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A Ride to Sea - Two Routes.

A ride to save two souls.

Pub. C. E. Wood 1907

It is deplorable for a young man to have a heavy cloud over him all the days of his boyhood and youth,- the days which should be fresh, happy and inspiring. I felt the pressure of this thought upon my heart with unusual sympathy when I met ^a ~~my~~ young friend, Wm. B. Rutledge, ^{one day} in Washington early in July, 1874. It was then that he told me the helpless condition of those dependent on him for support. He looked in my face, his eyes full of tears, and said: "My wife Amanda and Susie, our child, but four years old, haven't enough to eat, and I have spent my last dollar."

A bitter enemy had been pursuing him and caused him to lose his clerkship, and because he had resisted his assault the man was threatening him with fine and imprisonment. By some good Providence, in a large public ^{corridor} hall I met my ~~young~~ friend, pale as death, crushed and apparently in utter despair. This situation naturally was soon relieved by ^{myself} remunerative office. I was looking for a good Secretary and at once gave him the situation.

The little family, Amanda, Susie and William, accompanied me from the Capital to Oregon, at the time I was transferred (August, 1874) to command the Department of the Columbia with headquarters at Portland.

His wife, a young woman of twenty-four, was strikingly handsome - of the brunette type, tall, dignified, reserved, graceful in figure and movement. During our long journey to San Francisco by rail and on the ocean steamer thence to Oregon, whenever she appeared out for a walk or at the dining-table she always attracted attention. William was noticeably devoted to her and even more so to little Susie, whom with her flashing black eyes and lively ways, passengers, fond of children, tried to capture. William was but little taller than his wife, a strong, athletic, active man; he was always ^{expectant} watchful and nervous as if in fear of a blow from some enemy not far off.

One bright morning coming up the hatchway of the Oregon steamer I met an acquaintance, one ^{made} met during the trip. He gave me his name as Burt Adams. He was a thick-set young man, friendly in manner, able to walk briskly with me, and could tell a good story or laugh at mine.

"Come, General," he said, "let's have a constitutional--".

"All right," I answered, and we paced the deck together.

Suddenly somebody cried out: "See the whale!"

Both of us stopped and looked toward the Oregon shore and saw, not the whale, but abundant spray rapidly lifted high in air a few hundred

It is deplorable for a young man to have a heavy cloud over him all the days of his boyhood and youth,--the days which should be fresh, happy and inspiring. I felt the pressure of this thought upon my heart with unusual sympathy when I met my young friend, Mr. A. Rutledge, in Washington early in July, 1874. It was then that he told me the helpless condition of those dependent on him for support. He looked in my face, his eyes full of tears, and said: "My wife Amanda and Susan, our child, but four years old, haven't enough to eat, and I have spent my last dollar."

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yards from the vessel.

Just then William and his family formed a pretty group near us. Amanda stood by the gunwale leaning gracefully upon it, and William was near her holding up the child perched upon it.

"Oh, papa, see ^{how} the water ^{flies} fly, - see, see!"

We were all excited as people always are at sea when anything unusual comes to view. But I noticed that Burt Adams kept his eyes on the little group.

"Who are they, General, - isn't she superb?"

I told him that William was my Secretary and that the lady was his wife, and Susie, of course, their pretty child. Before long Adams had made the acquaintance of the family for himself and I saw the four very often together during the voyage, which included the passage up the Columbia and the Willamet Rivers. Amanda was a discreet woman and generally avoided new acquaintances. She was by nature cold, and formal to strangers, but William on the contrary responded quickly to any show of kindness or attention of the part of a new comer.

As the family was about to disembark at Portland, then a small city, Adams kindly offered to show the Rutledges a nice boarding place. This they found pretty well "down-town" on Fifth Street; it proved very convenient for my office on First Street. William took a couple of well furnished rooms, a bed-room and parlor, and obtained board for his family on reasonable terms. At the very first meal, as Amanda was lifting her child into a high chair, Burt Adams came in with William, followed by a healthy-looking, well-dressed young woman. Adams said: "Permit me to introduce to you my wife, Mrs. Adams."

"Why, you surprise me, Mr. Adams, you never told us you were married!"

The two ladies shook hands and were not long in forming an acquaintance. It seemed a fine thing to William for his wife to have a woman friend, who would keep her company during his absence at the office, - so these four grown people and child lived together in apparent harmony for many months at this comfortable boarding house.

Now and then I dropped in to see them. Susie was always happy to greet me. She usually accosted me with a shout.

"What j'y you bring me?" naturally expecting chocolates, peppermints, or the like.

One day at the door she said: "Don't you like Aunt Nettie?"

"Who is Aunt Nettie?" I asked.

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"Oh, papa, see the water! - see, see!"

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Susie took my hand and led me to the parlor where were her mother and Mrs. Adams and said: "Here, General, here's Aunt Nettie."

Amanda said quickly, "Susie always calls our friend 'Aunt Nettie.'"

By these hints and others I saw how intimate the young people had become. William Rutledge worked away diligently ^{and} to my satisfaction.

At one time during the fall of 1876, noticing that he seemed to be worried and that he had a strange pallor, such as persons often show when too long confined, I said to him: "William, I am going down the river to Fort Canby to inspect the garrison and post. Would you like to go with me?"

"Oh yes, General, nothing would suit me better."

"Can you leave Amanda and Susie here?"

"Yes,—Mrs. Adams will take them to her home at ^{the} Dalles for a week's outing. Her father lives up there and she has been teasing my wife to make him a visit with her."

Thus it was arranged and William and I took the morning steamer to Astoria. From there the one-armed Captain Gray ran us over in his launch to Fort Canby, situated just below the mouth of the Columbia. East of the Fort is a slightly promontory ^{on} which has upon it a well-kept lighthouse. After my inspection with the commanding officer, William and I went there. We were shown by the lighthouse keeper everything we wished to see within and without the building. As we were near the huge six-sided light and looked out upon the broad ocean expanse, several vessels, ships, schooners, large and small, with sails spread came into view. The sea, blue in the sunshine, was then calm and free from waves except at points ^{near the} breakers; these were ~~always~~ throwing up their white and angry foam, and the rocks beneath them were always dreaded by the mariners who undertook to thread the difficult passage at the mouth of the Columbia. I glanced at one of the six vertical surfaces of the ^{Great Light} illuminator and saw therein a complete reflection of the ocean scene.

"See here, William," I cried, "see what a glorious picture,—a panorama not often seen!"

William looked ^{then} and changing his position, again and again, kept on looking, then shaking his head he exclaimed: "I cannot see it, General."

He was much chagrined because he couldn't catch the proper angle and take in the view. He was about to give it up when at last he caught the grand picture and said: "Oh now I have it, now I have it!"

I had often tried to get William Rutledge to catch my mental view of

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I had often tried to get William Rutledge to catch my mental view of

the Great Master, but he ~~always~~ declared: "If I could see Him as I see you I know I could believe Him and trust Him."

Before we left the great lighthouse William thoughtfully turned to me and said: "Perhaps some time I may see Him as I did the ocean view."

On our way back to Portland I asked my young friend what was the business of Burt Adams.

He answered, "Adams is a professional gambler,--- and, I am sorry that I know him."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Yes I am. He sleeps by day and goes to gambling haunts every night. I fear him; he and I are not the friends we were."

"I did not dream of such a thing. Are Amanda and his wife still intimate?"

"Yes, General, you know me so well, *I'll tell you* - he troubles me and my temper is so hot and sudden!"

I knew that William as my Secretary and strong friend purposed in his heart to do right; but I felt instinctively that he had fallen into bad company. Still, I said no more at the time, but I did wish that he and his wife were pronounced Christians,- they did need Christian associates.

I saw Rutledge at his desk every day usually from 10 a.m. till 4 p.m. He grew paler and thinner. His brow was ~~kneaded~~ *pitted* with wrinkles, and his dark eyes flashed with passion like an Indian meditating upon some wrong done him, fancied or real. Susie clung to her father with intense affection, but Amanda, slow to understand his temper, was apt to rebuke ^{him}. He greatly loved her but was easily vexed, and I fear that his wife ~~nagged~~ *netted* him in the presence of the Adams' household and probably before others. In brief, at times they quarreled as loving couples sometimes do.

One morning when I came to the office I noticed that William was absent. A little later he came in leading Susie by the hand. Nobody else was present. He took a seat close to me and Susie stood by his knee. His ~~form~~ *frame* shook with emotion; he sobbed aloud and great hot tears flooded his face.

"What is it, William," I asked as gently as I could.

As soon as he could speak he said, "She is gone,- Susie's mother is gone and I am at fault."

He then hugged the child to his breast and soon in broken speech told me the story.

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"I had started for the office," he said, "but for some reason, I cannot tell what, I turned back. As I entered the upper hallway ^{at home} I saw the two women in front of our doorway, and then Burt Adams, crossing the hall, ^{joined them. Recalling how he had insulted & beaten me, full} put his hand too familiarly upon Amanda's shoulder. ^{Full of unreasoning rage, quicker than it takes to tell, I ran up and struck him, as he faced me.} ~~neath the right ear.~~ He fell heavily to the floor - dazed for a while. Sorry enough for what I had done his wife and I, sprinkling water upon his face, soon brought him to himself. But Amanda had left, having run into our rooms. ^{She & Mrs. Adams had taken Adams part & I spoke to them in anger} After a few words between Adams and myself and leaving Mrs. Adams in tears, ^{I left him more} ~~we parted~~ at the door and I ~~set out~~ ^{started again} for the office. I hadn't gone far when I began to see what a rash fool I had been; and so I ran back to the house and found Susie playing in the bed-room with her dolls, but Amanda was gone. ^{stung by my acts} She had packed her small satchel and fled."

"Where," I asked, "where have you searched for her?"

"Every where, every where, General!"

"Have you been to the Chief of Police?"

"Yes, but the police haven't seen her, - can't find her."

I then arose and said, "Take the child and come with me."

We walked quickly to the Northern Pacific Steamboat dock and soon found that a tall, dignified lady, with a thick veil over her face, had bought a ticket and with the small satchel in her hand had boarded the transport which went down the Willamet bound for Kalama on the Columbia. The next transport would leave in half an hour.

"Go home, William, and get ready for a journey, you and Susie, and be back, both of you, by 11:30."

William declared that he couldn't overtake her - and if he did she would never return.

"You don't know her, General, - when her will is once set nothing can change it."

He was still overwhelmed with emotion and blaming himself.

"Come, come, William, " I said rather roughly, " be a man whatever befalls. I am going with you."

I went back to my office; sent a dispatch to Kalama, hoping to detain the fugitive till our arrival. I wrote a note to explain to my family, living far up-town, the cause of my absence, and another for my Adjutant-General to find on his desk when he came in. Then throwing my army cape over my shoulders I hastened again to the steamer landing. William and Susie, now smiling amid tears, were on hand and we three took passage to

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Kalama, a small rail~~road~~^{way} town about thirty miles from Portland, then the railroad terminus of the Northern Pacific Branch, which some 200 miles in extent ran thence to Tacoma on Puget Sound. When we reached Kalama the tall lady had departed by train some time before. We took the next passenger train for Tacoma. It was indeed a desolate region in those days, - small settlements, a few rough half-finished stations, a few openings in the almost interminable, scrubby woods. Along the larger rivers and creeks and on an occasional knoll were good sized ~~for~~^{large} trees, but even these had been blackened and crippled by forest fires.

At last after five or six hours on the cars we came to the handsome village of Tacoma. Another disappointment, - the Olympia steamer had been gone an hour and had borne away our valued freightage. After inquiry William ran to me trembling with excitement and exclaimed: "Amanda is gone, General! What can we do?"

"Oh, do not despair, my friend; go to yonder hotel, you and Susie, over there at the mouth of the harbor and stay over night. I will get a wagon and go over to Olympia (it is but 25 miles) overtake your wife and bring her back. Tomorrow morning you two take the first train for Kalama. Where the Olympia wagon-road, five miles from here, intersects the railroad is a station. Expect me and your wife to join you there."

I had already found an experienced frontiersman who promised to drive ^{me} to Olympia that night without fail. It was ~~already~~ sundown and fast growing dark. The rainy season had set in and that night the windows of heaven appeared to have opened as in the days of Noah. We had two strong horses, - just the right sort of a wagon with two seats. "Outfit all right to stand the awful road" said George Sanborn, my driver. He had on a thick, warm overcoat; I had my army cape and an umbrella. We took our seats side by side, George on my left.

"All right, sir," he said, "we can make the run in eight hours."

He whipped up his horses and we set out at a lively pace in what George called "a stylish rig". But oh dear me, how it ~~rained~~^{poured}, - more and more. My umbrella was utterly useless. We were soon wet to the skin by the driven rain. The night was very dark and it was hours before we saw a house; once or twice there was a glimmering light far off in some glen; the mud flew over us from the wheels; and in general there was nothing but

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a wagon ^{trail} way through a dense forest of trees little and big. After a while George and I, both of us ^{ever} tough ^{ance ceased} to endure, ~~seized~~ to speak to each other. Two-thirds of the ride was accomplished; the horses tired enough began to walk slowly as we were entering an open prairie. The driver had become sleepy and stupid after his trials and he let the team have its own way. The rain had lessened; slowly the horses began to swing off to the left, keeping up the movement till they had turned completely around. I roused the driver: "Hello George, you've turned round."

"No I haven't; been over this ^{here} hill road twenty times, and I know the way."

His pride was touched. "But, my good sir, indeed your horses have swung around."

"Well sir, you're boss, - it is your ^{game} ~~game~~ - if you say so I'll turn round; but you'll find to your sorrow that I was right."

I laughed as much as my chattering teeth would let me and said: "I will take the risk - turn around, find again that muddy road and go on. Soon after this the rain stopped altogether and the ^{dawn} ~~town~~ began to appear. As soon as we could see, there was the small city of Olympia straight before us. We drove on to the best hotel. We were a sight to see, covered with black mud from head to foot, and there was not a dry spot in our clothing."

"George," I said, "you give those horses and yourself a big breakfast! They deserve it. They did not mean to turn traitors. Be ready here to go back at a moment's notice after one hour's rest."

"Wal, wal, " George answered, "you aire a soldier. Didn't think a greeny could beat me knowin' my own road!"

I rang the bell and inquired for Mrs. Rutledge, describing her.

"No such lady here, sir."

I then went to every respectable hotel in Olympia and had the same answer. At last I asked if there was not some sort of inn or boarding house that I hadn't visited. The proprietor of a restaurant where I had had a roll and a cup of coffee met me. He said: "There is a house kept by a negress named Howard."

He pointed to the place - quite a sizeable and respectable looking building. I went there and knocked at her door. Mrs. Howard, the proprietess, met me.

"Is Mrs. Rutledge here?"

(7)

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had a roll and a cup of coffee answered: "There is a house kept

by a negress named Howard."

He pointed to the place - quite a respectable and respectable looking

building. I went there and knocked at her door. Mrs. Howard, the pro-

prietress, met me.

"Is Mrs. Rutledge here?"

"No, sir, she is not - no such lady here."

I noticed something peculiar in the manner and look of Mrs. Howard, so I said: "I am General Howard, the Commander of the Department of the Columbia and I have always been the colored people's friend. Will you not help me find this lady?"

Quickly the conscience-stricken woman answered: "Yes, General Howard, Mrs. Rutledge is up-stairs, but she does not want to see anybody."

"Go and tell her I wish to speak with her."

The woman went and came back. "No, she will not see you."

"Please go again and tell her that I will not constrain her even to go back, ^{to Portland} but I have a message ^{slowly} for her of importance."

Amanda then came ^{slowly} down stairs. Such a haggard face I had never seen, - sleeplessness, sorrow and crying had disfigured her almost beyond recognition. She then began in a low tone ^{to make} with bitter complaints. I asked her suddenly: "Where do you propose to go?"

"To San Francisco by the next steamer," ^{and then home to mother!} she replied.

"Have you money enough to go to San Francisco?"

"Yes just about enough for that."

"Now, my good woman," I urged, "you ^{young &} ~~so~~ beautiful propose to go to San Francisco almost ^{on escort} without means. You will not get East to your mother that way. You will be ^{helpless} ~~ruined~~, lost! Go back to Portland and I will treat you as I would a daughter. I will send you and Susie to your mother in Washington if you still insist upon it. Only I beg of you to return to your child and your husband."

Suddenly she decided, - while the blood came and went in her neck and face. "Yes I will go with you - I will go!" She quickly packed her satchel and we were soon in the wagon driving along the backward trail.

Through the mud ^{hurried over the 25 miles} and forest we ~~went~~ ^{sped} as fast as George could make his sturdy team ^{sped} along till we reached the crossing of the railway. In four hours we had made the journey, but how deep was my chagrin to find that the passenger train with William and Susie on board had been ^{to the station} ~~there~~ before us, and gone on toward Kalama. About half a mile from us there stood a wood train near a convenient ^{platform} ~~landing~~. The smoke stack was sending up its black clouds and gave me the idea of readiness to go on.

"Drive there, George, at once!"

He ran his team to the place. The engineer and conductor were indulgent to me.

"Can't you take that engine and overtake the passenger train ahead?"

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Amends then came down stairs. Such a haggard face I had never seen, sleeplessness, sorrow and crying had disfigured her almost beyond recognition. She then began in a low tone with bitter complaints. I asked her suddenly: "Where do you propose to go?"

"To San Francisco by the next steamer," she replied.

"Have you money enough to go to San Francisco?"

"Yes just about enough for that."

"Now, my good woman," I urged, "you are beautiful, propose to go to San Francisco almost without means. You will not get fast to your mother that way. You will be lost, go back to Portland and I will treat you as I would a daughter. I will send you and Shale to your mother in Washington if you still insist upon it. Only I beg of you to return to your child and your husband."

Suddenly she decided, - while the blood came and went in her neck and face. "Yes I will go with you - I will go!" She quickly packed her suitcase and we were soon in the wagon driving along the backward trail. Through the mud and forest we went as fast as George could make his sturdy team, and along till we reached the crossing of the railway. In four hours we had made the journey, but how deep was my anxiety to find that the passenger train with William and Shale on board had been before us, and gone on toward Kelama. About half a mile from us there stood a wood train near a convenient landing. The smoke stack was sending up its black clouds and gave me the idea of readiness to go on.

"Drive there, George, at once!"

He ran his team to the place. The engineer and conductor were indulgent to me.

"Can't you take that engine and overtake the passenger train ahead?"

"Yes, yes," said the engineer, and the conductor bowed his assent. The engineer continued: "At the next water and wood station they'll stop fifteen minutes."

George helped the lady and myself to get up quickly into the cab and we fairly flew through the air till we overtook the coveted train. The conductor ^{of it} heard the call of our whistle as we approached, and though ready to start waited for us. William and Susie had descended to the board walk and were coming back to meet us as we ^{slowed up & came} ~~rolled up~~ abreast on the sidewalk of that station. Reaching the ground Amanda trembled and shed hot tears as she ^{seized} ~~met~~ her child and lifted her up to her embrace. She and William soon spoke a few words of sorrow and forgiveness, - and my work of peace-maker was accomplished.

They lived together many years and had two children afterward to cement their home.

An old friend of army days met me on the train while my shoes were covered with mud, my hat much out of shape, and my clothing from head to foot ~~still unfit to be seen,~~ *still badly disordered.*

"Tell me, General," he remarked with a smile, "why on earth did you, last night, take that awful ride?"

"Why, my friend," I answered, "it was to save two souls and there was no other way."

"Yes, yes," said the engineer, and the conductor bowed his assent.
The engineer continued: "At the next water and wood station they'll stop
fifteen minutes."

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we fairly flew through the air till we overtook the coveted train. The
conductor heard the call of our whistle as we approached and though ready
to start waited for us. William and Susan had descended to the board walk
and were coming back to meet us as we ~~were~~ ^{were} pressed on the sidewalk of
that station. Reaching the ground Amanda trembled and shed hot tears as
she met her child and lifted her up to her embrace. She and William soon
spoke a few words of sorrow and forgiveness, - and my work of peace-maker
was accomplished.

They lived together many years and had two children afterward to co-
ment their home.

An old friend of many days met me on the train while my shoes were
covered with mud, my hat much out of shape, and my clothing from head to
foot ~~stiff with mud~~ ^{stiff with mud}.
"Tell me, General," he remarked with a smile, "why on earth did you,
last night, take that awful ride?"
"Why, my friend," I answered, "it was to save two souls and there was
no other way."