing on their return from San Francisco and chatting of those things which are of more interest to young people, namely, other young people, Jennie suddenly broke out with:

"Say, Lucie, I'm going to tell Ras, and without waiting for a reply or giving any heed to the blushes which flooded her sister's face and neck, she rattled on with all the speed which her tongue could command: "How'd you like to have Mr. Anselmy for a brother-in-law? I know you don't need to like him very much, but you'd have to now, for Lucie and he are engaged, and are going to be married when he comes back from New York in about a year."

There now, Lucie, it's out, and you won't have to be carrying the awful load of having to tell it any longer."

"I think you are just as mean as you can be," retorted Lucy, half angry, and uncertain whether to laugh or cry. "I hadn't said a word about Mr. Ensign, and he has been almost as constant as your shadow ever since we met him on the boat. You would be engaged to him, too, if he had not got so far ahead of me, and then said, in a voice which sounded hoarse and unnatural:

"I am not going to marry Julia Ennis or anybody else."

After that little more was said for some time.

Once or twice Jennie, who felt that she was the innocent cause of the sudden silence which had fallen upon them, attempted to start the conversation again by asking questions about neighbors or affairs on the ranch, but Erastus only replied in the fewest words possible, and still looked straight in front of him.

Jennie was half inclined to be offended at this. She thought him angry because Lucy had engaged herself to a man whom he did not like. Could she have seen his face she would have known that some feeling deeper than anger was in his breast. Anselmy was at work with her as usual.

Was it possible after all that he loved her?

The thought sent all the blood rushing back upon her heart, and for a moment she felt that she should suffocate. Then came another thought. Perhaps Erastus had proposed to Julia and been rejected. This she felt could not be unless Julia had suddenly become enamored of some new admirer, for certainly she had always shown a preference for Erastus over the other young men of the neighborhood.

Still the thought clung to Lucy that such might be the case, and that instead of feeling bad because her own engagement to another, his silence was caused by pain at being reminded of his refusal by Julia, and her whole mood changed, and she became as cold and hard as he himself appeared.

As they neared home she began talking glibly of anything and everything she could think of, and she presented the family—Lucy for Johnny, a dress for mother, a necktie for Erastus himself, and a silver tobacco-box for father—all bought with money saved out of that sent them for their own use; going on from this to tell of her school, and of a couple of girls who came on the boat with them as far as Sacramento, where their parents lived; and how these girls were related to one of their own neighbors, and how, in answer to their inquiries, Jennie and she had told them all about this neighbor; how near they lived to the ranch, and how their ranch looked, and how it had been injured by the washings from the mines.

Here she came to a sudden stop.

She had unintentionally run upon that which they were all trying to avoid the mention of, and there came to her not only a knowledge of her blunder, but an insight into the feelings which she was somehow responsible for the losses and sufferings of this family and every other family in the valley whose homes were endangered by the operations of the hydraulic mining companies at Gravel Hill.

At least she had arrayed herself on the side of the companies; was engaged to be married to one who was engaged in the continuance of the work which was certain to bring more loss and suffering to these people.

She was no longer of them or with them; for from the moment she became the wife of James Anselmy her interests were no longer those of every one she had known since they had settled in the valley.

Even her father and mother, and Erastus, must feel that she had deliberately chosen to desert them in the hour of their greatest loss, and had gone over to their enemies in order to save herself from sharing in the hardships which might be coming upon them.

All this passed through her mind in an instant, and she sank down in her seat with a feeling of shame, and a hatred of herself which made it impossible to say a word more.

"No wonder Erastus is silent," she thought. "He can not see even to speak to one who seems so utterly selfish. Oh! why did I never think of it in that light before? It is that which has made him so cold to me ever since Mr. Anselmy first came. He has thought all the time that I was trying

to save myself from any suffering that may come upon the rest of them. Oh, if I could only die!"

By this time, however, Erastus had partially recovered from the blow which had fallen so suddenly, and he was to be expected, and was able to take up the thread of the conversation where Lucy had dropped it, and Jennie, anxious not to reach home in such a frozen silence as to attract the notice of their mother, asked to him, thus giving her sister time to rally again; and when they stopped in front of the cottage and Mr. and Mrs. Parsons, the former carrying Johnny in his arms, came out to welcome them, they thought they had never seen their daughter in a grayer mood, and that it would be a joy to bring home again after such a long absence.

When Mrs. Parsons told her husband of Lucy's engagement he remained silent for a time and then said:

"I suppose it's natural, Marty, and what's natural is generally right, but I don't like to hear Lucy will be sorry for it some day."

"I ain't got nothin' in particular agin the young man, but I'd a heap rather she'd a married Ras, an' I feel certain he'd a married her of Mr. Anselmy hadn't got in his way and he seen that Lucy kind of liked him, that's the way men make out, but that she loved him so very much while he was a comin' here to see her."

"May be 't all right as it is," he continued, after a moment's pause. "At least she won't want for somethin' to eat or to wear. An' may be it don't hurt her odds how it's got, only so you get it."

"I used her think," he went on, "that nobody couldn't go to Heaven that took what they had earned, but I'd know. May be there ain't no Heaven 'er no Hell; an' no right and no wrong, that we're just put in the world, and that them that can get the most is the best feller."

"If a man or a child is hungry and takes a loaf of bread, they send him to jail, because that's a violation of the law; but if he has money to start on an' bribes Congress to pass a law so he can rob a lot of poor folks of everything they have, as fast as they can get anything together, why, they're makin' money because they've got more talents than other fellers have; and everybody is entitled to all they can make in this country."

"I don't believe Christ ever taught such a doctrine as that, but then it ain't no more than the way of the world, and to speak for Him as is always out-din'd to the rich, a knowin', too, that no man can get a million of dollars without gettin' some that belongs to other folks."

"Well, Anselmy's rich, an' Lucy'll be his wife an' dress in silks and satin, and I hope she'll be happy. May be we're read an' gone he'll let her take care of Johnny, of the boy outlives us. There ought to be some good come out of so much sufferin', an' may be that'll be the way it'll come."

"I wouldn't take a cent of it myself if I was a dy'n' of hunger, but of some time Johnny would need their help it would be a gift exactly, for the company that's puttin' dollars into Anselmy's pocket is a train 'em out of ourn an' though they ain't the same dollars exactly, it amounts to the same thing, an' it's a robbery of us to get rich themselves."

A few days after this Erastus informed Mr. Parsons, and later in the day, the other members of the family, that when the hurry of the season was over he intended to leave them and strike out for himself.

He hoped that they wouldn't feel that he was deserting them, for he would never do that; but he was now two years past his majority, and ought to begin for himself, and a number of young men of his acquaintance were going down to the Missouri Slough country to take up land, and he had decided to go with them.

This decision of Erastus was the cause of much regret on the part of John and Martha Parsons. They loved him as their own son, and had hoped and planned that when he should start for himself it should be in the immediate neighborhood of their own home, and that he would marry one of the girls and remain always with them.

They readily conceded his right to go, however, and as there was now little prospect that they would soon be able to buy him a place they did not wonder that he wished to leave them and start a home of his own.

Perhaps they divined some of his feelings for Lucy; at least they realized that they could offer no objections to his going which would not appear purely selfish.

At first they insisted that he take the few hundred dollars remaining in bank, and a pair of horses and a wagon.

The money he positively refused to touch, except a few dollars necessary to enable him to make the journey to the Slough, although both the girls joined their parents in begging him to do so, and declared they would remain home from school or even from town, rather than permit him who had done so much to aid in accumulating what they possessed, to leave without anything.

Finally it was agreed that he should take a pair of three-year-old colts and one of the wagons, together with provisions and money sufficient to get him until he could reach his destination, look about him a little and decide just what he would do.

During the time intervening before the day set for his departure he worked even harder than usual, that he might leave the fall work in good shape and so relieve Mr. Parsons as much as possible. The colts, too, were harnessed every day and made to do some light work that they might be hardened a little before starting upon the journey, which, although not such a very long one, would yet be a hard one on animals of that age.

It was a very sad household, that of John and Martha Parsons, during these few weeks of work and preparation; perhaps the saddest that had ever gathered about their board.

When Johnny was brought home crippled for life, and when it was thought that their home was to be destroyed by the overflow, very dark indeed had seemed the days, especially to the parents; but always a hope that the home might be saved, and the thought that even if worst came to worst the family could be kept together, had enabled the mother to keep up a cheerful appearance. And young hearts are ever buoyant, so long as they have no very grave sorrows of their own, or the sorrows of others, even those they love best, can not prevent the occasional overflow of youthful spirits in merry laughter, and the young folks of the Parsons household had always expected that in some way the clouds that overshadowed them for a time would be lifted, and that the warm sun of love and prosperity would be found to have a permanent abiding place in their family.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

MATRIMONY.

The Blessed Estate of the Unmarried Woman's Standpoint.

I have never doubted the statement in Genesis regarding the creation of the first man and woman. I am there taught that an infinite God created woman purely because of His boundless pity for man.

"And the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an helpmeet unto him."

And Milton describes the two: "For contemplation he and valor form'd, for softness she and sweet attractive grace; He for God only, she for God in him."

God saw that it was not well for man to be alone, so He made him Eve for company. Down all the ages since Adam has continued to make Adams and also Eves, but they do not, unfortunately, always fit each other, even when they are made in pairs.

I propose at once to come to my point, and it is this: Marriage is an institution as old as humanity; it was divinely ordained; it is the complete, the perfect life. Every man who goes through life unmarried is violating the first great law of his being. Who does not scorn such a man?

"Such a man, so faint, so spiritless, so dull, so dead in look so woebegone."

The wisdom of the world is inclined to find nothing for itself in matrimony. So we have the wise old saying: "Every dog has his day."

But there is nowhere aught said about his being at liberty to take her or leave her. The whole force of the maxim is in the words: "has her." But if he turns his back on her he no longer has her, and he then lies in the face of an almost divine law.

And what of Jill? She has been created for her Jack. She is patiently (almost always) awaiting his coming. Perhaps she is painting screens for him, or making hay for him, or turning milk-maids for him, or shouting that she will be his, and that she is crying, like Rachel, "and will not be comforted"—till she has him.

But are the joys of matrimony such that she needs must mourn if "the cometh not?"

How can a poor girl answer except by parable? "Then you take a fish out of the sea, you take a bird out of the water; is it element, and it is happy nowhere else. When you catch a bird in a cage how it struggles to be free. Why? Because its home is in the tree-top and the air. Have you any such doubts in your mind, as to why Jack will be his, never-walked? All things have their own element, and are happy there, and are one."

Did you ever know a widow who was not more wretched than Jacks to marry again? Did you ever see a woman who did her best to get a second husband, who he looked abroad to replace his dear departed? Actions speak louder than words. What can one do but put this and that together, and declare to herself that matrimony must be bliss, when they have once tried it are satisfied, and they are content.

Then I judge of it by the superior airs of our married sisters—some to us who are unmarried. We are compelled to endure this, but we hate it with all our hearts. We see them fondle their children; we see them caress their husbands, and we see the tender parting, and the joyful and contented, and realize that a wide world has opened to them in which we have no part. We cry out in anguish, but we do this discreetly in our closets. No filing can be made at us so bitter as that we want husbands, no sorrow so great as that we are angling for husbands, and no contempt equal to that in which we are called "old maids." Are we to blame? Quite often we are the superiors of our married sisters; sometimes it is because of this that men pass us by, and we are left to our own devices, and we help them in many a deception, and with myriads of pretty compliments; we were willing to be their foils that they might show in better relief, but when they are sure of their game they turn upon us with contempt, and we are angry for husbands, and we are called "old maids." Are we to blame? Quite often we are the superiors of our married sisters; sometimes it is because of this that men pass us by, and we are left to our own devices, and we help them in many a deception, and with myriads of pretty compliments; we were willing to be their foils that they might show in better relief, but when they are sure of their game they turn upon us with contempt, and we are angry for husbands, and we are called "old maids." Are we to blame? 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