

at present. The fact is that I have been on the brink of ruin for some months, and I have managed to stave it off, hoping to win it all back again, by dropping everything in after it. I had no fear but that I should win, until just one hour ago. But everything has gone to smash, and I am absolutely ruined." He said it all so coolly that I was dazed and did not believe my ears.

"Here," he said, and he took off the flashing ring from his finger and drew out his diamond sleeve links, and also his beautiful timepiece and heavy chain, and pushed them into my hand. From his pocket he took his book and gave me his last roll of greenbacks, and running his hand through his pockets, gathered together all he had, to the last piece of silver. "Here, take these, and go away as soon as possible."

"But Rosamonde—she will want to see you," I began.

"No, I should be ashamed. I couldn't stand it. She cannot endure hardships," he exclaimed. "I can never look her in the face again."

In awe I gazed at him. "But, Howard, what is to become of you? What are you going to do?"

He smiled, game to the last. "Oh," he said with a shrug, "I can be a chauffeur for somebody." He jumped from the carriage, waved his hand to me as assuredly as ever, and disappeared.

### III.

WHERE does the strength come from that abides in the body of a woman who is suddenly resurrected from among the dying, by means of a new hope? Together Rosamonde and I sought him everywhere, in byways and hedges, in the darkness and the day, with advice and without, on the wharves and on the banks of the rivers, and finally after some months we had an inkling. Someone had heard him say he would like to go to the mines and see if he could not make a fresh start in the world. We two fitted it into another chance word, and then we set out upon our long-deferred journey toward the great west.

As we stepped from the train and went to take our passage in the stage for a rough pull out into

the wilderness, Rosamonde, in a short skirt of corduroy and a little coat, walked by my side with an eager light in her dark eyes, insensible to the cold and chill of that early morning hour.

"Howard said you could not bear hardships," I murmured, but she did not seem to hear.

After a day and a night of being hurled along over dreary roads, we came to a scattered settlement. It was all raw and crude and primitive, with not a place for man or woman to lay the head, save on the ground. But Rosamonde cared nothing for this. We stood and watched the mighty work of eager gold hunters, who had burrowed into the earth everywhere, in search of the precious metal that was to crown them as kings of success.

We two asked everywhere among this army of restless workers for a clue to the missing man. There was none. We turned away disheartened. Even she began to lose hope. Yet in spite of this there was a glow of health upon her cheek and an alertness of movement in her action, very unlike the pale languid lady in her orange satin that I had met but a few months before. She even looked younger and more like the child I had first known, in her innocence and beauty.

"If only we could have found him here," she said, "it puts new blood into my veins to be here in the very beginning of things! Why, I don't mind hardships, out here where there is all this fresh air to breathe. It's being penned up in walls and narrow streets and the sky and the stars so far away you hardly ever see them, like in New York, that is the real hardship! To think he should not have known me at all."

At the end of our efforts to trace him we were waiting to take the stage for a camp still further into the wilderness. Vaguely and listlessly we noted the great twenty-mule teams coming up the road, bringing swirling clouds of dust along with them that almost concealed them from sight, animals, wagons and drivers.

"To think of breathing that all day," exclaimed Rosamonde, "how can they do it, I wonder?"

"They are gods," I said, oracularly, "or, they are mighty men, which is the same thing."

"I suppose they are doing it for the sake of some loved one, to keep the wolf from the door," she said, musingly.

"What better work for men or gods?" I continued. "Come, we must be going, the stage is ready to start."

JUST then a gray teamster passed by in the great procession, with his mighty combination of three wagons drawn by its ten span of pulling creatures, and he was just like the others, a gray-haired automaton, swinging his whip and talking language that only mules can understand. We were bewildered, however, to see a wave of the hand that seemed familiar, and from amid the jangle of mule bells, a voice cried out, "Hello? How did you get here?"

Rosamonde gave a great cry and ran forward and threw her arms about the man of dust. The mules came to a stop, though the bells still rang out as if for a wedding, and her husband kissed her thrice.

"There isn't a bed in camp," he said, "and I have to sleep in the corral with the mules. You can't stay in this God-forsaken place!"

"No place is God-forsaken where you are!" she exclaimed.

I understood, though he did not, of course. In her eyes, this was but a disguise, under which he was serving as a charioteer for the gods in all his might and prowess. How could she break the spell and make him understand that her place was by his side. It came to her as an inspiration, suiting herself to the conditions of the case.

"Take me along with you," she entreated, "and I will do the cooking!"

In that moment the scales fell from his eyes and he saw that she was his helpmeet indeed.

The following day I left her there, and she is happy in her native wilds, rearing a brood of sturdy children out in a gulch of the great Sierra Nevadas for future American citizenship.

But then Rosamonde is a daughter, herself, of the mighty pioneers, otherwise gods of a bygone day, and it runs in her blood, not to be able to live in the cities, but to make a home in the great wilderness.

## "Pretty Peggy O'Neill's" Own Story

"SOME day, away off in the future if you will, I should like to have you write my story; just the little parts of it that you have heard from my own lips."

That was the ardent request made of the writer once upon a time by a distinguished woman, Mrs. Margaret O'Neill Eaton, who was better known in the days of Andrew Jackson as "Pretty Peggy O'Neill," known imperfectly and unfairly.

In a boarding house on Ninth between E and F streets in Washington, where the Inter-Ocean building now stands, the narrator lived in a room adjoining that of Mrs. Eaton, who was then nearing her eighty-third birthday. An acquaintance developed into a friendship which was valuable to the writer, then a young man, and helpful to the elderly lady. During the summer of 1879 Mrs. Eaton called on the young man frequently for attentions her age and sickness made necessary. She was very poor and very grateful for every kindness. Her expenses were paid by a grandson and a granddaughter, notwithstanding they had heavy expenses of their own to meet. Although Mrs. Eaton had lost her wealth, her beauty had not left her entirely, and she was an attractive woman to the very last.

When she died, on November 8, 1879, while her lungs were filling and her breath came gaspingly, she uttered these last words: "I do not ask to stay, but the world seems too beautiful to leave."

Although she was daily facing death for more than a year, Mrs. Eaton manifested great interest in current affairs; particularly in our political, national and international affairs. She was very poor; and poverty had come to her in her old age because of her folly in marrying a man much younger than herself; a man who squandered all of her fortune, and otherwise stabbed her to the heart with infidelity of the most cruel and wanton character. Her story is here given, substantially as she requested that it be given:

"First of all things, I want to vindicate the memory of General Jackson. During his administration I was generally spoken of as the most beautiful woman in America. I was between thirty and thirty-five years old. President Jackson was a very old man, and had long since passed his days of virility. Instead of being classed as a 'lover' of mine, that dear old gentleman should be classed as a faithful father of a woman who needed paternal protection. I want it made emphatic that General Jackson was the only man that I ever knew in all my life who did not in some manner misbehave or attempt to misbehave himself.

"President Jackson was a friend of my dear old mother. She was a member of Union Methodist church on Twentieth street just south of Pennsylvania avenue. She was one of the saintly members of that church. General Jackson often called on my mother, when I was a young lady. It was his respect and veneration for my mother that led him to

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stand by me and fight for me, to prevent jealous women from ruining my reputation. It was because I was the daughter of "Mother O'Neill," and not because I was 'Pretty Peggy' that President Jackson brought about the disruption of his cabinet in my defense.

"Martin Van Buren I did not know, except superficially, when the fight against me culminated. Martin Van Buren stood by me, God bless him! I had no reason and no right to expect it of him. Well, I made him president of the United States and am proud of the deed. At that time, I prevented John C. Calhoun from being president of the United States, and I am proud of the deed, for he used all of the influence of his commanding position and his wonderful mental force to destroy me.

"With one exception I had no malice against any of the public men of the day. They were merely creatures in the hands of their wives. I did not even cherish enmity towards John C. Calhoun, in the beginning. But when Martin Van Buren, who had unexpectedly shown himself to be my friend, was defeated of confirmation as minister to the court of St. James; defeated by the malignant will of John C. Calhoun on my account, it was manifestly my turn to show myself the friend of the man who had been my friend. Then I began working the political wires against Calhoun and in favor of Van Buren.

"I had many conferences with President Jackson. He saw clearly that the rejection of Mr. Van Buren was a rebuke to himself, for having appointed my friend to such a position; and he resented it. I made many suggestions. I was busy day and night laying plans and plotting politically against Calhoun and in favor of Van Buren. He had been my friend; and he subsequently knew that I had been his friend; but he never knew the half of what I did to have him nominated and Calhoun defeated.

"At first, when I suggested that Mr. Van Buren would be the proper man to succeed him in the presidency, as a complete rebuke to his detractors, President Jackson doubted the ability; that is to say, the fighting strength and staying qualities of Mr. Van Buren. He did not doubt his loyalty. But, knowing that he was leaving a fight partly unfinished, although he had almost completely changed the membership of the senate, President Jackson wanted to have for his successor some man who would keep up his fight relentlessly.

"I saw Mr. Van Buren, told him that the president was considering him for the succession, told him the doubt that seemed to exist, and urged him to put on his fighting clothes, and show himself to be a warrior. He took my advice promptly. Within a week, at a banquet at Brown's hotel, Mr. Van

Buren made a short speech, in which he defied all of his enemies in the senate, defended President Jackson and his entire administration, and stated that the fight of Jackson would be continued by Jackson's successor in the white house; and he predicted that President Jackson would be able to name a man capable of carrying on the fight until every enemy and opponent should bite the dust.

"We had no live newspapers in those days. Such a speech at present would go all over the world. Well, it went all over Washington and raised a row. President Jackson sent for Martin Van Buren, and he went to the white house. I never asked and never knew the details of that conference, although I knew the inside stories of all subsequent conferences, for I was a part of them. At the conclusion of that conference Mr. Van Buren came to me and stated that the president had selected him for the succession; but that it must not be known publicly for some time yet.

"That was the beginning. During that winter when all things were going along swimmingly, word came to me that John C. Calhoun had said that my presence in the white house was a disgrace to the American people. I don't know whether he said it or not. But I sent word to him, that even if I were as unworthy as he and others had depicted me, I was a chosen instrument in the hands of God to prevent a greater disgrace to the American people; that of having John C. Calhoun in the white house."

VERY soon after this tremendous and important social struggle which marked a political crisis, Mrs. Eaton joined her husband in Spain. She spoke of her first husband, Purser Timberlake, with deep affection. Their marriage was a love match, and they were very happy until he was ordered to sea duty. For loneliness and love of his wife, he died of a fever while on the Mediterranean station. One of the cruelties which this unfortunate woman was obliged to endure was the frequent assertion that her husband had committed suicide because of her conduct. They had lived together almost three years, in perfect harmony, and he knew her thoroughly. He had no suspicion nor cause for suspicion that she was not loyal to him.

Concerning her second husband, John H. Eaton, of Tennessee, who was governor of Florida Territory, secretary of war and minister to Spain, Mrs. Eaton said that he was the noblest man that she had ever known in all of her dealings with the leading men of the whole world. He was just, generous, patient, and of pure mind in all things. She said:

"He left me a comfortable fortune, and told me to care for it on account of the children, as well as on my own account. I loved him with an idolatrous love; for he was so superior to me. I worship his memory. I mourn for him night and day."

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