"Kiger Gorge"

By Minerva ("Woodie") Kiger Reynolds

Kiger Gorge

(I dedicate this story to my mother, Minerva Jane Kiger, who fearfully, but bravely, faced the dangers encountered in "Kiger Gorge".

(Toodles)
M.K.R. (Minerva Jane Kiger Reynolds

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- Introduction -

It was late spring in the year 1872 when a tall gaunt man stood surveying a grimy, raw-boned herd of cattle and a band a shaggy-haired, dusty horses. A sorry sight they were, but there was an expression of serene satisfaction on Reuben Kiger's haggard face for he was gazing past the present to three months hence when these same cattle would be sleek and prime and each would have a butter-fat calf by her side. The horses' coats would glisten in the sunshine as they ran with their colts, their manes and tails whipping in the wind just as he had pictured them in his childhood dreams.

The cattle gulped the lush grass, drank their fill of clear cool water, and one by one they dropped to their knees as if offering a silent prayer of thanksgiving for their journey's end, then slowly lowered their aching bodies to rest.

The gray-green plain turned to orchid, then purple. The last ember of a dying campfire faded out and it was dark. Not until then did Reuben realize that he was tired, -- very tired. He rolled himself into his blankets, the vision blacked out, and he fell into a deep sleep, -- the sleep of an exhausted man.

Chapt. 1

Westward Ho!

Reuben Christopher Kiger was born in Knoxville, Illinois, in 1838. He was the oldest in a family of eight children, five boys & three girls. His father was a house painter by trade & struggled to feed and clothe his large family. And when his brother died, he took on the added burden of supporting the brother's three orphaned children, making a total of thirteen to care for on his meager earnings. It required skimping and careful planning to give them the base necessities of life.

Reuben was a tall, curly-haired boy, quite mature for his age - for, since a very small child, he had chores and responsibilities placed upon him. He'd been little schooling and not much time for pleasure. Although he had inherited no earthly goods, he did inherit ambition, honesty, and a will to work. He was a great dreamer and since dreams were free, indulged in them to his heart's content. He loved horses and cattle and they were what he dreamed of. The stories of the West held great attraction for him and naturally it was westward that he turned. He loved to watch the sunset. It was then that his dream of a big cattle ranch was the brightest; in fact it seemed that he could really see the cattle grazing and the horses running wild with their heads and their tails in the air, and their manes whipping in the breeze. As the sun settled low, they would

disappear over the hill. Thus his dream faded and he ran to do his chores and wait for another day.

He was just past twelve years old when one day he came running home so excited and out of breath that it was several minutes before he could tell his parents that he had a chance to work his way West on a wagon train. They were shocked and emphatically said "No". He pleaded to be allowed to go, but to no avail. His folks tried to explain that he was too young for such an adventure, but the boy just couldn't understand. Stunned with disappointment, he seemed to lose all interest in life. His parents believed he would soon get over it but he grew worse. He became thin and pale and so despondent that they feared he would become physically ill. They began to reconsider. They knew his life was monotous with little to look forward to, -- perhaps they were denying him an opportunity for greater things. Reluctantly they gave him their consent to go. Immediately his spirit revived and he again became the vivacious boy that he had always been and could hardly wait for the train to depart, talking of little else

A few weeks later everything was in readiness. They were to leave the next morning. That night a change came over the Kiger household, -- everything seemed so quiet. There was not the laughter and usual fun. Reuben went to bed early and so did everyone. He and his younger brother, William,

slept together and usually had a swamp or pillow fight before settling down to sleep. But not that night. William crawled quietly into bed, Reuben blew out the the light and followed, but it was impossible to sleep After awhile a soft voice asked, "Reuben, where you goin' to sleep tomorrow night?"

Reuben was startled, for he thought William was asleep.

"Go to sleep, Willie," he answered, but that simple little question set Reuben to thinking. Where was he going to sleep? All his life he'd had a soft, clean bed, -- it was such an ordinary thing that he just accepted it without a thought.

Again William spoke up.

"How'll I know when to get up after you're g"

Reuben began to think of the many little things that were his responsibilities that he wouldn't be able to attend to. Who would chop the wood and kindling? Willie was too young, he might cut himself with the ax. And Eddie, the baby of the family, couldn't even get his shoes on the right feet. He rolled and tossed and finally dropped off to sleep. He awoke with a start from a terrible dream. He dreamed the wagon train had left him asleep on the plains all alone. Would morning never come?

At the first peek of day he got up, dressed and sneaked downstairs to build the fires. To his surprise

he found his mother was already up. Her eyes were red and he knew she had been crying and hadn't slept either.

Soon the whole family was up but nobody had anything to say. They sat down to the breakfast table. His mother had baked hot cakes, his favorite breakfast, but they just wouldn't go down past the lump in his throat.

Daylight came, -- it was time to go. For the first time he didn't want to go at all. He looked around. A light seemed to glow over the house and he viewed it in a way he never had before. Then he knew that although they were too poor to have the things that many people had, it was just about the finest home in the world and he wondered what had ever made him think of leaving it. He put his arms about his mother -- words just wouldn't come -- he couldn't say "Good-bye". Suddenly bursting into tears, he grabbed his pack-roll, bounded out the door, and ran as fast as his legs could carry him straight to the train without so much as a glance backward. He almost hoped they'd already gone. His cheeks were met with tears. He set his roll of worldly goods down, which was little more than a change of clothing and some bedding, wiped away his tears, and busied himself with the last minute preparations. It was then Reuben noticed that nearly everybody had red rims around his eyes and he realized that they were all leaving home and loved ones with heavy hearts. It seemed to comfort him to know that he was not the only one who had cried at leaving.

Soon everything was ready. The driver of the lead team climbed into his seat and with a loud, "Giddap" and a slap of the lines, the horses tugged in their harness to start the heavily loaded wagon. Reuben noticed how heavy iron rims of the wagon wheels cut into the hard ground and his heart went out to the poor horses. He knew they had the hardest job of all. The people could ride but the horses had to walk those hundreds of weary miles and pull a heavy load all the way. When the first wagon began to roll, it seemed to move easier and one by one the others followed.

As soon as they were on their way Reuben's enthusiasm returned and every minute was one grand adventure. There wasn't a lazy bone in the Child's body and he found many ways to help and was so willing, he soon won the hearts of all his companions. He learned to harness and unharness the horses first of all, because they were his love. He unerringly nestled wood, built fires, carried water, and helped in every way possible. He admired these courageous people with all his heart and marvelled at their ability to cope with all the problems that confronted them. No matter how serious a breakdown occurred, they were able to repair it although they had little to work with. Reuben watched everything they did. He wanted to do things just as they did. It was the first opportunity he'd ever had to work with horses. He was allowed to ride them and soon took turns relieving the drivers for short periods, giving them a chance to walk a little and stretch their limbs.

Whenever the wagons stopped to give the horses a little rest--

and this was necessary every little while -- Reuben would go from team to team to pet and try to lighten their work. He would lift their heavy collars, wipe away the sweat, and let the cool air fan their hot necks. At night he looked for harness burns, rubbed grease on their sores, and scraped the dirt and sweat from the sides of the collars that rubbed their necks, for he knew a rough spot could cause a blister that, becoming infected, would make a lasting sore. In fact he was the horses' best friend and they showed their appreciation as best they could; a gentle knicker when they heard him coming was a pleasing reward for him.

Day after day they travelled across the plains. Every day brought new, exciting adventure to Reuben, unfolding beautiful world he had had no conception of. It was not until they were well on their way that he learned that their destination was "Oregon". It really did'nt matter to him since he knew so little about the country -- only that they were going West, the "Golden West of his Dreams".

The train moved slowly but surely. Some days progress was slower than others, depending on the terrain, or the breakdowns which were numerous. Reuben enjoyed every minute on the plains, but when they reached the mountains the greatest thrill of all came. He had never seen real mts. before and their magnificence stunned him. The roads were rough, rocky, and steep and were a real trial for the horses. Almost everybody walked in order to lighten the loads. Reuben loved the tall pine trees that

reached so high into the sky and made a soft carpet with their fallen needles. He peered up to great snow-peaked capes aheads, and down to deep valleys below in arrangement. The thing that astounded him the most was the constant up and down they travelled, yet when they reached a place where he could look down he found that they had been climbing steadily upward.

The train had endured many mishaps, some difficult breakdowns, and several Indian scares. In fact, the latter was the danger that hung heavily over every wagon train that crossed the plains and many were wiped out by terrible Indian massacres. This train, while it feared ambushes and was constantly on the alert, had no serious trouble with the Indians. It ran out of food but was fortunate to find wild game enough to enable it to continue.

After weeks of rough climbing they reached the summit of the Rockies. As Reuben gazed at the snow-covered peaks glistening in the sunshine, he felt he was standing on top of the world and all the rest was at his feet. It was indeed a wonderland. Then began the great descent. That was easier, but there was still much climbing over the steep ridges. The road was narrow and rough, the horses were worn down in both flesh and strength but patiently tugged on and on. They finally reached the summit of the Blue Mts., the end of their journey was nearer. Reuben never forgot his first sight of the great Columbia River

He looked down and saw it winding deep in the blue valley like a silver thread that widened into a ribbon and, as they neared it, into the biggest river he had ever seen.

The farther Reuben travelled the more amazed he was at this stupendous Country. His world had seemed small but he was finding that it was a big world, very much bigger than he had ever dreamed of. The stories he had heard didn't begin to describe it. He loved it!

Soon the exciting trip would be over with and then what? Reuben had no plans, he just accepted each day as it was & found it wonderful.

Before long they reached the present site of Oregon City and the train began to break up. Each family had to choose a location and start a new life. Reuben had learned to love these new-made friends and to depend upon them. Now he was heart-sick to see them dropping out. One thing he was glad for,--the horses. They could rest now, but he knew not for long for there would be much hard work for them as the settlers cleared land, built homes, and farmed. Poor beasts of burden.

We moved on until the last family decided to stop. They dreaded to see the boy go on alone and, like many of the others, asked him to remain with them. But Reuben was independent and had faith in his own future, so he moved on, a little wanderer in a strange big land.

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Being already quite a distance up the Willamette Valley, he just kept going. As darkness settled he arrived at the small town of Marysville, tired & hungry. Looking around, he found a little restaurant & walked in. He approached the proprietor and asked if he could do some work for something to eat.

The man looked the boy over carefully, at his frank gray eyes, his shabby clothes, his soiled bed roll, and being a big-hearted Westerner, told him there was a big sink of dirty dishes and to get to work. He washed, dried, and stacked the dishes quickly. It reminded him of home. When he had finished, the old Negro cook brought a plate heaped high with steaming food and set it before him. How wonderful it tasted! It was his first food since morning when he had bade the last family of the train good bye.

He thanked the owner, telling him he felt dish-washing was poor pay for such a fine meal, and insisted upon cutting some wood.

The old Negro seemed to take a liking to the boy and came over to talk. "Where you going to sleep tonight?" he inquired.

Reuben told him he was going to ask to sleep in the hay at the livery stable.

"Would you sleep with a Nigger?" asked the old fellow shyly. "I sure would," Reuben answered.

"I got a room upstairs. You come with me", he said.

It was the first real bed Reuben had slept in since leaving home and it seemed the best he'd slept in on his life; he was so tired, so comfortable, and, oh! so sleepy.

Being an early riser, he awoke at break of day. It was really the dawn of his new life in the West and it looked very bright to him. He dressed and went down and began splitting wood: When the proprietor arrived, the day's wood was cut & piled, the wood box filled, and the fire laid. He asked Reuben a lot of questions and seemed to like the answers he received. He admired the boy and Reuben knew he had found another friend. The whole world seemed friendly. From then on he washed dishes and cut wood for his meals and a room adjoining the old Negro's. He got a job at the stable washing carriages, and when they discovered how much he knew about caring for horses, he got a permanent place there. He picked up any other jobs he could and after it became known what a good worker he was, he was in demand. He worked at all hours, became a jack-at-all-trades, and saved every cent, buying only real necessities. He liked this little town and the people who had be-friended him, so decided that here he would remain.

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Two years passed. Fate had really been kind to Reuben. He had made many friends, learned lots, and made considerable money. Reuben had carefully laid out a plan when he got his first job and now he counted his earnings and decided there was enough money to carry it out. He sent every cent of it back to his folks to buy a team and wagon with outfit in order to come to the Willamette Valley.

Some months later a wagon drove into Marysville loaded with happy people. It was easy to find Reuben because he had been expecting them for weeks, and what a joyous re-union it was! Great changes had taken place in all of them except his mother and Dad who seemed just the same loveable people to him. His brothers were tall, gangling youths, but his sisters,--well they drew a whistle from Reuben when he saw how lovely they had grown to be.

"All the boys in town will come a-courtin'," he laughed.

"And we'll bet you have half a dozen girls yourself," was the retort. Little did they realize how Reuben had shied away from girls in order to save his money to bring them out West.

A big, dilapidated old house was secured at low rent and the whole family went to work on it. They scrubbed, painted, and washed windows and soon the transformation was the talk of the town and neighbors. The clean-up idea seemed to spread all over town and resulted in many painting jobs for Reuben's father.

Having little money for furniture, they bought second-hand things which they repaired and painted, and soon the old house was one of the homiest places in town. Mrs. Kiger was a wonderful Cook and in order to defray expenses a little, she began taking on a few boarders. The children doubled up in their rooms and this left a couple of rooms to rent. Word of her marvelous meals and immaculate rooms travelled fast and soon more people came than she could accomodate.

There was only one hotel in the town. It had been neglected for many years and was so run down, people refused to stop there only as a last resort. Before very long, the Kigers made arrangements to buy the place. What they did to it was little less than magic. They repaired the porch which extended across the front, redecorated the whole interior, painted the whole building snow-white, and with the large shade trees surrounding it, it became a

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most inviting place to dine or to spend the night. Fine meals and sparkling cleanliness made the "O. K. House" famous. The stages stopped there and travelling salesmen drove extra miles in order to reach it.

The Kegers loved Oregon, especially Corvallis, as Marysville later become, and as they prospered, they thanked the day that a brave-hearted little boy made a move that brought a better life to them all.

Now that Reuben was satisfied with the way his family was getting along, he began to work for himself and on a few years he purchased the livery stable where he had worked the most of the time since he arrived in town. The fertile Willamette Valley was being settled rapidly and Corvallis, right in the heart of it, was growing too. The livery business was good, horses being the only means of transportation. R.C., as Reuben was often called, began the operation of a fast stage to Portland. He used three re-lay teams and made the one hundred mile trip in record time. It proved to be very profitable. There was much snow during the winter months and he had twenty-six sleighs for hire and sleighing became a popular winter pastime.

About this time he met Minerva Jane Morgan, familiarly known as Dolly. She was of a pioneer family living on their donation claim four miles north of Corvallis. Her father had died suddenly when she was only a week old. Later her mother, Mary Morgan, married John Sylvester, primarily that he might help her prove up on her claim and farm the land. Mary had been so grief stricken upon the death of her first husband, she did not give the child or John the love and attention she should have. Perhaps that is why Dolly and John grew to love each other so deeply. No real father and daughter were closer to one another than they.

Reuben had always been too busy to pay much attention to girls but, as is often the case, he fell quickly in love with Dolly and after a rather short courtship they were married November 18, 1866 and bought a house in town. Though Dolly was only sixteen, she was a very capable little wife. Reuben was busy with the livery business but they found time quite often to go to the farm and it brought back memories of his imaginary cattle ranch. A baby boy born a year later, completed this happy home. Somehow Reuben talked a lot of cattle and told Dolly how he had dreamed all of his life of owning a cattle ranch, she listened attentively, but it didn't interest her much. They had a

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nice little home, a good business, delightful visits with her family as well as his, and now a wonderful little son. She was happy and contented.

Chapter II

Land of Promise

As time passed, R.C. talked more and more of cattle ranches and Dolly deftly changed the subject each time, which tended to make him more determined to interest her in it. At first she thought it only a whim of his, that he would soon forget, but she began to realize it was a very deep-seated ambition and she feared he would never be entirely happy until he reached his goal. He painted such lovely pictures that she began to take more interest in the set-up.

He felt there were big possibilities in raising cattle in Eastern Oregon. He knew it would be a hard life for Dolly and they talked of the hardships they would have to endure, but the rewards would be great. One day he came home early looking very serious.

"What is it Dolly?" asked. "Well, Dolly, I have a proposition to make to you. If you will consent

to move to Eastern Oregon, I'll give you my solemn promise to return whenever you want to."

Dolly was quiet for a few minutes and then answered, "all right, Reuben, I'll go under those conditions".

It really seemed to take Reuben by surprise, but Dolly knew that promise would hold. Her word was her golden Code.

Reuben now began to plan his cattle ranch in earnest. At the first opportunity he made a trip to Eastern Oregon to look for a location. He crossed the mountains into the great open country of Central Oregon. It was the thrill of his life as he observed this vast, untouched land, high bunch grass in its wild native state with only deer and antelope grazing upon it. Here was a land just waiting to fatten hungry herds. It was hardly necessary to pick a particular site for it was all good; but the place he decided upon was near the present town of Burns, in Harney County.

Upon the return trip he made a rough road map estimating the distance he would travel each day, and selecting camp sites. This proved very helpful when he moved the stock over.

Judd, as they named their baby boy, was a

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little past three years old now; the pride of his parents and grandparents. He was a chubby, healthy little boy whose great pleasure was a trip to the farm. He had, beyond a doubt, inherited his father's love for livestock and made pets of all the animals. His cute little antics and quaint remarks were a never-ending pleasure for his folks. When at the farm he always called his father and Mother Reuben & Dolly because that was what his grandparents called them.

One day at the dinner table Judd spoke up. "Reuben, I'm not goin' to Eastern Oregon with you."

"Oh, yes, you are", replied his father.

"No, Judd's goin' to die an' the worms'll eat me up", the child said.

"Why Judd, what makes you say such an awful thing?" cried his mother.

They were all horrified. The men tried to pass it off lightly but the women couldn't get over it.

"I don't like it", said Dolly with tears in her eyes. and Mary said, "Its a bad omen."

Reuben tried to pacify them by saying "you know, Judd is always saying unexpected things".

A few days later Dolly noticed something in Judd's ear, and he told her he had put a shot in it. They rushed him to the doctor where it was removed

without much difficultey. Then Judd turned his head and said there was one in the other ear. But the doctor could find no trace of it and decided he was either mistaken or it had fallen out. Three weeks later, while they were spending the day at the farm, little Judd took a spasm, followed quickly by another, and died on the third before they could get him to the doctor.

Their grief seemed more than they could bear. What had been such a happy home was now a house of sorrow. The farm was even worse with all of ~~it~~ his playthings and the little pets he loved so much. They couldn't stay at either their home or the farm. It seemed they would go crazy.

"Lets' rush our plans and get away from here quickly as possible," said Reuben. "Maybe if we get clear away, in new surroundings with endless work to do, it will help a little." Dolly agreed that anything would be better than staying where every turn brought a reminder of their baby.

They sold their home, the stable, everything they owned, and put the money into horses and cattle. R.C. bought the best breed horses available and a particularly fine stallion. He bought only two-yr-old heifers of good beef types, with the exceptions of a few older gentle milk cows which he figured would help in

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taming down the others, and finally, the best bulls in the valley.

The idea of rushing their move was a wise one. It kept them busy and was a big undertaking. While R.C. was buying and gathering up stock, Dolly and her mother planned and listed the things she would need in the way of household supplies as well as food and clothing. It was no small job to figure so far ahead and space was limited. Besides getting the stock, Reuben had to figure on tools, machinery, and camping equipment.

It was some weeks before everything was ready including the men Reuben had hired to help him. The two wagons were so heavily loaded, it required four-horse teams to pull them. The camping equipment was on pack horses which were tied to the back of the lead wagon, hoping thus to induce the rest of the horses to follow. As a lead for the cattle, two cows were tied to the back of the second wagon.

They made an early start that first day but it proved to be a hectic one. The stock, especially the cattle, ran wild. The valley was mostly open country and the cattle had no respect for the scattered rail fences the farmers had built around their places. They jumped them like deer. No sooner would they get one bunch back in line until another would break in the

other direction. R.C. and the men were worn to a frazzle and pretty discouraged by night-time. The cattle seemed to be a particularly wild bunch and the men wondered how long it would be before they turned down. At the rate they had gone the first day, they would be months on the road.

They were too tired to bother much about a camp that night. Dolly had enough cooked food on hand for several days, so they built a fire, made coffee, unrolled their blankets, and went to bed.

They took turns during the night watching the stock. When morning came, everyone was rested and after coffee and a cold hand out, they made another start. The second day was a little better than the first but the cattle were on the run again. That night the men were about as tired as they had been the night before but they had made considerable more progress and the cattle were tiring too.

After several days they began to get things in hand. The cattle were getting their run out and by the time they reached the mts. their feet were so sore the men had difficulty keeping them moving. The road over Santiam Pass was little more than a trail, being rough, narrow and steep, and was a toll road. Both horses and cattle followed the wagons now and kept pretty much in line. The men were thank-

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- ful that the open country come at the beginning, as they would have lost them all if they had not turned down before striking the Mts. with their trees and heavy underbrush.

The Trip was hard for Dolly. The trouble the men had with the Cattle had worried her and she was tired and despondent. She sat in the wagon as it jolted along and grieved for her baby while she worried about the future. She had always had a great fear of Indians and rattlesnakes and she knew the land she was entering was alive with them. Her mother had also warned her of scorpions with their poisonous sting. Her beautiful life had suddenly lost all its color and had become very drab, like a thunder cloud over the sun.

Making camp was well organized by now. There were numerous lakes and open spaces for ideal camps and R. C.'s maps were a great help. The cooked food was used up so all helped Dolly prepare meals. She baked bread in a Dutch oven on the Coals. Deer were plentiful and the lakes, full of trout, required only a few minutes to catch a mess. So she fried venison steaks or fish, boiled a kettle of dried vegetables and one of fruit and served directly from the kettles. Each person washed

his own dishes. At night she put a big roast into the Dutch Oven and R.C. would place it in the hot Coals. By morning it was deliciously tender and each man made his own sandwiches for lunch.

Progress was slow; though some days they moved much farther than others. Seven-mile mt. was the worst road they encountered. It was sandy and the wagons sank so deep it was necessary to put on an extra team. This meant taking one team from the second wagon, taking the first wagon up, then returning four horses for the second, making two camps. Once over this mt., the travelling was easier. Instead of the big firs and the dense underbrush that grew on the west side of the Mts, they found jack-pines and Western yellow pine, & less ground cover on the east side.

Sometimes an early stop was made in order to let the stock graze and rest. The rocks were wearing their hoofs down & R.C. feared some might get too sore to travel.

At their camping spots the men put up a tent each night for Dolly but the rest picked out sheltered spots and slept in the open. One night Dolly was awakened out of a sound sleep by the most terrifying bellowing and tramping of hoofs

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she had ever heard in her life. She lunged out of bed and ran out of the tent. Suddenly Reuben made a dive for her and practically threw her into the wagon.

"For God's sake stay there, Dolly," he screamed. "The cattle are stampeding."

Being frightened they perhaps a bear or some other wild animal, they had gone crazy from fright and ran like a fast flowing turbulent river, running over any object or each other in their mad frenzy. The men swung onto their horses. There was only one way to get them under control and that was to get ahead of them and crowd them into a turn. Once running in a circle, they would mill around until exhausted and gradually stop.

Dolly was terribly frightened as she crouched in the wagon while it swirled, teened, and rolled until she feared it would overturn as the cattle crashed into it.

Finally things quited down but they would not know until morning just how much damage had been done. But one thing was evident, -- the camp was a wreck. They had to keep guard the rest of the night to make sure the cattle would not be disturbed again. Reuben went to see if Dolly was safe. Her tent

was trampled down and she was obliged to sleep in the wagon, but she was really too frightened to get to sleep again that night.

Morning found things in a mess. The cattle were skinned & bruised but aside from some broken horns there were no broken bones. The horses had been frightened by the din the cattle made, but being a short distance away, had not scattered badly. The men gathered things up, made camp again, and decided to remain there for a few days until the cattle recovered and were ready to move on.

By the second day things had calmed down and the men were just resting for a change. Suddenly Dolly screamed & came running to Reuben, clutching her clothes just above the knee. The other men came running, too, wondering what in the world had happened to her.

"O, Reuben, I've been stung by a scorpion," she cried. "I've got it in my hand."

"Well, hold tight and I'll get your clothes around it," he said. So Reuben took his razor-sharp pocket knife and carefully cut her clothing around her hand. When it was done she raised and opened it. Among the tightly pressed folds was a tiny red ant crushed flat.

The men put their hands to their faces or turned their heads to conceal their mirth, but it was too much for Reuben. He laughed loud & long and the men joined in. Dolly looked at the ant, then at the gaping holes in her garments, before

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she ran to the tent to try to find means of patching her precious clothing. Reuben tried to make amends by calling, "At least you are not stung, Dolly." But she wondered if that would be worse.

After that, every few days someone would clutch his leg and scream, "Reuben, I'm stung by a scorpion!" Soon Dolly caught the spirit & laughed too. A laugh was good; it gave their morale a much-needed lift.

With the cattle mending & the men rested, they moved on down-grade at a much better pace. At last they reached load country with good feed & soon came to the location R.C. had selected. The men remained to help get things started. They cut and hauled logs & built a one room cabin. It was small but there was hay to cut for winter & R.C. rushed to get at that, feeling he could complete the house at a more convenient time. So as soon as the cabin was liveable, the men returned to the valley and Reuben and Dolly were on their own.

There were acres & acres of wild grass suitable for hay & they started right in cutting, curing, and stacking it for winter use. While R.C. did finishing work on the cabin, Dolly mowed. By late summer the landscape was dotted with haystacks. It seemed it would be impossible for the cattle to consume that much hay, but R.C. insisted on cutting as long

as the weather permitted, just to make sure of having plenty in case the winter was harder than they had figured.

They had worked hard for long hours every day since they left the Willamette Valley & it had helped them to live with their sorrow. While they left the physical things of little Judd behind, the memories remained forever vivid in their hearts.

The Indians that Dolly had feared so much had not bothered a great deal. True, there were bands of them roaming about, but they seemed to be too much concerned with their hunting to care much about the newcomers, and Dolly began to think maybe her fears were unfounded.

Deer were plentiful & R.C. killed as many as they could use; carefully tanned the skins, & dried quantities of meat.

The air began to have a crispness that told them fall was approaching. Soon the leaves would begin to turn, the nights were cold, & before long there was a frost. They'd had some rain but it was light compared to what they were used to in the valley.

It was only a few weeks later that Dolly called to Reuben, "O, it's snowing!" She stood & watched the tiny flakes fluttering down. By morning a soft white blanket covered the landscape. That evening Dolly peered out. The moon was shining and the plains glistened in the moonlight like a sheet of shining silver. She called to Reuben to come and see. "Isn't it beautiful!" she exclaimed.

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"Remember how we used to love the first snowfall and the sleigh rides?" "yes, I liked them - then we had fun and business was good. Every young fellow in town hired a sleigh to take his girl out riding, but somehow it doesn't look so good to me now," he answered.

The next morning Reuben told Dolly, "I'll have to go out & open some haystacks for the stock. The snow is pretty deep & all the grass is covered up. It is only fall yet. I didn't expect snow so early."

That was only a beginning. It kept snowing and was almost knee deep as he plowed through it. Then the wind began to blow and flakes caught onto the sage brush & drifted into high ridges. The haystacks looked like snow-capped peaks. Over night the level plain had been transformed into a fairy wonderland. The snow flakes danced & frolicked like fairies in a mythical land until the temperature dropped & froze them in their tracks.

A month passed. The temperature dropped lower & lower. The cattle & horses ate their way into the stacks which also sheltered them from the cold. They had plenty of hay & nature had provided them with blankets of long shaggy hair. The wind increased to blizzard force. Reuben grew restless. This was far worse than he had anticipated. So far they were holding but it was only mid-winter. How long would it last? Day after day, week after week it continued.

with the haystacks diminishing. He was opening the last stacks when he passed his hand over a heifer, her head on the hay. He recoiled with a shock to feel the sharp bones that the long hair had concealed. He went back to the house & to Dolly who had obscured his uneasiness for several weeks.

"Dolly", he said, "we're down to the last stacks & the cattle are in worse condition than I realized. I've been thinking & hoping there would be a break in the weather but there is no sign of it. I'll have to do something. Make me some sandwiches & I'll get some dried venison. I'm going to look for feed".

"But where in the world could you find any?" asked Dolly. "I don't know", he answered, "but I can't set and wait for the stock to starve to death. I'll find feed somewhere."

He put on his warmest clothes. Dolly had made him a buckskin suit and with his fur coat and cap, and a muffler to wrap around his face, he seemed well protected. He saddled Dan, his big, dependable, and powerful bay, filled his canteens with water, and his saddle bags with food, then tied a roll of blankets behind the saddle.

"Dolly, goodness knows how badly I hate to leave you here alone. There is plenty of food and wood and nothing will bother you, I know. There is just no other way out", he said.

Dolly choked but answered bravely, "Don't

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worry about me. I'll be alright.

They had not seen an Indian since before the first snowfall. The Indians, knowing better than they what the winter would be like had moved into the shelter of the mts. long ago, and of course the rattle snakes holed up in the winter. Still Dolly was afraid, -- dreadfully afraid. She watched R.C. until he was out of sight, then she threw herself onto the bed and wept as if her heart would break. Suddenly she jumped up & wiped her eyes.

"Am I a weakling?" she asked herself. "If R.C. can ride out into this blizzard to try to find a solution to our problems, I surely can remain in the warm cabin with plenty of food and retain my senses. I'll work so hard I won't have time to worry."

She had made several pairs of buck skin gloves, for Reuben out of the skins they had tanned and while they were serviceable and he had praised them, they did not please her. She prided herself on her sewing ability and nothing short of perfection would satisfy her. Now she would draft a new pattern and make a pair of gloves she would be proud of, -- a project that would keep her brain busy.

Making a pair of buckskin gloves by hand is not easy and requires a lot of skill. She took

measurements, made adjustments, and drafted the new pattern. Then she stretched one of the buckskins and cut a glove. Stitching through the tough skin was very difficult but she worked diligently.

Night came. She looked out over that icy landscape and shuddered. Where was Reuben tonight? She went to bed but just couldn't sleep. She had to resort to counting and built up a mt. of numbers, but when she was just about asleep, the mournful cry of a Coyote floated through the cool night air. It startled her until she seemed to slide clear down the mt. and had to start all over again. Finally the numbers covered her all up and she slept.

At the first streak of daylight she jumped out of bed, built the fire, and began the days routine, thankful for the light. Nothing seemed quite so bad in the daytime. She tried to keep from looking out over that great ice field as it only increased her fears. She wondered how anyone could survive in the terrible Cold. She just had to trust R.C.'s ability as a plainsman and Don's endurance.

When the first glove was finished she slipped her hand into it. Ah! that was the glove she had hoped to fashion. Although much too large for her hand, she knew it would fit R.C. perfectly. With one glove completed,

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she made a mate for it, then immediately started another pair. But she became more anxious each hour and caught herself running to scan the plains oftener and oftener. Not a moving object in that great frozen field except the cattle and horses eating into the last haystacks.

The day that R.C. rode out into that freezing cold he was in the depths of despair. When he arrived in this unknown country, it had entranced him. Now it seemed only a death-trap, which way should he turn? Of course he must strike south as it was warmer in that direction, but how far this ice land extended he couldn't guess. He rode on blindly. Dan was a powerful horse, -- R.C. a desperate and determined man. They floundered in deep snow drifts, a biting cold wind beat at their backs, taking the strength of both man & beast.

When darkness came he found a high drift against a fallen juniper tree that broke the wind. He placed a blanket over Dan, scraped away the snow, spread the saddle out as best he could for a bed, and covered up in his blankets. Morning found him cold but somewhat rested. He ate of the dried venison. Dan ate snow and found a few bites of dried bunch grass, then they moved on. In the distance he could see a range

of mountains. He decided they must be the Steens Mts. he'd heard so much about. It was a ray of hope and he headed towards them. It was hard going and they travelled the most of the day. The Mts. rose high and steep and as he skirted them he saw what appeared to be a gap or ~~opening~~ something and he decided to investigate. There was an entrance perhaps a quarter of a mile wide with high Cliffs on either side. Reuben rode through. He put his hands to his eyes! Was real or had the glare of the sun affected his vision? He felt much as Alice must have felt as she stepped through the looking glass,--this was surely another world. It was a deep valley or gorge, shaped like a huge cupped hand. In its palm meandered a willow fringed creek, while fertile grazing land curved upward like fingers to a high sun rock that arose straight up into the sky. It was a natural wonder, carved by grinding glaciers as they had slowly melted and had slid into the gorge in a bygone age.

R.C. could scarcely resist applauding the whole area, but no, he was sorely pressed for time. That would have to wait. At a glance he knew he had found a great deal more. It was much warmer here, protected as it was by the high rock walls, and the tall bunch grass was well above the snow. He and Dan spent a very comfortable night compared to the previous one. Perhaps it was his peace of mind which let him rest. Early morning found

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him and Dan headed triumphantly home.

It seemed to Dolly that Reuben had been gone for weeks but she knew it really had been only a few days. Fear seized her heart. Supposing he didn't return! No, she would not let herself think of that. She was confident he would come.

Late one afternoon as she stood watching, she saw a tiny object in the distance -- it hadn't been there before. She was afraid to hope lest it be some wild animal, yet she didn't take her eyes from it. Now it was getting bigger, it was advancing! Soon she was sure it was Reuben. As soon as she could see him she knew all was well for she could tell by the way he rode -- shoulders straight, head high. He was out of the slump. As she ran out he waved her back. "Keep out of the cold, Dolly, I'll be in as soon as I tend to Dan."

Dolly could no longer keep up her brave front. She broke down and cried. R.C. realized the few days he had been gone had been a terrifying experience for her. He tried to describe the valley he had discovered, but failed. "Dolly, you wouldn't believe it! You'll just have to see it for yourself."

Immediately he began preparations to move the stock. Returning from the gorge he had come across two men who had settled near the Sierra Mts. the year before and had engaged them to help until the move.

Glad of the opportunity to make a few dollars, they came over the next day. Tools would be needed to build a cabin before Dolly could go, and these were loaded, along with camping equipment, onto horses, and the men and the animals left early the following morning. Dan's tracks were still visible, so R.C. and Dan took the lead, the other man bringing up the rear with first the horses and then the cattle. The stock was so weak it floundered about in the snowdrifts, finding only a little brouse or dry grass where the wind had blown the snow away. The wind was bitter and the progress was slow, Reuben feared at times that many of the cattle would fall by the wayside. But they staggered on and at last reached the gorge. One of the men had fallen far behind, bringing up the stragglers.

Once in the gorge they found food and shelter and gained rapidly in strength.

Again R.C. started a cabin, this time a much better one. In the first place there was plenty of time and secondly, he had learned a great deal about construction. It was necessary to go outside the gorge for logs as there were no suitable ones there. The cabin was twice the size of the first, with a huge rock fireplace in one end. Just as soon as the house was far enough along to live in, R.C. returned for Dolly.

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Although R.C. had been gone for weeks instead of days this time, it hadn't been nearly so hard on Dolly. Before, it had been the anxiety and uncertainty of Reuben's mission which had driven her frantic. Now she could sleep, knowing he was all right. The time passed faster than she had expected, but great was her joy when she heard the call "Hey, Dolly," and when she ran to meet him, he was all smiles.

Hastily they packed, loaded everything into the wagons, hitched up the teams that were left, and began the trip to the new location which they were certain would be far better than this one had proved to be. Dolly glanced back at the lonely little cabin and the trampled remains of the haystacks. It had been a hard year but now they were nearing the Promised Land, if Rube's predictions were true. The weather was moderating, the snow was melting, and tiny buds were swelling on the willows. Who could be sad when spring was on the way?

Chapter III

Dream Ranch

When they finally drove into the gorge, Dolly's eyes opened wide. The grandeur of it appalled her. After Reuben helped her out of the wagon she stood for a moment, speechless, then she exclaimed breathlessly, "your Dream Ranch"! She ran excitedly to the silver stream, dipped up a bucket of crystal water and tossed it high into the air. The breeze caught it and whipped it into hundreds of diamond-like jewels.

"I name thee Kiger Creek", she cried joyously, then on tip toe she stretched her arms high toward the rim rocks. "And this is Kiger's Gorge"!

R.C. smiled contentedly at Dolly's enthusiasm, but suddenly the color faded from her cheeks, and fear crowded the joy from her eyes, for, as she stepped back, a rattle snake buzzed a warning and the clatter of hoofs in the valley announced the approach of Indians.

"Don't be afraid of them, dear," R.C. said soothingly. "They are a part of this wild land and we must accept them." But they had cast their shadow.

Dolly was delighted with the new cabin, the nice roomy structure so different from the tiny one in which she had been confined through the long winter months.

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Much remained to be done and they went to work at once calking the cracks with clay, facing the fireplace with rocks, and awnings, R.C. hand hewed a log for the mantel which Dolly pronounced a work of art.

Dolly understood now why there had been so few Indians at their first location, -- they had all moved to the Steens Mts. Roving bands of them were everywhere. Since deer, fish, and migratory fowl were in abundance it was indeed a happy hunting ground for them. As they wandered up and down the gorge, they stopped to investigate the intruders. They walked in and around the cabin, their faces stern and sullen. Dolly was terrified.

As spring advanced the gorge blossomed into a thing of beauty and the stock grew fat and sleek on the abundant bunch grass. Also, the rattle snakes crawled down from the rimrock where they had holed up for the winter months, and the valley seemed alive with them. Reuben cleared a space around the cabin, bare of brush and with wide paths to the creek and to the Corrals. This made it easier to observe snakes and besides, they like coast and avoid open spaces.

The Indians kept coming. Sometimes they entered the cabin but usually they stood or crouched at the door, their black, beady eyes following Dolly's every move. It was their stealthiness which preyed most

on Dolly's nerves. To be about her work and suddenly see an Indian standing at the door almost frightened her out of her wits. She tried to pretend not to notice them and would keep busy at the farthest side of the cabin. But this tried her temper, especially when they stayed an hour or so, and sometimes it made her so nervous she thought she would scream! She kept a rifle within reach and occasionally she felt like taking a shot at them. Then she would be ashamed to think she had even thought of such a thing, knowing full well she would never do that unless they should attack her.

There was one old fellow who came often and sat silently in the door until Dolly was bored to distraction. One day she gave him a fish hook and line and he disappeared quickly. She sighed a breath of relief. It worked. In a short time he reappeared holding a big trout in his hand which he extended to her. It made her so happy, she felt almost like hugging him, for it was the first sign of friendship any of them had ever shown. From that time she had no fear of old Eagle Claws, a name she had given him because he wore a necklace of eagle claws strung on a strip of buckskin. In fact she began to welcome his visits

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as a sort of protection against the others. She learned to talk with him a little and always gave him some sort of trinket or a bite to eat. He often brought her fish and several times a lovely skin he had tanned. He took a liking to White Chief as he called R.C. and often came to him when R. C. was spending the night on the range. R.C. would give him tobacco or share his lunch with him. He was a Warm Springs Indian, one tribe that had never broken a treaty they had signed. Reuben looked forward to Eagle Claw's visits for he was company and taught Reuben many things.

Nevertheless, Dolly was constantly on the alert. When she left the house she first scanned the gorge for Indians, then watched her every step for snakes. Of the two evils she thought the snakes were the lesser for they always gave a warning before they struck.

Reuben had explored every foot of the gorge. It was indeed a Cattleman's paradise, -- an abundance of high bunch grass, plenty of shade, and clear, swiftly running water. The high rimrock extended around the gorge, the only entrance being the gap through which R.C. first entered. He decided to build a rock fence across the gap and his cattle would be on a range from which they could not stray.

He was anxious to see the surrounding country and as soon as they were settled he rode out to look about. He found a cattleman by the name of Pete French, in the adjoining valley. He had come in two years before, financed by a wealthy Californian, Dr. Glenn. He was rapidly expanding their holdings and already owned large herds of cattle. There were a few other scattered settlers and more were coming in. French was very aggressive, his ambition being to become "Cattle King of the West". He resented the other settlers and tried keeping them off or crowding them out in order to keep the range for his own herds. He and R.C. became well acquainted and their associations were congenial. The two men were much alike with one exception. Pete had unlimited backing and wanted to own everything while R.C. had earned every cent he had and wanted only as much as he could care for. Pete saw at once that R.C. was a man that could never be forced out and in his heart he knew that here was his greatest competitor.

Next to French, Devine probably had the largest holdings. Then there were the Symths, the Boones, and the Riddles, and the McCoys who had settled on Crooks and on other suitable locations. While these people were miles distant from them, Dollyond Reuben were glad to know they had neighbors, and eventually came to

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know and like them very much.

As soon as the cabin and corrals were finished, R.C. began building his rock fence. Rocks were plentiful and he built it high and strong. He made the gate of poles and swung it between two high posts. To fasten it, he slapped a wedge through the upright of the gate into a hole he had cut in the post. He filled it tightly so the horses could not rub it open. For hinges he split some green saplings and bent them around the back gate post. When seasoned they were tough and held the gate securely in place yet let it swing open easily. It was quite an undertaking to build such a fence but when it was finished R.C. felt very proud and figured it was worth all the time it required. Little did he dream of the role this fence would one time play.

R.C. rode the range each week in order to keep a close watch on the stock. At the same time he set a trap line as there were many fur-bearing animals. Dolly especially liked the skins of the otter which were quite plentiful. She plucked off the long coarse hairs, leaving a soft velvet-like fur with which she lined the cuffs of her gloves.

They had begun, in the winter, to save cream from the cows they milked and made butter which

They churned, salted it down and into barrels which they rolled into the creek where it froze, and kept perfectly. In the spring they worked it into rolls and made a trip to Fort Harney, sixty miles distant, where the soldiers willingly paid a dollar a pound for it. They then secured provisions at the Commissary.

On the first trip to the Fort, Dolly was a bit startled by a big dog that came to her. When she put out her hand to pet him he wagged his shaggy tail and looked at her with a sort of appeal in his soft brown eyes as if he were looking for a friend. One of the officers spoke up, "Better take him home with you. He's sure a nuisance around here."

"If you really mean that, I'd love to have him," Dolly replied.

"He's all yours," the soldier said.

From that minute on he was Dolly's constant body guard. She called him "Beauties" and to her he was worth his weight in gold. She could tell from his bark exactly what he saw and when Reuben was gone she depended upon what he told her. If Reuben approached, he barked with joy; if he saw a wild animal, his bark was fierce; but if an Indian came, he growled, low and menacingly. When Dolly was in the cabin, he stationed himself at the door and the Indians kept their distance. He seemed to sense her fear of them, and hated them with all his heart.

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Pete French stopped occasionally to chat. On one of these visits, Dolly gave him a pair of gloves. He couldn't believe that she had made them and at once agreed to buy every pair she would make. When the cowboys and the soldiers saw them, they also rushed to buy, and Dolly soon had quite a good paying business.

Spring turned to summer, the sun peeked over the rim rock, flooding the gorge with bright sunshine. Fat cattle lolled in knee-deep grass and shiny horses stood in the lacy shade of the willows. Dolly was expecting another baby in August. In spite of her sorrow and fear, life seemed much brighter now.

Dolly and Reuben were at the corrals one day when two Indians rode up swiftly on a pony. They motioned for Reuben to come with them and before Dolly could remonstrate, he swung quickly onto the pony behind them. They wheeled their horse about, kicked it into a run, and were gone. R.C. rode in tune with them, arms waving, feet dangling, all done for Dolly's benefit, and she had to laugh. She told Reuben afterwards it looked as if they were flying through the air as she couldn't see the pony.

They went at this rate for about a mile and when R.C. saw a group of Indians he wondered what this was all about. They jerked the pony to a halt and

saw his prize stallion mired in the muck and with only his head protruding. R.C.'s heart missed a beat. He couldn't afford to lose this animal. Could they ever get him out? But before he scarcely had time to think, the chief gave a grunt, the rest pulled taut the ropes they had already placed under the animal and flung him clear of the mire.

Reuben breathed a sigh of relief. They had waited while the two went for him in order that he might witness the rescue. He took them all to the cabin and rewarded them with corn-cob pipes, tobacco, fish hooks and lines, treasures indeed to them. R.C. had thoughtfully brought numerous such articles when he moved into the country, hoping they would help him win the good will of the Indians.

"You see, I told you there were some good Indians," he reminded Dolly.

One warm summer day in ~~early~~ August as Dolly and Reuben were finishing their noon meal, Dolly stepped to the door, then called back, "There's a wagon pulling into the gorge; and before Reuben could get up Dolly screamed joyously, "Mother, Dad!"

Reuben ~~ran~~ out quickly and exclaimed, "well, well, there's no one in the world I'd rather see than you folks, but I'll admit you are about the last people I'd expect to make that trip."

"We just had to come and make sure our grandson arrived in good shape," said John.

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"Come in, I'll attend to the horses," said Reuben. They cried and laughed while they related all of the happenings since they had parted. Two hours passed swiftly and then Mary said, "Well now, what do you say we unpack the wagon? There are somethings that should be taken out."

"Let's do," said Reuben. "I can hardly wait to see what is in the treasure chest."

They removed the dusty canvas cover and Mary and John handed things down to Dolly and Reuben, who tore into the boxes like children opening their Christmas packages. There were fresh and dried fruits and vegetables, ham, bacon, and sausage preserved in lard, five-five gallon crocks of jams and jellies, apple butter, and pickles, besides quantities of yarn and piece goods that would keep Dolly busy for months making clothing. And of all things, -- there was a little sewing machine. It had to be turned by hand but it would double the number of gloves Dolly could make, now that the demand was so great. She was thrilled with the prospect.

They munched the apples, gnawed carrots, tasted jams and pickles. In the bottom of the wagon was a big crate that required the strength of both men to unload. When they pried the lid off, out flew three cackling hens with bedraggled feathers, and

a huge rooster, who stretched his neck and indignantly crowed at the top of his voice.

There were even sacks of winter feed, and lastly, a supply of garden tools.

"It looks like this is a gentle suggestion that next year we grow our own," laughed Reuben.

"That might just be a good idea", replied John.

"Well, children," said Mary, "you may be pretty well filled up but John and I are hungry."

"Oh, I am so sorry," cried Dolly. "I was so excited, I forget. Come in and I'll treat you to a big venison steak."

Later, Dolly said, "Mother, you are the only one in the world who could fill a whole wagon with just the things we needed and wanted most."

"My dear", replied her Mother, "you must remember I've done a bit of pioneering myself."

The days passed quickly. Mary and John helped to make improvements around the place. John built cupboards, wash stands, and two big rustic chairs which sat beside the fireplace. Best of all was a little trundle-bed for the baby. This was low enough to be pushed under the bed when not in use. But John took time out each day to go fishing, eager to catch the big hungry trout that awaited his bait. Dolly and Mary made curtains

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to protection off the bed, and fluffy pillows from the feathers Dolly had saved from the many ducks and geese they had killed. They also finished the layette for the baby.

Early in September the baby was born. Mary, like most pioneer mothers, had had much experience assisting at childbirth. Dolly got along fine and the baby was a chubby little boy whom they named John after her step-father.

A few weeks later, Mary and John decided it was time to be getting back to the valley. Soon the weather would turn and the roads would become impassable. Besides there was much to do on the farm.

It had been a wonderful six weeks with the family all together and the addition of the new baby. Their leaving was indeed a sad and tearful separation.

"Promise to come again," cried Dolly.

"Well, it will take another grandchild to bring us," answered John.

A month passed. Dolly was busier than ever but the baby brought more than enough joy to compensate for the extra work he made.

One day a soldier rode up and called, "A letter for you, Mrs. Kiger."

Letters were rare and she ran excitedly for it. Her hand trembled as she tore it open. It must have an important message, she was

thinking. As she read it she burst into tears. Less than twenty miles from home a bridge collapsed as her mother and father drove over it and her mother had been killed. The shock seemed too much to bear. She stumbled into the house and dropped onto the bed. Another great sorrow had clouded her happiness and Reuben was out on the range..

Evening came but she couldn't get a hold of herself and outside the coyotes howled dismally. She looked down at the tiny baby sleeping peacefully in her little trundle bed. The Lord had taken but he had also given. How comforting! She still had a lot to be thankful for. She cried herself to sleep.

Days passed. She grieved deeply for her mother and recalled over and over those six wonderful weeks they'd had together, but which had cost her mother her life. The love for her baby helped much to ease the pain.

Three years had passed since they arrived in Eastern Oregon. It had brought near disaster, sorrow, happiness, and finally prosperity. Late that summer Reuben had the first bunch of steers to sell, for they were now fat and prime. He drove them to Winnemucca, Nevada to market. which was in the neighborhood of a hundred and fifty mile drive. He hired some cow hands to help him drive them slowly, allowing them to graze as they travelled in order to hold their weight.

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Dolly was surprised when Reuben showed her the amount he received from the sale. It was their first income in three years except for the sale of butter and gloves, and that had gone into the purchase of provisions. After this there would be steers to train every year, and each year there would be an increase since they were saving every heifer calf. They, too, would produce calves in a couple of years. Their profits would amount like compound interest.

There was also another little surprise for Dolly, -- a package Reuben had carried carefully all the way home. It was seldom that Dolly received a gift and she opened it eagerly. It was a lovely silk dress, the softest rose color she had ever seen and made in the very latest style, ruffled skirt, ribbon bows, and a frill of lace. It was the first ready-made dress she had ever owned and she loved it. She held it up to her body and caressed its silken folds.

"It's the most beautiful dress I've ever seen, -- but Reuben, where in the world can I wear it?"

"I'll let you in on a secret, Dolly," he answered. "It's rumored that the soldiers are planning to give a ball one of these days and I thought you'd like a new dress to wear."

Once again Dolly cried, but this time with happiness.

And sure enough, in a few weeks the anxiously awaited invitation arrived. All the settlers for miles around came. They were asked to bring only their bedding, the soldiers furnishing the rest and they went all-out to make it a gala occasion. Gathered around long tables heaped with deliciously prepared food, they sang and played games, but most of all these hungry-hearted folks just talked and visited. The grand finale was the ball, and they danced all night. Dolly, with her dark hair braided and pinned high like a crown, her gray eyes and milk-white complexion, and her beautiful rose-colored dress, was plainly the belle of the ball! She laughed, danced and was gay. It was the first time Reuben had seen her in that mood since the death of little Judd, and he was very proud of her and happy.

These good times came to an end all too soon. There had been three days of festivities. Rejuvenated in spirit, all had been drawn closer together and they, as well as the soldiers, had had a great party. The soldiers promised that it would be an annual event. Sunday morning the chaplain delivered a brief sermon and prayer, then they bade each other good-bye, and returned to their lonely lives, but much happier and with the anticipation of getting together again next year.

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Reuben and Dolly made two trips a year, one in the Spring and one in the fall, to Fort Harney, exchanging butter for provisions. The original Fort had been burned by the Indians, and quite a battle ensued. In 1865 a treaty was signed and the present Fort was built, a much larger and stronger structure than the first.

On one of these trips Dolly cried, "Stop, Reuben", as they passed the ruins of the old Fort. She climbed down and out of the wagon and began digging.

"What in the world is she up to?" thought R. C. "Come", he called, "We have a long ways to go".

The rocks still flew as she tugged and pulled. Suddenly she held up an andiron.

"Come and help me find the other one," she called.

"Well, we could sure use them", and he found himself digging too. It was not long before they uncovered the other one.

"What made you think to look for them"? asked Reuben.

Dolly smiled mischievously. "I saw the lovely ones at the Fort and it occurred to me they'd probably had some in the old fireplace". Just leave it to Dolly!

The irons were badly rusted, but it didn't take many evenings to scrape and polish them. They were large and heavy and wonderful to hold the huge logs in their own fireplace.

Reuben had broken up a piece of ground and had planted wheat for the chickens. It was a real pleasure having their own eggs and fryers, yet they were always a reminder of Dolly's mother, as were the many other things she and John had so thoughtfully brought with them.

Some weeks later Dolly and Reuben were eating lunch when they heard Brutus growl. R.C. bolted out the door, Dolly following. Some Indians had let the poles down from around the wheat, which was now rank and green; turned their ponies in, and were making camp. R.C. ran up to the Chief, whirled him around and gave him a swift kick in the seat. He then motioned to him to get out his ponies from the field and go! Dolly shuddered and turned pale, fearing that now there would really be trouble. To her surprise, the Chief said something to the squaws, they began gathering their tepees, and quickly moved away.

"How could you dare do such a thing?" Dolly wanted to know tremblingly.

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"If you want the respect of an Indian, you've got to be braver than he is," chuckled Reuben. "It's just a good thing I was here, or the chickens wouldn't have had any feed this winter."

"Some day they'll kill us all, thought Dolly.

John was past a year old now, growing and thriving. Dolly watched over him carefully, always mindful of the dangers in this untamed country. Then one day John became suddenly very ill, and, as fate would have it, R.C. had just left on a trip to the range. Dolly quickly recognized the difficulty to be the much dreaded dysentry and she felt perfectly helpless to cope with it. Although she applied every simple remedy she knew, he grew increasingly worse. His little body was so racked with pain, she realized he could not endure it long. She was recalling how quickly Judd was taken, then her mother, now must she lose John?

"Oh, no, dear Lord, please spare him!" she prayed. "Oh, if Reuben would only come!"

It was then she noticed an old squaw, who had slipped in unnoticed, standing beside the bed staring at the baby.

Dolly was now facing a danger a thousand

times more terrifying than Indians. Let them come and go. She didn't care. And she dropped her eyes again in prayer. When she looked again, the old woman was gone.

In a few minutes she reappeared, carrying a bunch of dripping roots, and as she moved to the fire, Dolly realized she wanted to boil them. Dolly had little faith that she could help but she was desperate and would try anything.

After the roots had boiled, the woman cooled a cup of tea, and the baby was able to swallow about a teaspoonful. The old squaw sat down cross-legged beside the bed and silently waited. In about an hour she got up and again brought the tea to Dolly and again they gave him some, this time a little more easily. In another hour they could see he was definitely better and Dolly's hopes began to revive. Hour after hour she administered the medicine. John was sleeping peacefully at last and the dysentery was checked. Her prayer had been answered!

As the old squaw got up to go, Dolly wondered how she could ever repay her for the great service she had rendered, the greatest she had ever been granted. Grabbing up her beautiful woolen scarf, she folded it diagonally, and placed it around the old woman's shoulders. Her weathered old face actually broke into a wide smile and there was a softness in her beady black eyes.

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This was no doubt the greatest treasure she had ever had, and she was happy.

Reuben returned late that night to find Dolly completely exhausted from the night and two days of anguish.

"Go to bed, Dolly," he insisted, "and I'll take over from here."

Dolly dropped onto the bed without even undressing and fell into a deep sleep, while Reuben carefully covered her with blankets.

Another year passed and another son was born to them, but it did not bring her mother as she had promised. Now it was up to Reuben to deliver the baby and he did surprisingly well considering his only experience had been his assistance at John's birth, when Mary supervised. They named him Dick and with two little boys Dolly's job was a full time one.

Reuben built a little play pen in which they placed the children while he and Dolly milked the cows. The pen was built of poles and Reuben had filled the lower part with clay in order to keep the snakes out. One day Dolly, who kept a constant watch of the children, saw John holding what looked like a whip. She dropped her milk pail and screamed, "It's a snake!" and ran frantically to him. By the time she and

Reuben reached the pen they discovered it was a snake - John was holding but a harmless garter snake so beaten up, it hung limp as a rock.

"That's the first garter snake I've ever seen here," exclaimed Dolly. "I thought they were all rattlers!"

"That's because you're always looking for danger," Reuben said. "I think we'd better turn John loose. We'd soon rid the place of snakes."

A frontiersman who has made friends with all his neighbors never knows what he may be called upon to do. Reuben was that sort. He was firm yet very kind, and all with whom he came in contact admired him and did not hesitate to seek his advice upon many occasions. Sometimes it was more advice as was the case one night shortly after Reuben and Dolly had finished milking. Boone, another settler, rode up, his face badly swollen and his whole head wrapped in a scarf.

"Reube," he cried, "my tooth is killing me and I want you to pull it."

"Why Boone," replied Reuben sympathetically, "I never pulled anybody's tooth in my life."

"But you've pulled horse's teeth," insisted Boone.

"O, that's different," answered Reuben. "I knock them out with a hammer and chisel, but might break your jaw."

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Well, it couldn't hurt anyworse than it does now. Please, Ruba, you've just got to," groaned the poor man. It's ached for a week,--I'ee bet I didn't sleep ten minutes last night."

"All right, come up to the cabin and show me which one it is," said Reuben.

We placed Boone in a chair where he could be well braced. It was not difficult to locate the guilty tooth. Reuben selected his tools, washed the chisel before passing it through a flame in order to sterilize it. He then placed it against the tooth and gave it a hard tap with the hammer. The tooth flew all the way across the room.

Boone jumped up, threw his arms around Reuben and cried, "O, thank you! Thank you! I knew you could do it, Rube! I just knew you could!"

We sat down for a few minutes, then arose to go.

I'm going home and sleep 'til morning."

After he had gone Reuben told Dolly, "I hated to do that, but to tell the truth, I never knocked a horses' tooth out as slick as I did his."

We picked up the hammer and chisel and advanced towards Dolly.

"Lady, he asked, "do you have any teeth you'd like extracted?" Dolly backed away. You'll not get

a whack at mine. When you come down with that hammer I thought you'd take out at least six!"

Reuben was prospering and because he saw great possibilities in the cattle business, he sent word to his brother, William, usually called Doc, offering to help get him established if he would come out. It was a joyous occasion when, a few months later, Doc and his wife Lucy, arrived with their two children. They settled only a few miles from the gorge and Dolly and Lucy visited often. The two women had always been close as two sisters and it was wonderful for them to be together again. But Dolly especially found great comfort in having Lucy near after her lonely years.

It was fall and Reuben and Dolly were busy harvesting the ripened wheat which would be food for the chickens during the winter months, when they noticed a cloud of dust. A band of Indians were approaching, riding wildly as their custom was. As they neared they jerked their ponies to a halt, dismounted, and coming to Reuben, the Chief handed him a ball of dirty yellow ribbon. Reuben began unwinding it, yard after yard. In the very center was a crumpled piece of paper, the Peace Treaty of the Warm Springs Indians, known for their peacefulness.

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R.C. began to read this treaty aloud, and to the amazement of Lemand Dolly, the chief removed his feather head-dress and the others bowed their heads and stood silently until R.C. had finished. Then the ribbon was rewound, R.C. shook the Chiefs' hand, and patted him on the shoulder. Immediately the Indians remounted their ponies, and with vicious kicks were off in a cloud of dust.

Two more years rolled by. Reuben was busy with his increasing herds and Dolly was expecting another baby. John was four years old now and Dick was two, both remarkably active boys. Dolly watched them constantly, guarding them from the three great dangers,-- rattlers, Indians, and the creek which was deep and swift, but a mighty attraction to them.

Dolly was becoming much concerned about the Indians. They were growing more numerous, they were bolder, and the bands were constantly on the move, never remaining in one camp as formerly. Dolly laid this restlessness to the fact that the country was being settled faster, the Indians no doubt resenting the settlers poaching on their hunting grounds.

Grief and sorrow seemed to follow Dolly and to strike often. This time it was poor Beatus. He

attacked a porcupine one night and when they found him the next day, quills were piercing his mouth and throat. Dolly and Reuben worked hard to remove them and finally did succeed, but infection set in and he died in less than a week.

Dolly had depended so completely upon Brutus for protection, it seemed to her she could not live there without him. They buried him beside the door where he had so faithfully kept watch, for although he was no longer there she felt his spirit stood silently on guard.

Chapter IV

Indians On The Warpath

One morning Dolly had been to the creek for water when she saw a horseman approaching. She knew it was a white man from the way he rode, and he was coming very fast. She soon recognized him as a cowboy by the name of Chenowith, called Chenny for short. He reigned in his horse and yelled, "are on the warpath, Dolly! For God's sake, get out of here."

"O, Chenny, she cried, Reebe's on the range, where can I go?"

"Get over to the sod house", he told her. "There's

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seem to be coming there;" and with that he spurred his horse and hurried on to warn the other settlers.

Dolly was simply paralyzed with fear. What she had always dreaded had happened at last. O, for a horse or Brutus and she had neither, so she grabbed the children and headed for the sod house. It was a house French had built mostly of sod to house some of his hired help and it was a good two miles away. The children sensed something was wrong and Dolly feared their loud cries would attract the Indians.

There was the creek to cross, so she tore her apron in two, tied Dick to a sagebrush while she carried John across then tied him up and returned for Dick, both screaming at the tops of their voices. The creek was swift and knee-deep and she could scarcely keep her balance. But the lives of her children were at stake. Three times she crossed the icy water, her limbs numb and her clothing wet to her waist. She ran although she was compelled to slow down occasionally from sheer exhaustion. Finally as she staggered up to her destination, Pete saw her and ran out to meet her.

"Dolly, what in the world is the matter," he exclaimed.

"O, Pete, she cried, "the Indians are on the warpath!"

"Who told you that?" he wanted to know.

"Chenny," she answered.

"Why, you haven't seen Chenny, -- He's over in Nevada somewhere. You've just had a bad dream or something," Pete insisted.

That was just too much for Dolly and her eyes filled with tears. Pete took her into the house, brought one of his shirts and a blanket and told her, "you get out of that wet clothing while I get some wood." Then he called to the Chinese cook, "Ah Wong, fix Dolly and the children some breakfast."

While Pete was gone she took off her soaked clothes, put on the shirt, and fashioned a skirt out of the blanket, then spread the clothes out to dry. Pete brought an armload of wood and built a roaring fire. Ah Wong brought ham with hot biscuits and honey, and coffee for her and a pitcher of milk for the children.

The good breakfast and the protection from a group of sturdy men gave Dolly a feeling of security and she soon regained her composure. But she had scarcely gotten back into her own dry clothes until

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Doc drove up with his family and called, "Pete, is Dolly here?"

Pete said as he reached the door, "Are you scared too?"

"Cheney says the injins are really on the war path this time," answered Doc. "You'd better get out of here."

The cowboys had seen Doc drive up and came over to see what was going on.

"We aint runnin' away from the red devils," they explained. But they did, and Pete with them.

A few days later a few band of Indians came upon them while they were branding calves, and the cowboys jumped onto their horses and rode for their lives. The pony of Ochoco, one of the cow hands, was shot out from under him. Pete rode up, stood and his hand, and Ochoco swung on behind him. They had gone only a short distance, though, with the Indians in hot pursuit, when Ochoco said, Pete, I'm sick. I can't go any farther."

Pete glanced back and noticed blood running out of Ochoco's boot. "There's a culvert in the road ahead. I'll ride close to the edge and slow down a little so you can drop off. If you crawl under the bridge the Indians will never see you in all this dust. Tie a tourniquet around your leg to stop the blood and I'll send a posse

of soldiers for you."

The soldiers did rescue him and he recovered, but poor Ah Wong was not so fortunate. The Indians killed him, cut him to pieces, and hung his flesh on the sage brush to dry. The sod house wouldn't burn so they dumped Pete's huge store of provisions, which he had trucked from Winnemucca, out on the floor and turned in the hogs Pete had been fattening.

In the meantime Doc had taken Dolly and her children, along with his family, to Smyth's where, since it was the most logical meeting place, the settlers had agreed to assemble in case of an attack. He had first gone by for Dolly, figuring R.C. would be on the range, but finding her gone and everything in the cabin in order, he felt assured she had not been harmed and that she had no doubt gone to the sod house where he later found her.

Evidently Cheney had made the rounds and warned all of the settlers for many were already at Smyth's when Doc and his group reached there, and others were arriving. All were badly frightned, some of the women almost hysterical. Grandma Smyth was the only calm one in the whole assembly. Rube Kiger was a particular friend of hers.

"If there's any danger, Rube will come," she

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exclaimed confidently.

"But Grandmother," cried Dolly, "he's out on the range and we could all be killed before he even hears of it." They may even kill him," and a terrible fear clutched her heart."

"Well, I'm not budging until he comes," and Grandmother went into the kitchen to fix something for the crowd to eat. Her undisturbed manner had its effect on those fear-crazed people. The tension began to ease as they wondered if this might be just another Indian scare of which there had been so many. A few persons began to laugh, others joined in, until they all became quiet jovial. A get-to-gether was a treat to all. Someone suggested that one of the men tune up his fiddle, and they'd dance.

"Might as well have a little fun," another said. "Maybe we scare too easy."

The women went out to help Grandmother. It was no small chore, feeding so many. Dolly saw her go into the little rock cellar they had built off the kitchen and bring out a pitcher brimming full of cream. But suddenly her face turned ashy pale, the pitcher slipped from her hand, and the cream spread in a golden pool at her feet.

"What is it grandmother?" cried Dolly, running to her.

"My God, there's Reuben", she answered.

The others heard and rushed out. Not a word was spoken. One look at R.C's white face and Dan's heaving sides dripping with sweat confirmed their veldest fears. The other men seemed stupefied but R.C. began to give orders.

"Unwrap the wagon wheels, harness the horses, and get ready to move out as soon as it is dark, but keep under cover as much as possible."

Darkness fell and with the advantage of a moonless night, they moved out and headed for Fort Harney, sixty miles away,-- fifty-two men, women and children. Dolly, clinging to the children, rode on the running gears one one wagon thinking any minute she would surely be thrown under the wheels of the wheels of the wagon as it tipped and careened, for the road was rough and rocky. Though the wheels had been well wrapped with torn up blankets and clothing, to deaden the sound, they still seemed loud enough to be heard for a great distance, and these was the constant fear that a yelling horde might pounce upon them at any turn of the road. It was indeed a night of horror!

At sunrise they rounded the top of a ridge and looked down upon the Fort just as the flag was being

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raised and the bugle sounded. Never had the stars and stripes looked so glorious.

A detatchment of soldiers advanced to meet them and escorted them down. The gates of the stockade swung open and the weary settlers pulled in. The gates closed behind them and at last they were safe. Horses and people were both so exhausted, they practically dropped in their tracks.

R.C. had been making his usual rounds on the range when suddenly old Eagle Claws came out of the sagebrush. Reuben sensed something was wrong.

"My people make war medicine," he said. "White Chief go," and he pointed up to the sun rock. R.C. raised his eyes. A thin wisp of smoke curled upwards and on the opposite side of the gorge, another. Smoke signals!

Reuben drew his favorite hunting knife from its sheath, handed it to his faithful old friend, and grasped his hand in appreciation. He had betrayed his own people in order to warn a white friend. Then Reuben leaned forward on Dan and he lunged into a run. When he found Dolly gone and wagon tracks in front of the cabin, he figured Doc had picked them up. Dan needed no further urging.

We made a record run to Smyths'.

The settlers were given quarters in the Fort and made as comfortable as possible. In their flight they had fled from their homes without thinking of clothing or other possessions. Now they realized the need of many things, while they restlessly roamed the fort. With their fears considerably eased, some began talking of returning to retrieve some much needed articles. Finally Doc, Boone, John Smyth, and his son determined to drive back to their cabins. Others tried to discourage them, but they refused to be persuaded. Doc had borrowed eighty dollars of Dolly's glove money, and when she learned he was going, she told him she would cancel the debt if he would stop at their cabin and bring her scissors back with him. Doc looked at her in wonderment. Of all the things she had left, to want a pair of scissors most and to be willing to pay eighty dollars for them just stumped him. Women were funny but he gladly agreed to bring them.

Long before daylight one morning they started back. They left the Smyths at their house while Doc and Boone went on to theirs. After getting the things they needed they stopped at Reuben's cabin, went in and found the scissors on the mantel where Dolly said they would be. Doc laid them on the wagon seat beside him and they proceeded on. As they neared the gate Doc missed the scissors. They stopped and searched but

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to no avail. They were gone.

"Hold the horses", Doc said to Boone. "They were here a minute ago. They must have jolted off the seat. I'll run back and see if I can find them."

As he rounded a little projection in the cliff he screamed to Boone, "Unhook the horses! The Injuns are after us!"

Boone quickly unhooked the tugs and dropped the neck yokes and leand Doc jumped onto the horses and rode for their lives. As they passed through the gate Doc dropped off and with a rock drove a wedge in even with the gate-post, then back onto his horse and away they sped.

When the Indians reached the gate they couldn't get it open and were stopped. But they did have rifles that some renegade had traded to them and they shot at the fleeing men. One shot struck Boone in the leg and although it bled profusely, he was able to reach the Fort and eventually recovered.

In their mad flight they observed Smyth's house in flames. When a detatchment of soldiers returned to the scene, they found the body of young Smyth, the head severed from the body and placed upon a pole. It was very apparent that a fiendish war dance had been held about the fire. They had not located

the father who had taken refuge in the rock cellar but he had not survived for the heat had suffocated him. Before expiring, he had wrapped the contents of his pockets in a piece of his clothing and had hidden this in a place where it was found later by friends.

Upon his return to the Fort, Doc said to Dolly, "I'm sorry, but I didn't get here with your scissors, but I agree with you now that they were valuable for they saved our lives." If we hadn't gone back after them we would have been through the gate before knowing the Indians were after us, -- easy prey for the red devils".

"Your debt is paid in full anyway, Doc," replied Dolly tearfully.

A few days later one of the officers came up to R.C. and asked, "Rube have you any money buried around your cabin?" "Why do you ask that?" replied R.C.

"Well, somebody sure thinks you have," he told him. "We rode past there yesterday and the whole yard is dug up."

Rueben's heart jumped when he heard this and he hurried to find Dolly.

"Someone is digging for our hard earned cash, one of the officers tells me. He says they've dug up the whole yard. It doesn't sound like the work of Indians. Fix me a couple of sandwiches. I'm going after it."

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"O, no! Cried Dolly. "the Indians will kill you sure! Look what happened to the Smyths and Doc!" But Reuben was adamant.

"You don't think for a minute I'll sit here and let someone walk off with our hard-earned savings, do you?"

Dolly knew it was a waste of breath to try to persuade him so she sadly made the sandwiches and at dark Reuben and Don slipped out of the stockade.

Don was 'rarin' to go' as they raced through the mts. They reached the gorge well before dawn and Reuben tied Don to the willows besides the creek then made his way up to the cabin. Suddenly a dog barked fiercely. An Indian cursed and the dog yelped. Of all things! Indians were camped right at the corrals! Evidently the Indian thought the dog was barking at some wild animal, and mad at being awakened, had thrown a rock or club at it.

R. C. stopped in his tracks and waited. When all was quiet, R. C. cautiously picked his way to the corner of the house and began stepping off so many paces to where the cache was buried. At the first step he thought he had stepped on a bed of Indians. He slipped to his knees, his blood curdling. No, it was

only one of Dolly's feather beds that they had carried out and torn open. There were feathers all over the place.

He proceeded, stepping into many holes that had been dug. Supposing they had found the money! But when he had reached the right spot, the ground was undisturbed. With the short-handled spade he had brought he tried to dig but it made so much noise he feared it would start the dog barking again, so he carefully loosened the soil and dug with his hands. How happy he was when his hands came in contact with those buckskin bags of gold! Gathering them up, he quickly returned to Dan. For once he hoped Dan would refrain from his usual nicker with which he welcomed his master. Luckily this time he was just too tired.

R.C. put the money into his saddle-bags, led Dan carefully to a safe distance, mounted and rode rapidly away. He knew of a little cave or nicke in the hills and decided to hide there until dark. He had stopped there many times for shelter from the heat or a storm so knew there would be room enough for them to rest comfortably. He loosened the saddle, ate his lunch, then relaxed and dozed.

About mid-afternoon he awoke with a start and listened. Dan, too, became alert, pointing his ears forward. Then Reuben heard voices and as

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he peered through a clump of sagebrush which only partially obscured the entrance, three Indians appeared. Riding, one behind the other at a trot, he felt they could not fail to see him. Apparently they were having some kind of argument and when within fifty feet of him, they suddenly sheered sharply to the left and disappeared around a knoll.

Whew! That was a close one!

As soon as it was dark, he tightened Don's saddle, swung onto his back and rode rapidly back to the Fort, getting there just after daylight. Dolly had spent those hours in great anxiety and was jubilant when he rode in.

It was not long after this before Indians began appearing within sight of the fort. When they discovered that the settlers had left their homes and taken refuge at the Fort, they came in great numbers and almost surrounded it. The officers as well as the refugees feared an attack and prepared for it as well as possible. Even the women who could handle guns were armed. Dolly was an expert with a rifle and could

compete with any of the men. Barrels of water were prepared in order to fight fire in case they tried to burn this Fort as they had the first one.

Finally the officers arranged a parley with the chiefs and after much bickering, a peace treaty was signed. Early in August, 1878 the Modoc War ended.

Chapter V

A Promise Fulfilled

Three weeks after that terrifying ride to the Fort, Dolly gave birth to another son. This time she was under the care of the army doctor. When Dolly looked at the baby she turned her head and cried out in anguish, "O, he's not a normal child!" She grabbed Reuben's hand.

"O, Reuben, she cried; "I want to go home, back to the Willamette valley!"

It was a sudden and staggering blow as if she had plunged a dagger into his chest. For a moment he could not speak; then he answered calmly, "All right, Dolly, we'll go as soon as you are able." And he pressed her hand affectionately, kissed her,

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and left the room.

Now he wanted to be alone. He had made a promise to Dolly long ago, she had called it, and he had not the slightest idea of not fulfilling it, but he had to think things out. He saddled Dan and rode into the hills. He had learned long ago that he could always think more clearly on Dan, and this sudden turn of events was as if he had been thrown into a whirlpool from which he must find a way out.

Dan struck off into his easy ~~gate~~ gait and it soothed R.C. as a panorama unfolded before his eyes. He saw Pete's big white mansion standing out against the great Sierra mts. like a haunting ghost of his shattered dreams. He had seen Pete haul lumber from the Blue mts. one hundred and fifty miles away; truck the finest furnishings all the way from San Francisco; all of this to build a fitting home for his bride, the beautiful, pampered daughter of his benefactor, Dr. Glenn. He even imported an army of servants to cater to her every whim. Yet without one qualm of conscience or thought of Pete's gigantic effort to please her, she stayed only a short time, then returned to her

beloved San Francisco. Here Pete kept her in luxury but seldom saw her.

Dolly, on the other hand, had lived in rough log cabins, carried water, milked cows, made butter and gloves, bore babies without medical aid, always with a consuming fear in her heart of snakes and Indians. But had she ever complained? "No," he admitted, "not once".

R.C. felt that the trouble with the Indians was at an end. In another five years his holdings would be worth a million dollars. But what was a million worth? He figured the price was much too high. No! he would leave the millions to Pete and take his family back to a safer, easier life. That was the way it should be and that was the way he wanted it.

He turned Dan and went straight to Pete where he laid his cards on the table. A great light shone in his eyes which R.C. understood. Pete French had long coveted Kiger Gorge and R.C.'s herds, but knowing he could never force them out, he had never tried. Now it was being handed to him.

It was Pete's move. R.C. waited. Both men knew that Pete held the ace hand. Here

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was no other market. Or was there? Pete didn't doubt Rube's uncanny ability to accomplish the impossible, yet he never let money stand in the way of something he wanted and R.C knew it.

"What is your price, Rube?" Pete asked.

"Eighty thousand dollars," replied Rube, recalling that Pete had remarked at one time when they were having a disagreement, "you can't even prove my name is Pete French," then added, "in gold."

"Come over next week and I'll have the money for you!" Pete had done just as R. C. knew he would; he'd played it fair.

Reuben returned to Dolly, now that everything had been cleared up. He told Dolly what he had done but he didn't tell her how it had hurt and she never knew the depth of the wound.

In the meantime the doctor explained to Dolly that the baby's condition was due to the terrible experience she had gone through,-- the rent to the sod house, crossing the ice cold creek, her fear, and the rough and dangerous sixty mile ride to the Fort, all of which had resulted in the baby losing weight, but that he

would soon be built up into a healthy child. Dolly just couldn't believe it.

The Indians had congregated around the Fort in great numbers and lolled around their campfires.

One day R.C. came and said, "Come, Dolly, and walk with me down to the Indian camp".

She refused.

Lucy heard them and chipped in, "Go on Dolly, I'll mind the children."

So, reluctantly Dolly accompanied him. They walked slowly down through the dirty, smoky camps. She had never seen so many Indians, hundreds of them, until she was convinced every Indian in many Western states was there, and her fear of them had not lessened a great deal, and she cringed from the sight of the half-naked savages.

They had continued walking for some distance when R.C. stopped before an old squaw. Dolly looked up and recognized her once lovely rose-colored dress on this woman. It was dirty, bedraggled, and lacked several inches of coming together at the waist. Dolly's eyes opened wide with horror but she couldn't speak.

"Shall I get it back for you, Dolly?" asked Reuben?

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"That isn't funny," cried Dolly. "Take me away from here quick".

The Indians gradually broke camp and moved away. Dolly regained her strength. Now they were planning their trip back to the Willamette Valley. One of the officers at the Fort had a fine, stylish city cab which he had brought with him when he was assigned to serve in the West. It had two seats facing each other, a top that folded back, while in front was a high seat for the driver. But to his astonishment when he desired, there were no roads on which to drive and, alas, no fair ladies to ride with him! Since it had become a source of constant ridicule, R. C. was able to purchase it at a bargain price. He made a "grub box" to fit between the seats and on the bottom of this he placed their precious gold, with the food on top of that. A mattress over all this made a comfortable place for Dolly and the children to ride while R. C. sat on the high front seat and drove. Two six-shooters and a rifle were the weapons he chose for himself, while Dolly had her rifle in order to guard the rear through a small window in the back of the cab.

Just before they left, R. C. rode back to

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"Kiger Gorge". He traversed every familiar trail. It seemed his heart strings were entwined in the high bunch grass and it was hard to tear them loose. Lolling cattle raised their heads, gold-tinged horses raced from the lacy shade of the willows, their manes waving a farewell. These were no longer his, but the memories were, and he locked them in his heart to keep for ever-more. As he rode east with Dan, the faithful horse from which he would never part, they halted for one last look. What a paradise it was! Then he closed and fastened the gate on his "Dream Ranch" and rode swiftly away.

As for Dolly, when she ran out in her terrified flight to the Sod House, that was farewell to "Kiger Gorge." She never returned.