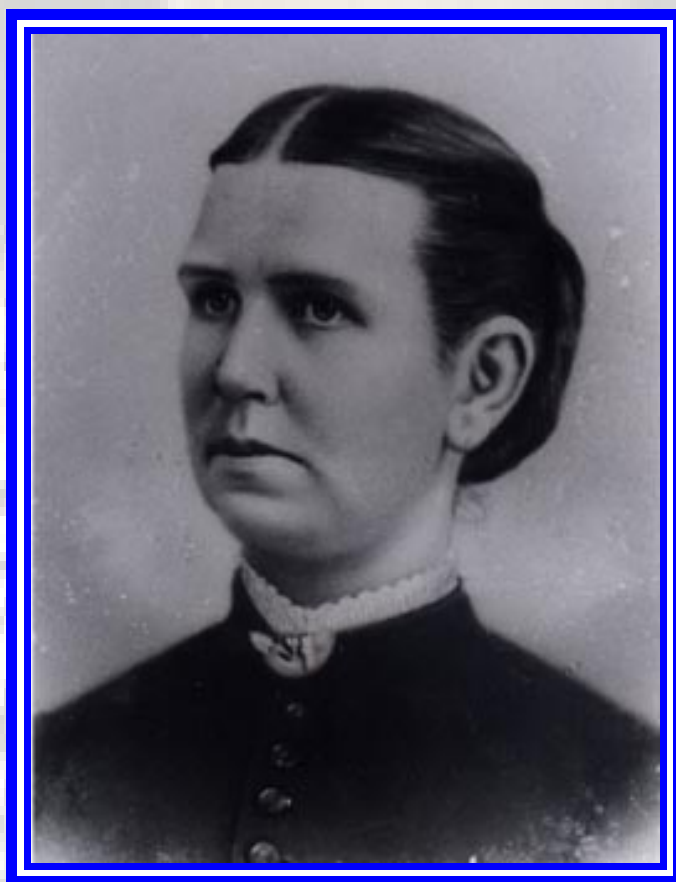


The Tempered Wind

The Life Story of Thisbe Read Hanks



The Tempered Wind

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SYDNEY ALVARUS HANKS

Tribute to the Author

To a noble father we say "Thanks."

Thanks for this book, *The Tempered Wind*. The Story of your Mother's life, Thisbe Quilly Read. For the book, "Scouting for the Mormons," the life story of your father, Ephraim K. Hanks. For the story of your own life and your family, "The Time of Ripening."

Now we can better appreciate our noble ancestors and the trials they passed through for the love of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Ephraim K. Hanks was ordained patriarch to the Wayne Stake of Zion, and true to his prediction, two of his sons enjoyed the same calling. In 1939 Sidney Alvarus was sustained patriarch to the Pasadena Stake, Los Angeles, Calif. The office he held until the time of his death, April 1, 1949.

Thanks to a loving mother, Martha Huber Hanks. Her patience and help, during the many hours father was busy writing, helped to make this book possible. For her untiring efforts after his death to have it published.

Thanks to all who have helped in any way.

The Tempered Wind

The Family



Thisbe Read

CHAPTER ONE

Thisbe looked up into the sun-reddened eyes of the drover. "Please, Brother Temple. Have you seen my brother. Walter?"

Brother Temple took off his hat and wiped his sleeve up over his face and the place where his bald head was as smooth as the back of your hand. "Be ye Brother Sam Read's little girl?"

Thisbe nodded. "I'm nine, and my sister Alicia is ten and Walter's just turned eight. Please, we can't find Walter any place, and he asked Ma at noon if he could come up ahead with the herd."

"Walter'd be the little black-headed fellow that's always riding his stick horse around, then. Yes, he's been with the herd this afternoon." Brother Temple chuckled as he put his hat back on his head. "Most of us is groanin' because we can't walk one way to the Valley. But that young'un'll make the trip three times afore we're through. For'ard and back an' on again."

The worry line between Thisbe's grayish brown eyes smoothed out for a moment. Brother Temple talked as if he could lift Walter right out of the pocket of his home-spun trousers. "Where is he now?" she asked. "Ma's making a special supper for him because he's eight years old today."

Brother Temple rubbed his stubble covered chin. "Where is he? That I don't know. We passed him two, three hours ago, sittin' beside the road waitin' for the cart company and yer pa and ma."

Three hours ago! Then he must be with the cart company after all. She'd find Alicia, who was

The Tempered Wind

talking with some of the other drovers, and then they'd go back to the place where the hand-carts were already circled in for the night and maybe they'd find Walter sitting by somebody's supper fire.

As soon as Thisbe saw Alicia she called, "Did you find Walter?" But she knew the answer the minute she saw Alicia's face. Alicia had been crying and the tears had made wagon tracks down her dusty face. They took each other's hands and without a word hurried back to the circle of hand-carts.

"Let's go to every fire until we find Walter," Thisbe suggested.

"Why, you know there are more than five hundred people, counting all of us. That would take all night. We ought to go tell Pa and Ma so they can help us look. It's getting dark. Thisbe, what if Walter is really lost!"

"Oh, he isn't lost," Thisbe said, but she wasn't at all sure she was telling the truth. It made her feel funny in the stomach to think of Walter and his stick horse not being with the drovers –or anywhere.

In the light of the campfire the girls saw Pa and Ma sitting by a spread-out canvas. The tin plates and knives and forks were all set for supper. There was jam and a piece of pound cake and some fine smelling fried venison. Pa was rubbing his foot – the one with the broken-down arch in it – and singing:

We're marching to Zion, that beautiful Zion,
We're marching, marching to Zion.
That beautiful city of love."

Ma called, "Girls, where's Walter?"

Alicia burst into a new flood of tears. "He's lost. He wasn't with the drovers.

Thisbe took off her sunbonnet. Suddenly her head felt too hot, and cold perspiration soaked the back of her neck under the bonnet's curtain. "The drovers left him by the side of the road waiting for the carts to come."

Pa jumped to his feet. "Walter can't be lost. He's somewhere in the camp. I'll go to Captain Martin. He'll give the alarm. We'll find the boy in no time." But Thisbe and Alicia and Mother all three knew that Pa didn't believe a word he was saying. Why, he even forgot to slip his foot back into his boot, and hurried off like "my son John," limping as he ran.

Ma and Thisbe and Alicia followed as fast as they could. By the light of the fire they saw Captain Martin's face, full of sympathy, but stern, too. "Did you give your little son permission to leave your family and go with the drovers?"

Thisbe watched Pa's face, his limp hanging shoulders, his bowed head. He seemed like such a little man standing there with Ma half a head taller and Captain Martin two or three inches taller than Ma. She was proud when Pa's shoulders straightened and his head came up. "Yes, the boy had permission."

Sympathy smoothed out of Captain Martin's face and only sternness was left there. "That is bad, Brother Read. It is bad for a father to give his little son permission to break one of the sacred laws of the camp. I hope you have read the rules of the camp."

Pa looked up again, "I have Captain Martin."

"I'm surprised to see such an honorable man disregard these rules."

"But Captain Martin –" Ma began.

Captain Martin went on as if he hadn't heard her. "Have you read the rule which says, 'Parents or guardians are responsible for every child in the family, every minute of the day traveling and every

The Tempered Wind

minute of the night in camp’?”

“But Captain Martin,” Ma began again, and this time he let her go on. “Blame it on me. I told Walter he could go ahead for awhile. It was his birthday – and he coaxed.” Thisbe put her hand in her mother’s and felt the usually cool, strong hand trembling. “Don’t blame Samuel. Blame me.”

When Pa put his arm around Ma’s waist. Ma began to cry. Tears came to Captain Martin’s eyes too, and he brushed them away with a red bandana. “Sister Read,” he said kindly, and the sternness was gone. “I feel it is my duty to forgive you for breaking the rule. And may God do the same.”

Thisbe grasped Ma’s hand tighter. She didn’t understand everything that was going on and she felt that time was wasting. She itched to be looking again for Walter. Pa must have been feeling the same way, she thought, because he said slowly, “Captain Martin, I’ve brought along gold to start me in business when I get to the Valley. I’ll gladly give every bit of it towards finding the boy.”

“We’ll do what we can,” the Captain promised. “And what we can do can’t be paid for with money. We’ll find the boy, if –”. There was something in the pause that frightened Thisbe more than anything that had happened – “if it is God’s will. Go get your supper and in thirty minutes, after I have talked with my council, I’ll call an assembly.”

Thisbe held tight to Ma’s hand as they walked back to their camp. The wood fire had fallen into embers. Pa put some more wood on it and poked it into a blaze. In the new flame the canvas with Walter’s birthday dinner spread out on it looked forlorn and deserted. “Do you want supper, Samuel?” Ma asked. “What about you girls? I can warm it up.”

“No, Elizabeth.” Pa said, and Thisbe and Alicia started to gather up the plates and knives and forks and put them in their place in the cart, while Ma took care of the food.

In a few minutes the folks next in the circle came over to the Read fire. “Hear your baby’s lost,” Sister Smuin said, and the word “baby” set Ma to crying again. Sister Smuin’s arm around her shoulder comforted her, and Pa began to tell about Walter waiting by the roadside.

“Oh, he’s somewhere in the camp,” Brother Smuin said in his bluff voice. But Thisbe could see his face was worried too. Everybody was just whistling – that was all. Pa always talked about whistling in the dark to keep your courage up.

In a few minutes other neighbors came over, the women talked with Ma and the men talked with Pa. Somebody gave Thisbe a slice of bread fried in bacon grease, and she ate it without noticing whether the grease was good or rancid.

It seemed like a long time before the alarm was sounded and everybody joined in the center of the circle of carts. There were more than five hundred people in the company, and it seemed to Thisbe that everybody was there. For a moment there was shuffling and talking, then Captain Martin began: “One of our beloved flock has been lost this afternoon. Walter P. Read, eight years old today. I well know all of you are tired and need your rest. The drovers last saw him about three o’clock, perhaps eight miles from here, sitting by the side of the road waiting for the on-coming train.” He paused a moment, then said, “May I have two men to go back and hunt for the boy?”

For a second Thisbe’s heart waited for something to happen – but only for a second. Hands went up all around the circle. “More than a hundred,” Alicia whispered to Thisbe, but before Thisbe had a chance to count, Captain Martin went on, “You, Brother Temple, and you, Brother Evans. You are both men of the plains. You’ll be able to pick up the child’s tracks, and if he has wandered away a little, bring him in. I want you to take good horses, and your guns, and bring the boy back before starting time in the

The Tempered Wind

morning, if –”. Again there was that awful pause– “if it be God’s will.” He bowed his head. “We will now unite in evening prayer.”

Thisbe had meant to follow every word of the prayer, but at her side she heard a dry, racking sob. The woman next to her was almost a stranger. She couldn’t even call her by name. She remembered her because – because – and the picture took every word of Captain Martin’s prayer from Thisbe’s ears. Not more than two weeks ago the company had gathered around the grave of a little boy no bigger than Walter, and the woman who now knelt next to Thisbe had been the child’s mother. Thisbe remembered that the mother had begged to be left with the little grave and had not wanted to go on with the cart company. Suddenly Thisbe knew what losing Walter meant. It wasn’t just being worried sick for an hour or even through a night. It was more than likely forever. Something inside of her had known this all the time. That was why it had hurt so when Captain Martin had said. “If – if it be God’s will.”

When the two men rode out of the circle to go back over the road everybody wished them God speed. For a moment Pa held to the stirrup of one of the horses and talked to Brother Temple. Thisbe knew that Pa would like to have been one of the searchers Captain Martin sent back, but he wasn’t a plainsman. He was just a city man newly come from London.

In a few moments every campfire was out and quietness prevailed. Ma spread the bed for Thisbe and Alicia, and the girls crawled under the cover with part of their clothing still on, without Ma ever noticing. It didn’t seem right to be in bed without Walter. He always slept at the bottom, and if Thisbe moved her foot the least little bit she could lay it up against his restless little legs. Besides, Pa and Ma still sat by their gone out fire talking and talking. Pa’s voice was too low to hear, but once in a while Ma’s carried to the camp bed. Her words were detached and Thisbe could make nothing out of them – “Snow – mountains – heavy carts – almost impassable – alone – alone – alone.” These were the words.

At last Thisbe slept, her arm locked around Alicia’s body for comfort. When she wakened, stripes of color were just beginning to cut through the grayness of the sky. Captain Martin was talking to Ma and Pa. Thisbe slipped out of bed and quickly put on her shoes. She moved close enough so she could hear the conversation. Captain Martin was saying, “If the snow catches us in the mountains, it will mean the lives of the whole company. So, Brother Read, if you want to stay and search for your son you have our blessing.”

Ma’s voice came clear and firm. “Samuel and I have been talking through the night and he’ll stay here and I’ll go on with my little girls.”

Thisbe crept back to bed and pulled the covers up over her head. With Pa and Ma so brave she didn’t want to be seen crying. But they hadn’t found Walter. He was lost forever and ever. And Pa would be lost, too. He was going to stay in this horrid Iowa hill country. And what ever would happen to Ma and Alicia and her?

Thisbe could see as well as if she were looking at it now, the loaded cart stuck in the dry rutted earth, Pa pulling for all he was worth, and Ma pushing with the strength of a man. And these were only hills. What would happen when the cart company reached the mountains everybody had been dreading? She remembered Ma’s words – “Snow – mountains – almost impassible – alone.”

When Captain Martin had walked away, Ma came over and shook the two girls by the shoulder. “Is Walter, here?” Alicia asked, then she began to cry when she read Ma’s face. Thisbe had finished her cry under the covers. She was ready to be brave to help Ma.

When everything was packed into the cart Captain Martin came over again. “I wish we could

The Tempered Wind

wait for you, Brother Read.” He put his hand on Pa’s shoulder. “But you understand. It is already late to start for the Valley.”

Pa stood up, tall and dry-eyed. “We know. We wouldn’t want you to wait. Elizabeth and the girls will get along.”

“We’ll do all we can for your wife and daughters. If it is humanly possible – and God willing – we will see that they reach Zion in safety.”

“I know you will.” Pa’s voice caught for a minute. “Elizabeth has always been a determined woman, and one that can manage. She shall have the gold I exchanged in New York when we landed.

“No.” said Captain Martin. “This is a sparsely settled district, and the few ranchers there are known how to charge a man to stay over night in their sod shacks. You’ll need to buy a good horse, too, Brother Read. And saddles cost money.”

Pa took off his belt and counted out twenty gold pieces. He put them in Ma’s hand.

Ma didn’t hesitate a minute. She walked over to where Brother Martin stood on wide braced feet. “We have no need for money while we are in your care, Captain Martin. We have our cart well packed. Our cow gives the milk we need and to spare. There may be those in the Company who will fall into need.”

Captain Martin put his hand on Pa’s shoulder before he moved away, but he didn’t say a word. Soon the signal was given for the move and Thisbe stood with her hand in Pa’s. Suddenly Pa was dearer to her than anything in the world. She didn’t want to go on without him. Why couldn’t they all stay? “Mountains – snow – impassable” – the words ticked through her mind.

When the last cart drew into line Ma turned to Pa. For a minute their eyes held. Pa said steadily, “I love you, Elizabeth. I love you.”

Ma took a breath that swelled her bosom under her gray linsey dress, then she turned and lifted the shafts of the loaded cart. She didn’t look back as she steadfastly pulled it up the gentle slope of the first little hill.

But Thisbe, pushing the cart from behind, kept her eyes turned back to Pa. There he stood like a soldier at attention, a lone man in a vast wilderness. Thisbe watched until he looked no bigger than a toy man. Then she called. “Pa, we love you and Walter, and may God protect you both and bring you back to us.” Pa lifted his hat and waved it, but Thisbe couldn’t be sure that he had heard her. Maybe her voice had sunk like summer rain into the thirsty hills.

CHAPTER TWO

Thisbe kept her eyes on Ma's back as she walked beside Alicia, pushing the heavy cart. Ma pulled just like a man – her shoulders and hips moving in regular rhythm. If Ma didn't have on woman's fixings, maybe you couldn't even tell her from a man. She was even taller than most, and just as broad and strong. Her hands on the shafts of the cart were broad and already burned brown by the sun. Her bonnet covered the neat bob of dark brown hair in the back of Ma's neck. When they got to the top of the hill Ma would throw back her bonnet to get a little breeze and then the bob would show, with maybe a few hairs pulled out of it and lying in dark curls on her neck. Then Ma would turn around and smile at the two girls and her face wouldn't be like a man's at all – but sweet and gentle even if it wasn't pretty like some faces.

"Say, Thisbe," Alicia asked, panting a little on the uphill grade. "Doesn't it make you feel sad to see Ma pulling the cart?"

Thisbe was silent for a minute. "I was just feeling proud," she said slowly. "Why, I think she's even a better puller than Pa."

"Well, I wish she didn't have to do it. I wish we could all have stayed back with Pa and hunted for Walter."

"I wish God would find Walter pretty soon," Thisbe said practically. "Then Pa could catch up when we stop at Florence and – and everything!"

At the top of the hill Ma rested a moment just like she always did. "Girls," she cautioned, "going down don't drag your feet too much. It wears out your shoes. Hold back as much as you can, though, or the cart will push me."

The down hill slope wasn't steep so the girls held back just a little and Ma walked as fast as she could and the cart seemed to almost fly along. "Ma," Alicia called over the rattling of the wheels, "wouldn't it be fine if it was like this all the way to the Valley? We'd put you in the cart and you could ride like a queen."

Ma turned and glanced at Alicia's lovely soft face framed in its fluffy light brown hair. A smile lightened her tired, sober face. Then she shrugged her shoulders. "Really, it wouldn't be fine at all. That would be too *easy*. It's the hard things we do that make us strong." She smiled again and brushed the back of her hand across her forehead. "You wouldn't want a weak mother, would you, girls?"

"You're the strongest woman in the world, Ma. Strong in body and – and –" she stopped, hunting for a word.

Thisbe was silent. "That would be too easy – you wouldn't want a weak mother –." Her mind circled the thought. Time and again, since Walter had been lost, she had wished with all her heart that they were back in England. That they had never come at all. She had even considered asking God, when she said her evening prayers, to take them back where things were – easy.

In England Pa had seemed to *belong* more than out here in wild America. His clothes were always the best, his Vandyke beard was smoothly waxed and neatly clipped, his black eyes were always dancing at a joke or a happy story, he always had money in his pockets. Sometimes Alicia and Thisbe, with their older sister Claire, had gone into Pa's bookstore. There he was just like a prince, with people asking his advice and giving him money for the beautiful books that were on the shelves – books which

The Tempered Wind

Pa always handled as if they were day-old kittens.

Trudging along behind the cart, Thisbe could almost smell roast pork and applesauce cake. That's the way their pleasant house had smelled the night two strangers changed their lives for them. Thisbe and Alicia had come home for the week-end from the boarding school they attended. Claire was there, too, and Sam, who was an apprentice to a leather worker, had come home long enough to eat Saturday night supper with the family.

Sam played with Walter while the three girls helped Ma serve the dinner, then they all sat down to eat. Pa said grace, but he hadn't had time to even pick up his knife and fork when a knock came at the door.

"I'll go," Thisbe said, slipping from her place.

At the door stood two young men with book satchels in their hands. "Is your father at home?" one of the young men asked, and his voice was kind, but the way he said his words was strange.

"I'll call him," Thisbe promised shyly, but Pa was already at the door. Thisbe stood behind him and peeked out at the strangers from the side of Pa's jacket.

"What are you selling?" Pa asked. "You see, I am —."

The same young man spoke. "We are selling nothing. We are doing missionary work in behalf of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." It sounded to Thisbe as if the man had learned his words by heart. "We have been called by a prophet of God to leave our homes and explain the principles of the true and everlasting gospel to those who are willing to listen."

"Is that right?" Pa said in his friendly bookstore way. "Well, we have our own church and we are satisfied." The man looked at his companion and both turned and started down the steps to the sidewalk.

Thisbe could see the disappointment in the set of their shoulders and Pa must have seen it, too, because he said, "Come in and eat with us. We are just commencing dinner."

The two young men turned, and the one who had done the speaking smiled, and his clean strong teeth shone in the half light from the entry hall. "Thank you. It does smell good. We Elders travel without purse or script, relying on the spirit of the Lord to soften the hearts of men and lead us to the doors of good folks like you."

After Pa and the strangers came back to the table, Pa picked up his knife and fork and started to eat. Ma served the strangers a great plate of sweet smelling food. For awhile everybody was silent, busy themselves with their food. Finally Sam said to the stranger next to him, just to make talk, "You're a lot braver than I am, Mr. —."

The stranger's teeth flashed in another smile. "Call me Elder Hunt," he said, "and this is Elder Allen."

"You're a lot braver than I am, Elder Hunt, to come to a strange country and preach a new untried gospel to people who are already happy in their own religions."

Even Thisbe could feel the half hidden thrust in her brother's words, but Elder Hunt didn't seem to notice it. "I came because I love my fellow men, and I love the true and everlasting gospel." He paused for a moment and said, looking at Pa, "After supper I'd like to explain to you and your family that our gospel isn't new. We know that it's the same gospel that Adam taught his children, that Noah taught his, that Jesus taught when He was on earth.

Elder Allen spoke for the first time and his words came more slowly than Elder Hunt's. "I, too, would like to bear my testimony."

The Tempered Wind

“All right, all right,” Pa said, hurrying to make up to the strangers for Sam’s rudeness.

During the meeting the Elders held after dinner, Pa listened thoughtfully. Thisbe could see his handsome face keen and clear in the firelight, his body bent forward and his chin resting on his hand. Ma sat in the shadows, but it was Ma that asked the questions about Jesus, and about the new prophet, Joseph Smith. Joseph Smith wasn’t in the Bible. He had been a boy just like other farm boys in America, but his thoughts had turned to God and God had spoken in answer to his prayer. Sam and Claire stayed for the meeting, too, but Thisbe could see them looking at each other now and then and sort of smiling with their eyes.

She tried to listen like Pa and Ma, but the words were long and strange – “dispensation of the fullness of time,” “second advent of Christ,” “for as in Adam all men die, so in Christ all men live again.” Not only were the words strange, but the tongues that spoke them made even ordinary words sound like new ones. Thisbe was glad when Elder Allen passed some little hymn books and asked them to join with them in singing some of the sweet old hymns.

“Come again,” Pa invited the Elders when he took them to the door.

“Thank you. We’ll be glad to,” Elder Allen said, and Elder Hunt said, “I thank God for leading us to you.” Both the young men held their hats in their hands while they shook Pa’s hand.

When Pa came back into the sitting room Sam said, “Let me know next time and I won’t bother to be at home.”

“Why, Sam,” Ma said, quiet like.

“Well, I mean it. I’ve never heard such rubbish.”

“Sam,” Pa said, and Sam was silent, but there was a cross feeling in the house that Thisbe felt even after she and Alicia had gone to bed.

So the Elders came again and again, and always Claire and Sam would try to be away from home, or if they saw the young men coming up the brick steps in front of the house, they hurried out through the back garden. Pa was quiet these days, quiet and thoughtful, and Ma carried with her, all of the time, some of the little tracts and black bound books that the Elders had loaned her.

Life wasn’t easy those days, with Pa and Ma pulling one way and Claire and Sam the other, with Alicia and Thisbe and Walter somewhere in between. It wasn’t hard, though. Not like it got to be after Ma told the Elders that she had prayed earnestly and had a testimony of the new gospel and wanted to be baptized. Pa said he was ready, too, and Sam sat sullen and quiet. It was after this that the news got about that the Reads were Mormons and the girls at school wouldn’t be friends with Alicia and Thisbe, and folks that knew about it stopped coming to the bookstore to ask Pa about what books they should buy to read.

Thisbe felt half unhappy all the time. It was a relief when Pa said one night at Saturday night supper that he and Ma felt the spirit of gathering and were planning to go to America.

“Well, I don’t feel the spirit of gathering,” Sam said. “I feel the spirit of staying in England where we are well off and where we belong. If anybody would have told me that two young men from America could make my parents act like they were crazy, I’d have called him a liar if I’d had to do it with a sword,” he said.

Thisbe expected Pa to be cross, but instead tears come to his clear, dark eyes. “Your mother and I have expected this. It will break our hearts to leave you and Claire here, but we must go. And Sam, let me tell you this. It wasn’t two young men from America that converted Ma and me. It was God Himself,

The Tempered Wind

using those fine, clean boys for an instrument. Don't think we haven't prayed, Sam. We've prayed night and day to be allowed to know, and now we do know we must gather to Zion."

Thisbe held her breath. It seemed a long, long time before Sam held out his hand and said, "Forgive me, Pa. I just don't see it your way and I never will."

"I guess you never will," Ma said, and Thisbe felt a lump in her own throat when she heard the quaver in Ma's usually strong, alive sounding voice.

After that there was lots of excitement, and Thisbe and Alicia and Walter wakened each morning to the tense feeling that something great might happen today. At last it came sailing time, and Thisbe and Walter hung to Pa every minute so they wouldn't miss anything. The *Thornton* was to leave Liverpool with a whole load of Saints gathering to Zion on board her. From the baggage room to the ticket office and round and back again Thisbe and Walter followed Pa while Alicia waited like a little lady, her hand in Claire's. Claire wasn't going to America, she had just come to say goodbye.

When the *Thornton* lowered her gangplank, the people moved forward like a river of water. "Wait, Ma," Claire said, tears running down her face.

"I can't wait." Ma took Claire's face between her two big, strong hands and kissed it again and again. "I must go now – or I won't be able to go."

Thisbe tugged at Ma's skirt. "Walter and Pa are going," she said. Alicia was still clinging to Claire and she was crying too. "Come on, Alicia," Thisbe urged.

Ma turned away from Claire and shooed the two little girls before her as she hurried toward the gangplank.

Thisbe tried to find Claire in the crowd as they stood on the deck looking down at the oily water and across to the pier where a great crowd stood to wave good-bye. The ship lifted anchor, the ship creaked, and then there was a funny feeling beneath her feet. Suddenly the space of oily water got wider, people on shore waved white handkerchiefs, and the band began to play "God Save the Queen."

"Oh, Samuel," Ma said, "they are playing 'God Save the Queen'."

"They sing the same song in America," Pa said. "There they call it 'My Country, 'Tis of Thee'."

"Sounds like an odd song," Ma said, but she wiped her eyes and smiled at Pa, and Thisbe felt happy inside again.

As soon as the band stopped playing one of the elders began to sing:

"Come with me beyond the sea
Where happiness is true,
Where Joseph's band, let by God's hand
Inviting waits for you.
With joy we hail the welcome day
When safely we are gathered there.
I know it is the Promised land.
My home, my home is there"

With the 760 other Saints, the Read family had been on board the *Thornton* for almost two months. They had got tired of ship fare, and once there had been a big storm that had made everybody sea sick and Pa had rolled out of bed in the middle of it. Ma had cleaned all the family up after the storm was over and she had laughed at Pa's long face. "That wash around the cabin floor gave you the proper spirit

The Tempered Wind

of humility, Samuel,” she told Pa as she helped him change the clothes. “You look as if you’d been rolled around in a barrel.” But Pa hadn’t laughed and Thisbe had wondered what the “proper spirit of humility” was that Pa should appreciate in the midst of the trial.

They had landed in New York to the tune of “The Star Spangled Banner,” and everybody had shouted cheers and praises to God as they put their feet on ground again. There was business to tend to in New York City. Thisbe and Alicia and Walter stayed close to Ma where the Saints were herded together by Elders who were appointed to put the folks on the cars for the West. Pa had gone off by himself like a man of business and had changed his English money for American gold.

The trip on the cars through strange, wide country had been exiting, too, and all the time Ma had said, “Sam would have been happy here,” or “Claire would have liked this.” In a few days they were in Iowa City. Here the Saints had been met by Brethren from the West who had already seen the Valley and who had come all the way back to help these newer Saints to get there. Pa moaned when he had to sell all the family’s extra clothes, even to Ma’s fur piece, for what he could get for it in the little town. Ma looked sad about giving up her English willow-ware dishes, every piece of which she had packed by hand in the midst of their trunks of clothing and linen; but it was plain to see that if they had to push everything they had for more than 1300 miles in a hickory handcart, they wouldn’t want to be moving more things than they needed. Pa comforted Ma, “We can buy the things we need when we reach the Valley.”

“Samuel,” Ma said, “shame on you. I’m not down hearted. Aren’t these men from the prophet of God? Just set to and pick out the clothing that will wear the longest and give us the most warmth if cold overtakes us.”

Pa “set to.” “I could have got a much better price in New York,” Pa said, mostly to himself. For just a minute Pa sounded a great deal like Sam.

Everybody was eager to be off, but they stayed and stayed in Iowa City. There wasn’t enough handcarts for everybody and it took about three weeks to build more and load each one with the best things to push and pull across the plains. Ma had lots of ideas for things to take, but she gave them up when Pa told her about the things they carried when he was in the Army. Pa had been an officer in the Burma War, so when he said, “When I was in the war,” Ma listened and heeded what he told her.

“What are you dreaming of, Thisbe?” Ma called back. “You usually rattle along like an iron rim on cobble stones.”

“What you said a minute ago,” Thisbe answered. “What, you said about *easy* things not being good for us and about hard things making us strong.”

“Isn’t that right, Thisbe?” Ma questioned, turning for a minute and putting a curl of soft brown hair back off her forehead.

“I was just thinking we’ve never really had it *hard*, what you’d call hard.”

“It was hard to leave Walter and Pa,” Alicia said, tears coming readily to her eyes. “And Sam and Claire.”

Thisbe’s effort at thought twisted her brows into a frown. “I don’t know about Sam and Claire. Maybe they’ll embrace the gospel sometime. But if we have faith and pray that God will help Pa find Walter they’ll catch up with us any day now.”

Ma smiled and her whole face looked warmed and different. “You keep that faith, Thisbe.” Then the smile faded as fast as it had come. “No doubt we’ll need it and more, too. I don’t have any idea that our hardships are at an end.”

CHAPTER THREE

*“One step, two steps, three steps
Stop!
Four steps, five steps, give a little
Hop!”*

Thisbe sang as the cart rolled along smoothly over a level field of summer-browned grass. When the cart rolled ahead almost by itself, one could play a little game without making pulling any harder on Ma.

“What are you doing, Thisbe?” Brother Stuart’s big boy asked as he came up even with her.

Thisbe hung her head and dropped her eyes. It was hard to explain to anybody, especially a boy, that when your feet get too tired to walk it is easier for them to dance. When she looked up, the boy had passed by her and was talking to Ma. Thisbe stopped singing so she could hear what he had to say. It wasn’t anything much. “Sister Read, my brother and I have both been harnessed to our cart, and we thought that right now while the pulling is easy one of us could go it alone and the other one could give you a little rest.”

Ma pushed her hair back from her forehead with the back of her sunbrowned hand. “That’s mighty kind of you, but I’m strong as an ox, you know. So thanks anyway.” The boy turned away when Ma added, “But Maybe it would be nice if you’d like to pull for a spell and I’ll push and give the girls a chance to run with the other young-ones.”

“Oh, thank you!” Thisbe shouted. “Come along, Alicia.”

“I think I’ll walk by Ma,” Alicia said, and Ma called, “Now don’t stray away, Thisbe. Keep right where I can call you any time.”

“I will,” Thisbe promised. Her feet weren’t tired any more, now that there were plenty of young ones to race and chase with.

She went back down the line for twenty carts, looking for someone her size, then she turned and started up the line again.

“Thisbe,” someone called. It was Joe Nelson, a boy she had known in England. “Come see what we’ve found.”

Thisbe hesitated a moment and then left the line, running toward a great oak tree that stood like a stranger in the tan grass. Around its trunk half the children in the company were gathered.

Joe held out a dirty brown hand tightly locked. “Shut your eyes,” he requested. Thisbe obligingly made her eyes into tiny slits. He put his fist in her palm and opened out his fingers.

She opened her eyes and squealed with delight. Her hand was full of bright Indian beads.

“Where did you get them?” She danced first on one foot then on the other. “Are they mine to keep?”

“Sure,” Joe said. “There’s a whole lot under this tree. At first we thought they were seeds or berries or something, but when we washed them they were beads!”

“Where did they come from?”

“Dare me to find out?”

The Tempered Wind

"I'll dare you," Thisbe answered with a dozen others. Then she added thoughtfully, "But how are you going to do it?"

Joe pointed up into the high branches of the tree. "See that big bird nest up there? I'm going to climb up and find out if –"

"Once my ma found her locket and chain in a mouse's nest," one of the girls put in hopefully.

One of the boys gave Joe a boost, and up the tree he went. It took him only a minute to make his way through the branches, while the children watched the seat of his pants ascending. He reached the nest, threw his leg up over the last branch and grasped a branch above with both hands. Then he turned his face toward the children, chalk white.

"What's up there?" Thisbe called. "My sakes, what you looking at? A ghost?"

"Worse than that," Joe said, and down he came amid a shower of broken twigs.

He sat down with his back against the tree. Even his hands were white when he folded them around his shaking knees. "Listen," he said, to the open-mouthed group around him. "That's a nest of bones!"

"Bones?"

"Yes, it's the bones of an Indian young one. About your size, Thisbe."

"Girl or boy?" Thisbe asked curiously.

"Well, a girl I guess. They've put some beautiful dolls up there with her. They're all made of carved wood and dressed in fur. These beads used to be on the little Indian girl, I reckon."

"I know," Thisbe said. "That's where they put her when she was just new dead. That's nicer than in a grave, I think."

"Do you want I should get you one of the dolls?" Joe asked.

Thisbe shook her head. "She'll be up in Heaven now and she'd know we took it."

"I don't believe it," one of the boys scoffed. "I don't believe Indians go to Heaven."

"I do," Thisbe maintained stoutly. "Jesus loves the little children. It says so where Ma reads in the Bible to us. And it doesn't say that Jesus loves the *white* children."

"Yes," Joe said, "but maybe she's more than eight years and if she ain't baptized –."

"That's so," Thisbe said. "Let's catch up with the carts." For a time she walked along in silence, Joe beside her.

"Do you think we ought to put these beads back?" he asked.

"She won't miss 'em." Thisbe looked at the bright beads in her hand. "That little girl's pa and ma loved her just like Pa and Ma loved Walter."

"Don't cry, Thisbe," Joe comforted her awkwardly. "I wish we'd never found the old beads."

"I wish she hadn't had to die so young – and everything," Thisbe said, trying to understand the sadness that had overtaken her in the middle of a beautiful morning.

"Ma," she said, when she had got back to the cart and taken her place beside her mother. "Let Alicia push and me pull. I want to ask you something."

She showed the handful of beads and told about the burial nest high in the oak tree, then she asked, "Is that little girl in Heaven?"

"Why, of course."

"That's what I told the rest of the young-ones, but they said maybe she wasn't baptized."

For a time Thisbe trudged along by the side of her mother, then tears squeezed through her tightly

The Tempered Wind

closed lids and ran over her cheeks. “Ma, Walter wasn’t baptized, either, and he was eight years old the – that day!”

“I’ve thought of that,” Ma said quietly, “and I’ve prayed about it. Thisbe, this is just for our family to know, but it has been revealed to me through inspiration, that Walter will be found, and that he will be privileged to go down into the waters of baptism.” Thisbe dried her eyes with the inside of the hem of her skirt. “Wish I had a kerchief,” she said. Then, after a minute, “Ma, if wolves carried Walter off wouldn’t they eat him?”

“Do you remember Daniel?” Ma asked.

“In the lion’s den,” Thisbe agreed, “Only it seems like miracles like that can’t happen to Walter.”

“There is nothing impossible with God,” Ma said.

“Just the same,” Thisbe said, “I’d like to hear from Pa.”

When she went back to push on the cart and Alicia moved up to pull beside her mother, she tried to play again,

“One step, two steps, three steps

Stop! . . .”

but there were too many things to think about. “Father in Heaven,” she prayed to herself, “I wish you’d let us get a letter from Pa or something.”

CHAPTER FOUR

Today was just like yesterday, and tomorrow would be just like today. The cart company would be laboriously moving over, the same rolling hills, under the same late summer sun, pushing and pulling the loads which seemed heavier every day through the same patches of sand. But, too, there would be the same cheerful songs, the same evenings of warm fellowship, and the same promise that soon – not too soon, though – the cart company would be welcomed in Zion.

Thisbe sometimes wondered if the cart were really making any progress at all; but each night when she looked sadly at her wearing-away shoes she realized that they bore testimony that the road behind was growing daily longer and longer.

One day as Thisbe pushed alone at the back of Ma's cart she saw a stranger standing by the side of the line talking with Captain Martin. He was tall – more than six feet – and heavy, too. But in spite of his heavy build he seemed as muscular as Pa. His deep brown beard fell almost to his chest, and what was most remarkable, his head was up, and his gestures as he spoke were so quick and lively that Thisbe knew in a minute he hadn't been pushing a cart forever and a day.

When the Read cart drew abreast of Captain Martin and the stranger, Captain Martin held out his hand to detain Ma. "Sister Read," he said, "This is Ephraim Hanks." He smiled at the lively interest in Thisbe's eyes, and added, "a real Mountain Man."

"Do you mean," Thisbe put in eagerly though Ma's eyes on her told her that she was talking out of turn, "that Brother Hanks has really been to Zion?"

Brother Hanks spoke then, and his voice was full of good humor and kindness, even though his speech was as vital as his movements. "There and then some," he said.

Brother Martin explained. "Brother Hanks was one of the Battalion boys."



This is Ephraim Hanks

"I see," Ma said, though Thisbe knew that Ma didn't know any more than she and Alicia did what being one of the Battalion Boys meant.

"Some few of them stayed in California," Captain Martin said, "but not Eph Hanks. He's too fond of action."

Ephraim Hanks laughed, and his laugh was something good to hear when you were tired and not feeling too lively yourself. "I do like action, and that's a fact," he admitted. He turned to Captain Martin for a minute, then looked back at Ma. "I'm carrying the mail just now, Ma'am. Captain Martin has told me how your little Walter was lost and that your husband stayed back to hunt for him. Would you like me to take a letter back to him?"

For the first time since they had left Pa, Thisbe saw tears come to Ma's eyes. "I've been hoping for this," she said. She reached into the pocket that was hidden in the folds of her skirt and drew out a letter already written and addressed to Pa.

Brother Hanks took the letter. "I'd figured on leaving it for him, but since I've seen you folks I'll try to look him up and have a talk with him. Then when I come back this way I can let you know how he is and what he has found out about the young-un."

Ma started to speak, but when her voice broke she didn't try to go on. It was Thisbe who said in her lively, impulsive way, "Oh, Brother Hanks, we'll love you forever."

Brother Hanks laughed as he put his hand for a minute on her sleek, dark head. "You remember

that promise. I will,” he said. Then he turned to Ma. “Good day, Ma’am, and I do hope that I can bring you good news next time I see you.”

Ma couldn’t speak. She bowed to the two men, then took up the shafts of the cart. “My goodness, Ma,” Alicia said anxiously, “we’re last in line.” But Ma didn’t answer and Thisbe had her head turned so far to watch what Brother Hanks and Captain Martin would do next that she couldn’t be worried about being the last cart in the procession.

So Ma and Thisbe and Alicia toiled along, with a hope for word from Pa making the load lighter and the way shorter.

It was past the middle of August when the monotony was again broken by visitors. This time it was the arrival of Apostle Franklin D. Richards and a score of returning missionaries from England and Scandinavia, and even far-off India. These were not ordinary visitors, and Thisbe knew at once that something important was about to happen. They heard whispers that a special council was meeting to decide something very important. When Thisbe asked Ma what was happening Ma just shook her head, “Nothing that I know of.”

“Well,” Thisbe declared, “there’s something, because I feel it in my bones.”

“I do, too,” Alicia said, and when the two girls talked to the other children in the cart train and the wagon company that had joined them, everybody seemed to feel the same thing – a strange tenseness in the air as if a storm were about to break, or some momentous thing happen.

Sunday morning, August twenty-fourth, Thisbe with Ma and Alicia, went eagerly to church service – but it was just like other services. There were songs and prayer and the sacrament was administered, and Apostle Richards and some of the other elders spoke. Today they didn’t speak of the journey still before the companies. They praised them for the journey that was already behind them, and spoke words of comfort and encouragement. Thisbe wiggled and squirmed. Still the air felt heavy with something impending. At the close of the service, Captain Martin said, “This evening at six we shall hold another meeting on this same camp ground. Every member of the handcart company and of the Hodgett and Hunt Independent Wagon Companies is requested to be present.”

So there was something happening! All afternoon there was speculation about Apostle Richards’ message. “I think he’s going to tell us to remain here at Florence or at Council Bluffs until next spring,” one of the women said to Ma.

“Oh, no!” Ma exclaimed.

“Well, it’s getting late in the year.”

“I know,” Ma agreed. “I’ve been chafing to get on our way I ever since we laid over Friday. They wouldn’t wait even a day when –.” Then Ma bit her lip firmly with her even white teeth, but Thisbe knew that she had almost said “– when Walter was lost.” Then Captain Martin had pointed out the necessity for hurrying, had talked of snow and impassable roads.

At the evening meeting Apostle Richards rose and stretched out his hands to the people seated about him on the camp ground. “Brothers and Sisters,” he began, and his voice was like a father’s, full of love and gentleness.

Now there were no words of praise for the journey that lay behind them. Now, all the talk was of the thousand miles that lay before. Thisbe listened to every word. Apostle Richards had made the journey before and he knew what he was talking about. He spoke of the lateness of the season. He said that if the storms were late that the company might cross the mountains in safety, but that the storms were not

predictable, they might come early – even very early.

(It seemed strange to talk of the early storms when the sun was so hot that it burned even through the curtain of a good sunbonnet.)

He said that many of the infants and aged might die by the way.

(But there was always room in the wagons for the old folks who didn't feel well enough to walk; and Thisbe had seen time and again parents pick up their little folks and ride them on top of the loads in the handcarts.)

Then he spoke of disease, and impure waters, of fatigue and exhaustion.

(Thisbe had been tired before. So had all of them. You couldn't walk from Iowa City to Florence, Nebraska, and not get used to being tired. But nobody died from just being tired.)

For a moment Apostle Richards was silent, almost reading the minds of the people. "If you choose to stay here," he continued, "rather than take the risks of these possible and probable fatalities –" (Not here on this endless plain! Not here instead or in Zion – after all this!)

His voice grew more gentle and his words were slower. He promised that if they chose to stay through the winter and begin the journey early in the spring they could have the provisions that were in the warehouses waiting to put on the wagons, and that he had means in his hands to purchase what supplies were available in the little villages round about. He promised that he would help them in every way if they decided to stay.

Again he paused for a few seconds. For a moment Thisbe thought his sermon was finished, but he went on: "This is the largest season's emigration that has ever been shipped from the British Isles since I have presided at Liverpool. Hundreds of you are among the first converts to the faith. Many of you know, just as I know, that your hearts have answered the call for the gathering over and over again but you have never been able to emigrate yourselves. Eighteen years in the faith, and some of you only now are finding an answer to your prayers to repair to Zion. There has been no groaning and fault-finding among you. The way is hard, but it is a way blessed by the Lord. I pray to Him who has put the answer to the call for the gathering in each of your hearts that you will all reach Zion in safety this season."

There was a moment's bustle after Apostle Richards sat down, then a moment or two of silence before anyone rose to speak. Thisbe felt herself holding her breath, waiting – waiting . It was for the company to decide, Apostle Richards had said. Now the company would speak.

"Let us go on," Brother McAllister said. Thisbe knew him because he had written the handcart song. As he spoke he gave reasons for going on, but it was his energy and the excitement with which he spoke that made the blood tingle down Thisbe's back. After Brother McAllister had sat down Brother Cyrus Wheelock, Brother George Grant, and some others whom Thisbe didn't know by name spoke for going on. Only Brother Webb urged that the company be cautious and stay in Florence for the winter. Folks listened to Brother Webb until he finished, but his words seemed to fall short on the people's ears and hearts. Then others spoke for going on, and again the excitement of the meeting lifted Thisbe's heart. She knew which way she would vote if children were given a chance to have a say.

At last Apostle Richards rose. You have your free agency," he said solemnly. "Each of you must take the responsibility of your own decision. I cannot decide for you, neither can you decide for any other man." Now the pause was a long one before his voice lifted. All in favor of going on signify it in the usual manner.

With uncovered heads and right hands raised to Heaven, the men and women and children voted

to go on.

All those opposed, signify it in the same manner,” Apostle Richards said, still solemnly. Thisbe turned her head to see if Brother Webb would raise his hand against going, but he had moved out of her line of vision. It seemed that the vote was unanimous.

It took a long time for the cart company and the Saints in the wagon trains to settle for the night. Folks stood about in groups talking. “I’m glad we’re going on,” Thisbe said, “aren’t you, Ma?”

“Well –” Ma hesitated, “I’d feel better if Apostle Richards has favored it, He is a prophet, seer, and revelator.”

“But he did,” Alicia said.

Thisbe set with her hands around her legs, her knees against her chest. She was thinking back on what Apostle Richards had said. He had spoken of the hardships ahead and said infants and old folks would die on the path; he had promised to help them to live through the winter if they decided to stay – but he hadn’t spoken in favor of going on. Oh, if you wanted to twist his words you might make something of them. He had prayed to God that all of them might “reach Zion this *season*.” But that was all. He had asked them to vote with their free agency and take the responsibility for their own decision. And she had voted to go on. Just as if she were a grown up man or woman she had held up her hand and had her say.

CHAPTER FIVE

Pushing the cart was easier for a few days after the meeting in Florence, Nebraska. Thisbe's heart felt light as a cloud and she sang as she trudged along. So did everybody in the long file of carts. Apostle Richards had promised to report their condition to President Brigham Young as soon as he reached the Valley then he and the other returning missionaries had hurried on. Ma said that when Brigham Young heard that the food in the wagons was getting low he would send other supplies from the Valley. But Thisbe didn't worry about food. There was still food enough for everybody every time the company camped, and Ma still had some special delicacies in the cart.

Mostly Thisbe thought about the day they would reach the Valley and she could live in a house again, though sometimes she thought of Pa and of Walter. "I wish the letter man would come back," she said one day to Alicia.

"Who?" Alicia questioned. Then she laughed. "You mean Brother Hanks, who took Ma's letter back to Pa?"

Thisbe nodded, her gray eyes glowing. "He promised Ma he'd bring back word of Walter and he's so big and strong I know he could do it, too."

Alicia shrugged her thin shoulders. "Thisbe, I just keep on thinking that God is taking care of Walter and Pa and I try not to worry."

"So do I," Thisbe agreed. "But I'll be glad to see Brother Hanks, anyway, just to see how God is getting along."

For a moment Alicia looked shocked, then she laughed. "Thisbe, you do beat all."

The first frost had come and turned the leaves to gold and the cart folks' minds to their thin jackets and worn out shoes, before Brother Hanks came back. The company had stopped for the noon meal by the bank of a clear stream when he rode in. He went first to Captain Martin and handed him a package of letters for the Saints, then he dismounted and leading his horse, came down the line of carts looking for Ma. When he found her, bending over a little fire she was fanning to life, he stopped, and holding his hat in his left hand, offered the other to Alicia and Thisbe. When Ma straightened up and saw Brother Hanks, a light came over her face and she held out her hand. Brother Hanks reached into his pocket and drew out a letter. Ma's hands trembled so when she took the letter that she couldn't even open it. She just stood there, looking up into Brother Hanks' face with the eager question in her eyes.

Brother Hanks looked away for a minute, then he said softly, "I am sorry, Sister Read. I can't tell you anything of your lost boy."

Ma, still holding the unopened letter, put her knuckles to her eyes, but Alicia saw tears squeeze through.

"Your husband thinks there is yet a chance. The Indians there are friendly and there aren't any wolves. He said to tell you that he has put posters up where people meet, had the story published in some of the papers, and that he is riding every day to see if he can't pick up word of the child."

Ma turned her back to Brother Hanks while she wiped her eyes, then she said with an even voice, "I hope you'll take food with us, Brother Hanks."

Thisbe and Alicia watched, while Brother Hanks hobbled his horse and opened his pack. "There's fish in this stream," he explained. "I've got two outfits and if any of you would like to try your luck with

me we'll have a fish dinner."

He took out his knife and began to cut two willows for fishing poles. Thisbe stood by wide-eyed until he said, "Here, little sister, you catch some grasshoppers if you can."

With the grasshoppers Thisbe caught Brother Hanks baited the hooks. He showed her how to throw them out into the water. As they stood side by side, the big man and the little girl, she said shyly, "I've prayed for you every night, Brother Hanks, when I've asked God to look after Walter and Pa."

"I'm grateful for your prayers," he said simply. "God hears the prayers of honest little souls like you."

Suddenly Thisbe felt a jerking on her willow pole and bait and hook disappeared. "Play her, play her," Brother Hanks cried, and finally she brought up a fine ten-inch trout. Her screams of excitement brought a group of folks away from their own dinners and they stood and watched while the two added fish after fish to their string.

Brother Hanks cooked the fish while Ma made flap-jacks and Alicia set the dishes out on the canvas cover. At her first taste of the fish Thisbe said, "I wish we could pray these fish into enough for the whole company."

Ma and Brother Hanks smiled at each other. "She knows her Bible, Ma'am," he said approvingly. As soon as the dinner was over, Thisbe and Alicia were sent to take the fish that were left to other folks in the party who were ailing and would relish a change of diet from the everyday bacon and flapjacks, and mush and beans.

When Ma was unpacking the cart at bedtime she found a beautiful pair of beaded moccasins and one of the fishing outfits tucked away in one corner. The moccasins exactly fitted Thisbe. The fishing tackle was to be like a gift of God to the whole company before it reached the Valley.

It was not long after Brother Hanks' visit that the autumn storms set in. At first the Saints were bothered by occasional thunder storms. Later the storms were almost constant, and soon they turned to snow.

The company struggled along, sometimes making only three or four miles in a whole day. Captain Martin called the company together and explained that food was running low. From now on folks could have only four ounces of flour each day. After awhile he called them together to tell them that two ounces would be a day's ration. "We'll always have our milk," Ma said; but food for the cattle was failing, too, and the milk got less and less.

One night one of the brethren tried to joke about the small food supply. "Me and Henry held the critter up while Robert killed it," he said. "We ain't hungry enough yet to eat dead animals." No one laughed. Thisbe felt sick at her stomach and she saw Ma turn away. It wasn't a joke, anyway. Everybody knew that the meat that was sometimes apportioned out with the spoonful of flour was probably cut from some wagon company ox that had dropped under its yoke. Whenever there was a stream someone used the fishing tackle Brother Hanks had left, and the fish were like manna to the hungry Saints.

One night as Ma and Thisbe and Alicia sat for a little while by their supper fire, Thisbe started the other two by saying, "Ma, I've got to thinking that it was God that lost Walter."

Ma turned an inquiring gaze to her, but didn't speak. Alicia said, "Why, Thisbe, that's wicked."

"It isn't either wicked." Then Thisbe spoke of something that no one talked about. "Ma, I know why you have kept Alicia and me busy about the cart in the mornings. I know about the burial squad that makes graves every morning for the folks that die at night. You've kept us busy so we wouldn't see the

burying.”

“That’s so,” Ma said in her lifeless voice.

“Well, who is it that’s been dying? It isn’t hardly ever the women. Women seem to be stronger than men. And sometimes it’s the little children – like Walter.”

“Apostle Richards said it would be the old folks and the young ones,” Alicia said.

Thisbe went on as if she hadn’t been interrupted. “I think of Pa with his broken arch. And Pa wasn’t big and strong like you, Ma.”

Ma was silent and so was Alicia. Thisbe finished. “As it is, we know Pa’s alive and can come on some other time.”

Ma’s voice was still lifeless. “Yes, we know Pa’s alive.” Then she said something strange to the girls. “I’m sure I’d know it if Walter was dead. Over and over I’ve asked God to let me know if he was, so I wouldn’t just keep on hoping, and I’m sure He’d answer that prayer.” She was silent for a long time and Thisbe thought she had finished before she said, “So I know Walter is alive, too.” Then her voice grew slow and duller, “But I sometimes wonder how much longer we will be.”

Thisbe rose to her knees and crawled a step or two to Ma’s side. “We’ll live to reach the Valley, Ma. I’m sure of it.” She laid her head on Ma’s lap for a minute. “Maybe we’ll come to another Laramie.” She remembered how all the folks of the company had taken what money they had to the gentile fort and traded for food supplies. Some had even traded their watches and clothing. She and Alicia had begged Ma to ask Captain Martin to give back some of the gold that Ma had given him the day Pa left them to hunt for Walter. Ma had closed her lips firmly and shaken her head. Later Captain Martin had visited them as they cooked their meager supper. He had offered Ma the gold but she had told him to buy what supplies he could with it and share them with the whole company.

Often when Thisbe and Alicia had been hungry they had thought of the special provisions that some of the Saints had tucked away in their carts and had almost blamed Ma. Almost – not quite. It was better that everybody should share the hunger as they shared other things.

Ma sat silent, stroking the hair away from Thisbe’s forehead, “You’re right, Thisbe,” she said, going back to what Thisbe had said a long silence before. “We’ll live. We’ll reach the Valley. Sometimes when I can’t go on at all, sometimes when it seems that I can’t pull another step, I feel someone beside me taking the load from me. I look around, wondering if I have been dreaming and if Pa is by my side. But he isn’t. Nobody that we can see with our earthly eyes is there. It is the spirit of God between the shafts.” Ma shook her shoulders as if to shrug off a dream. “Yes, Thisbe, we’ll be all right.”

“But if there isn’t another Laramie?” Alicia asked.

“God will provide.” From where she sat Ma poked at the dying fire with a forked stick. Ma’s voice was soft and very low as she picked up an old hymn in the middle.

“Though other helpers fail and comforts flee
Help of the helpless, Thou, abide with me.”

Thisbe thought of the song often as she struggled along the road, sometimes covered with fresh snow, sometimes boggy and muddy from snows that had melted or been thawed by sudden rain squalls. “If we’re not helpless I don’t know what we are,” she said to Alicia. “And if God’s going to help us I wish he’d hurry.”

"It says in the Bible that God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," Alicia said. "I don't see why He doesn't keep it from storming on us."

"That isn't in the Bible," Ma called back. "That's profane literature and I can't blame God for not helping us if you girls complain all the time." There was a sharpness in Ma's voice that hunger and weariness had whetted a fine edge. Alicia didn't answer, neither did Thisbe. It seemed to take too much strength to talk or even sing, nowadays.

So they trudged along, Thisbe thinking of the men who had ridden ahead to tell Brigham Young of their condition, and wondering if they had reached Brother Brigham, if they had died in the winter storms, or if they had been killed by Indians. "Other helpers" were certainly failing.

There was a real blizzard, with the icy snow being whipped about like bullets gone wild, when the cart company reached the crossing at the Platte River. It was almost sundown when Ma pulled her cart up to the river's edge. She sank down on the snow and Thisbe and Alicia came up beside her, waiting for some word of weariness or despair to set them both to crying. But Ma was removing her shoes and stockings. "Just one more river to cross," she said, tucking them in the corner of the cart beside the little bundle of dried sagebrush she carried for an emergency fire. "You girls better climb in the cart and I'll pull you across."

Both Thisbe and Alicia protested, but it was some one else's strong voice that said, "No, Sister Read. You shouldn't be pulling an empty cart, even."

The voice was Captain Martin's and he was sitting on his poor, bony horse. "I'll take the girls over for you on horseback if you wish," he offered. Thisbe gave Alicia a little shove and Alicia smiled shyly. Captain Martin dismounted and lifted her to a place in front of the saddle. "I'll be back for you, Sister," he told Thisbe and rode away. Ma picked up the shafts of the cart and spoke over her shoulder to Thisbe. "Wait for Captain Martin."

Thisbe nodded, wordless, as she watched her mother step into the icy stream, the cart bumping behind her. There were cakes of mush ice floating in the stream, and one poor man had sunk down on a sandbar in the middle of the river. Too weak to rise he sat there with the water milling around his shoulders while a woman waded out, helped him to his feet and half carried him forward. Thisbe recognized the woman – Sister Leavitt – so the man, half curtailed from her by the flying snow, must be poor Brother Horrocks, Sister Leavitt's brother-in-law. Sister Horrocks would be pulling the hand cart with the three children on top of it. Thisbe looked around to see if she could see the cart. If Pa and Walter had been along Ma would have been in the same condition. Pa never could have stood what Ma had gone through.

Thisbe's eyes were attracted back to the river by a shout of alarm. There was a cart half overturned in the river. It was Ma's cart. She was doing her best to right it.

Without hesitation Thisbe waded into the river, shoes, and all. She put her shoulder under the load, though the cold water lapped her face, cutting her breath off in a way that terrified her. Ma gave a great pull, some one else came quickly to help, and the cart was right side up again and climbing the far bank.

Before Ma even put her own shoes and stockings on, she undressed Thisbe and wrapped her in a blanket from the cart. After, Captain Martin had assigned the position for each cart, to break the wind as much as possible. Ma pulled her cart to its place and made a fire with the precious sagebrush she had carried for an emergency. She carried Thisbe over to a log that had been cleared of snow so she could

bake it in the fire's warmth. Still Thisbe shivered, and her teeth made fearful music as they chattered and chattered.

The wind blew harder. Snow, sand, sleet, and hail beat against the frail carts. Ma, Thisbe and Alicia huddled close together while Ma tried to keep the fire burning. Still Thisbe shivered and chilled. Sometimes she dozed and smelled apple sauce and roasting pork. Sometimes she dreamed that she was in England and Pa, handsome, well-dressed Pa with his smooth Vandyke beard and his sparking eyes, was lifting Alicia and her from the London train that had brought them home from boarding school for the weak end.

The bugle at sunrise awakened her from her confused dreaming. Ma said, "You'll be all right, Thisbe. Alicia'll keep the fire going while I get our morning food."

While Ma was gone the woman in the next cart came over to inquire about Thisbe. "I thought you'd catch your death of dampness," the kind-hearted woman said. "You was surely as wet as anybody and I hear that twelve of the company died last night."

Thisbe turned away and put her face against Alicia's shoulder. "Died." That was an awful word. Thisbe hadn't thought of it in connection with herself. Now – well, she'd have to think of something else. Her teeth were chattering again, but this time it wasn't because she was cold.

Shortly Ma came back with flour for breakfast. There were three ounces each. Ma made gruel with flour, seasoning it with some of the precious salt from the Cart. "It's been a hard night on the animals, too," she told the girls. "They can't pull the loads they've been under and, too, there are more folks who must ride. The wagons can carry just thirty pounds for us, now."

"Have we more than that?" Alicia asked.

Ma smiled, a dreary, half-hearted smile. "No," she said. "Remember when you girls wanted me to take back the gold I left with Captain Martin? It was back at Laramie and you wanted me to get some more supplies. If I'd have done that we'd have had more than our share to carry now."

Before the company started its journey for the day the excess clothing and bedding was destroyed – burned. And the shivering Saints watched the fresh bright flames and the sultry smoke and started the endless walk with the acrid smell of burning wool in their nostrils.

Thisbe rode on the cart part of the morning, but in the early afternoon she insisted on walking again. Once in a while she would climb on the cart and ride for a time, then she would slip off and walk again. Ma was patient, and so was Alicia. They even offered Thisbe a part of their small ration of food, but Thisbe didn't want even her own small allotment. While she walked she dreamed almost as if she were asleep and she wasn't wallowing through the wet and the mud, she was safe and warm – and rested – back home in England; or maybe she was sitting by Brother Hanks on the bank of a clear storm in warm October sunshine angling for her first fish.

One morning Thisbe went into one of the dreams as she was walking along the road. When she wakened and realized that she was on the trail to Zion, she was riding in the cart. She tried to slip out, but she was closely covered with a blanket. When she tried to move the blanket, Ma spoke. "Stay in the cart for awhile, Thisbe. You better ride until you feel better."

"Am I going to die, Ma?"

Ma dropped the shafts and came around to the side of the cart. As she stroked Thisbe's head the child felt the blisters of her mother's muscular, wind chapped hands. "No, Thisbe, you're all right." The next morning Ma turned the cart so Thisbe wouldn't see the burying trench, but she saw it anyway – a

long, shallow trench that other people who had gone to sleep dreaming of England were lying in, head to foot, for goodness knew how far across this lonely foreign plain.

And now the days were the same, one after the other. Thisbe drowsed and wakened and drowsed again. Each morning there was a burial trench, each more shallow than the last. One night the men were too tired and weak to raise the tents and the company spent the night under the icy vault of the open sky.

Now people hesitated when the morning bugle blew. It would be better, they said, to stay here and die comfortably than to push forward into the ice-bound mountains. Brigham Young, they said had never heard of their plight and even God was far away.

So the company moved slowly – not all together as they had at first, but strung out in a long line that made a needle and a trailing black line in the snow. No one sang, no one talked.

Folks just pushed along at their own pace and tried not to think of how the days might stretch into weeks and months before the last of them found a long sleep in a trench of snow.

And then, one evening, just before sunset a strange quiver like a thrill of hopefulness was communicated down the wavering line. Alicia climbed on the shafts of the cart to look ahead where everyone was pointing. Coming toward the train was a lone man leading two horses with great pieces of buffalo hung on each side of the animals.

Thisbe pushed at the covers and Ma helped her to stand up in the cart. “Why, Ma,” she said, “that’s Brother Hanks, coming like an angel of God through the snow.”

“How you talk,” Ma said.

But it *was* Brother Hanks and he had brought a fresh buffalo that everyone set to cooking at his own fire. But more than meat, he brought them hope. The advance scouts of a rescue party were just a day away, and behind them a day or two further down the road were food and clothing and a chance to rest.

CHAPTER SIX

Brother Hanks sat by Ma's supper fire and Thisbe watched him with wide gray eyes as she sipped the bowl of bison broth that Ma had prepared from the strip of meat Brother Hanks had brought to her.

"It was like this, Ma'am," he was saying, his large hands spread out to the fire. "No matter what I did or where I went I couldn't forget you folks. I kept wondering how you were getting on, what with the early snows and everything.

"This night I was down near Utah Lake where I'd gone to fish." He smiled at Thisbe and she, remembering the first jerk on her willow pole, smiled in return. "But I was after a load that time, not just a string for supper. Well, I was staying at Gerney Brown's place, and though the bed was comfortable enough I couldn't sleep. Finally I did drop off, but no sooner than I'd done it I was waked up again. Somebody said, 'Ephraim.' That's my name, Ma'am, so I said, 'Yes?'

"But it wasn't Gerney that was speaking. No one was in that room. Then my name was spoken again. My heart was like to pound right out of my body, but I couldn't see anything. The third time the voice said 'Ephraim,' seemed like it was sort of sharp and out of patience.

"I said, 'Yes, yes. Is there something that I can do for you?'

"Then the voice said clear as if I'd been face to face with a neighbor, 'Ephraim, that handcart company is in trouble. Will you help them out?'

"I got right out of bed. Gerney, he got my team hooked up and Sister Brown fixed me a bite and some food to carry along. I got to Salt Lake about daylight, and what should happen but I met a messenger from Brother Brigham, on his way to fetch me."

"Why, Brother Hanks," Ma said, and there was awe in her voice, "that's *prophecy!*"

Brother Hanks nodded solemnly. "Yes, it is. Seems like since I was a boy, the Lord has always been willing to keep in touch with me if I'd keep in touch with him."

Thisbe looked from Brother Hanks to Ma. Both faces were closed and inscrutable. "I've often wondered," Ma said, "about those gifts of the spirit that the Bible promises will follow those who believe."

"This is the way I have it figured," Brother Hanks looked at Ma, and then at the two girls. "The Lord isn't going to fool around with any of them gifts just to impress folks. I don't hold for goings on in meetings like I've seen in some sects. I do know that when a body needs the Lord – needs something the Lord can do for him – so bad that there isn't any other way out, – that is the time that the Lord will show His face or His voice and there'll be healing, and tongues, and prophecy and all the rest."

For a time no one spoke, then Brother Hanks said in a different, more jovial voice, "Yes, the Lord does do strange things, but I notice He always counts on human folks to help Him out. Now I've traveled this road time and again and at this time of year I wouldn't ever have expected to meet a buffalo. But you folks needed meat and he was put in my way. Now, if I hadn't been there, or if I couldn't have brought him down – well, the way I figure, the Lord wouldn't have bothered to have him there, that's all."

"Will you pray with us?" Ma asked after a long silence.

"I'm glad you asked, Ma'am. I'd like to say a special prayer for little sister, here."

Thisbe looked up with another smile. Already she felt warmed and stronger, and happier. Ma said the broth would do her good, but it seemed like the food hadn't made her half as happy and filled with the

feeling that everything would be all right as listening to Brother Hanks had. If he'd anoint her she'd be all right. She knew she would.

Soon Captain Martin came along and the two of them, Brother Hanks and Captain Martin, put their hands on her head. "Dear Sister Thisbe Read –." Brother Hanks' voice sounded like the low tones on the organ back home in England. It seemed to her that from his gentle hands on her head she could feel wave after wave of hope and courage and health shimmering through her body.

When the prayer was over, Brother Hanks and Captain Martin went away. There were others who needed to be anointed and administered to, by God's messenger of mercy. The next morning everyone in camp was talking about Brother Hanks, about his prayers for the sick, but even more the operations he had performed with his hunting knife. Many of the Saints were carrying frozen limbs which were endangering their lives. Brother Hanks amputated toes and feet and sometimes even legs. One of the sisters told Ma that first Brother Hanks anointed these folks and prayed that the amputation could be done without pain. Then when he took out his great hunting knife, held it in the fire to cleanse it, and took off the dying limb with its keen blade; many with tears in their eyes said they hadn't "felt a thing."

Thisbe wanted to be dressed at once, but Ma wouldn't hear of it. "Why?" she asked.

"I want to see Brother Hanks again before he rides away."

Ma laughed. Everybody in the company was laughing today, and for the first time since the storms closed down people were singing as they did their morning work. "Brother Hanks is going to ride with us now and bring us into the Valley." Three days later three horsemen rode into camp. They had been sent in advance of the relief wagons. Supply wagons waited near Devil's Gate. Joseph Young, Daniel Jones, and Abel Garr, the three horsemen talked with tears in their eyes, tears for the suffering of the cart company; but they said that the only way for the Saints to help themselves was to push in spite of cold and storm until they came up to the supply wagons. "Well," Ma said in her practical way, "Devil's Gate is closer than Zion."

And everybody moved with a new hope, a new goal. The goal, now, wasn't Zion, it was food – enough food to fill the stomachs and send strength through the weary bodies of those whose spirits were weakened from want.

Once Thisbe started to sing as the cart plunged on through the snow: "And if our lives are spared again –" but the song stopped almost before it started. Of course their lives would be spared again.

Two days – and the wagon train was reached. Now there was food, six wagons loaded with flour and staples, with warm clothing, even with clean pocket handkerchiefs. Having a clean handkerchief in one's pocket made you feel like a "lady" again.

The next morning the girls stayed together while Ma went to a meeting Captain Martin had called. It was to be decided whether the company should spend the winter at Devil's Gate or whether they should push on to the Valley. Thisbe thought of the meeting back in Florence. That seemed years ago, though it had been just two months. If they had stayed in Florence as Apostle Richards had seemed to counsel, there would have been none of the suffering of the past month.

And yet, Thisbe hoped as she lay in the wagon that the company would decide to go on. "It's strange, isn't it," she said half to herself and half to Alicia, "that what Apostle Richards called the 'spirit of gathering' should be so strong in our hearts."

"I don't know whether it's strange or not," Alicia said. "It wasn't strong in our hearts back by the Platte, but since we've had food –."

And when Ma returned she said the decision had been made to go on. The freight wagons with their starving teams would be left to bring on later. The new wagons would go with them to the Valley.

Now Thisbe sang again as the cart company moved forward. Snatches of songs, never finished, sometimes not even begun – often picked up in the middle somewhere out of a shifting memory or a pleasant half dream.

But trouble was not over. The storms had lessened but the cold had increased and when the company reached the last ford of the Sweetwater, the river was covered with three or four inches of ice. The company camped and in the morning when they were ready to cross, hoping to pass over on the ice, a thaw had broken the surface into great cakes of floating crystal with knife-sharp edges, seeming to wait for those who must wade across.

When Ma reached the bank, one man, as weary as Thisbe, began to cry, “Must we cross this?” he asked.

“Yes,” was the answer.

“Oh, dear, I can’t go through with it.”

His wife came to his side. “Don’t cry, Jimmie,” she said. “I’ll pull the cart for you.”

Thisbe could see Ma and Pa in the forlorn man and his brave wife.

Ma pushed the cart across this – the last – ford, but Alicia and Thisbe went across on horseback. Ma’s leg was cut by a piece of floating ice, and though she tended it carefully it stayed bad. Whenever Brother Hanks rode into camp he visited the Read family. Thisbe suggested that Brother Hanks bless Ma’s leg, but Ma blushed and pooh-poohed the idea. “Nearly every grown up in camp had ice cuts,” Ma said.

The days went faster, now, and with the fresh teams, and most of the slowest folks riding in the wagons, more miles slipped under their wheels.

The ford over the Sweetwater was the last river – and at length the cart company came to the last mountain. Thisbe was walking part time, riding in the cart part time, sometimes even taking a lift in one of the wagons; but the day they reached the last summit overlooking the Valley she stood with the rest and looked to the west – to Zion.

The lake far to the west was a sharper blue than the winter sky, and pushing at its edges like fluted **pie crust was a great stretch of sun-tinted snow. Nearer, Salt Lake City, laid out like a toy town, cuddled for protection against the mountains.

For a moment Thisbe was disappointed. Salt Lake – *City*. The word city had made her think of London, of Liverpool with their great buildings, their teeming streets, their public buildings, their maze of streets and thoroughfares. This – this was only a village with streets as straight as if they had been laid off with a schoolboy’s rule, and with not more than a hundred low houses of logs or adobe or stone set in wide yards. But Ma’s voice drew her out of her own thinking. Ma lifted her two arms high above her head and her voice rang out as clear as a song. “The land of the *living*.” Ma cried, and on the word *living* her voice soared to the sky. Tears came to Thisbe’s eyes. She could see, as if it were stretched at her feet, the burying trench, at first deep and even – and short; then shallower, more wavering, longer as the days had gone on.

Mother’s voice had raised a song to other lips. “Let us thank God!” someone suggested, and everybody’s eyes were lifted, looking for God through the white billow of winter clouds.

Almost at once the travelers were surrounded by a welcoming horde. The shafts of the carts were

seized by strong hands. Someone boosted Ma and Alicia into the cart beside Thisbe and with two men at the shafts the cart moved like the wind.

When they reached the town the streets were lined with the Salt Lake Saints, eager to greet the newcomers. There were songs and cheers and shouts. Anybody'd know, Thisbe thought, that all these good folks had been told about the cart company's troubles. They were *good* folks, too; it was easy to see that.

In a few minutes Brother Hanks came and walked along by Ma's cart. "You're coming home with me," he said. "And there you're going to stay until you folks can get settled.

Thisbe's heart jumped. She had just been thinking that Zion would be pretty nearly perfect if they just had some "close" kin in the Valley. Ma opened her mouth to object, but Brother Hanks said, "My wife, Harriet, sure will be glad to have you."

So in less than an hour from the time the Reads had reached the Valley they were sitting in Brother Hanks' comfortable log house, listening to the roar of the fire in the wide rock fireplace and eating the best biscuits that ever were baked in an open fireplace. Thisbe watched Harriet Hanks as she hurried from the fire to the table and back again, seeing to their comfort.

Harriet's dark brown hair was soft and fluffy, her eyes, between blue and hazel in color, were heavily lashed and her mouth was mobile and quick to smile. What interested Thisbe most was the soft roundness of Harriet's body. Most women in England were more spare. Never had Thisbe seen a woman who seemed to have no bones – just clear, fresh skin over firm flesh with dimples showing in the elbows above the pushed-up sleeves.

She's beautiful, Thisbe thought. Beautiful and good. If Brother Hanks didn't have a good wife I just couldn't stand it! "Sister Hanks—" she said shyly.

"Call me Aunt Harriet," Sister Hanks said, and when Thisbe looked up and with a smile, Sister Hanks ran her soft hand over Thisbe's shining black hair with a touch that was something like Ma's – and something like a friend's.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Almost the next day after the cart company had arrived in the Valley Ma began to chafe to find a home of her own. Harriet laughed at Ma's eagerness to be away from the Hanks' abode. "Why, Sister Read," she said in her bright, kind way, "we're more than glad to have you. A body'd think we hadn't made you welcome, the way you want to be off on your own."

"I can't be beholding to anyone," Ma said. "I can work out and Thisbe and Alicia can make a home for me."

Harriet opened the door for a minute and watched the soft whiteness of the falling snow. "See," she said, "the Priesthood will put up a house for you since your husband isn't here to do it himself. But no one can build this time of year." She came and sat down on a stool by Ma's feet and took Ma's hand between hers. "But I'll tell you what you could do, if you wanted to. Eph and I have talked it over and we thought this might be a good plan for all of us. He tells me you're a capable midwife and nurse."

"Oh, she is," Thisbe said excitedly, forgetting for the moment that children should not be heard when their elders were talking. Ma looked at her reprovingly but Harriet sent a smile across the room.

"Eph and I thought you could go out to nurse and I'd keep the two girls here. They'd start in school, but they could help me with the young ones when they had time and it would be nice all the way around."

Ma let her hand stay in Harriet's. "I'd like that," she said simply. Then, after a silence, "I'd like the girls to be in school and I'd like to have them here where they could partake of the spirit of your home. Seems like every time I've felt that I'd reached the plumb bottom, Brother Hanks has come along to help me."

Harriet's eyes were warm and the clear lines of her face softened. "Everybody loves and appreciates Eph," she said.

"Loving your man so, I can't see –". Ma began, then she put her teeth tight on her lower lip and a blush washed over her face.

Harriet laughed a little, but some of the warmth left her face. "Don't be embarrassed, Sister Read. I know what you were going to say. You were going to say 'I can't see how you can share him with another'."

"I was," Ma admitted, "but I'm ashamed of myself. It's none of my business."

"I guess it is – your business," Harriet said slowly. "I mean polygamy and how it's lived is everybody's business. I won't say that it isn't hard – it is. I love Eph. I've loved him ever since I first saw him prancing down the street on the most beautiful horse I ever laid eyes on. Man and horse – that was a sight! But when the church began to preach polygamy from the platform – well, I made up my mind that I'd be expected to share Eph." She dropped Ma's hand and raised both of hers, palms up, "So – I was, and I did."

Thisbe, only half understanding the talk of the two women, came closer and sat down, tailor style, by the fire. Harriet seemed to pay no attention to her. "We could all be miserable, or we can all be happy. I've known from the time Eph came and told me that he had settled on Jane Capener for his second, that whether we were miserable or happy would depend mostly on me." Harriet spoke more slowly, more to the fire than to Ma, Thisbe thought. "Jane's a nice girl and a brainy one, but she's young. You know how

fine a man Eph is, but he's quick to anger if a spark touches his tinder."

Ma said after a long silence, "Ever since he left you that first time to spend a share of time with his second, I've been wondering if I could share Samuel. Seems like all we went through on the plains, cold and hunger and exhaustion and all, wouldn't be much compared with sharing your man."

Sudden tears came to Harriet's eyes, which she wiped away with a quick, half contemptuous gesture. "You've got it figured about right, Sister Read." She jumped from the stool and took the copper baking pan from its nail above the fire and began to polish it with ashes taken from a jar by the side of the fire. Thisbe wondered about that – polishing a shining pan, and without a word to say, either, just after they had all seemed so friendly.

But when Brother Hanks came home that night everything was easy and natural again.

After supper Brother Hanks sat down with two of his three little ones on his knees and said soberly, "Well, folks, I'll soon be off again."

Harriet looked at him questioningly, but Thisbe, sitting on the stool at his knee, raised her wide gray eyes and said, "Where?"

"Brigham Young has called Feramorz and me to leave right away for the east. Just the two of us are going. We're to carry mail."

"You don't mean back where we just came from?" Thisbe asked incredulously. Alicia crossing from fire to table, stopped in her tracks, a look of horror on her face. Ma shivered and rubbed her hands towards the elbows of her crossed arms. Only Harriet said smoothly, "When do you leave, Eph?"

Eph's clear eyes held his wife's. "As soon as possible." After a moment Harriet moved and broke the spell that had fallen on the folks in the warm pleasant room.

"But there's snow, and there's waves, and there's Indians." Thisbe brought out each word with a little shudder. That two men alone should start back over those endless plains seemed to her like walking out of peace and safety into death.

"I know that, Little Sister," Brother Hanks said patting Thisbe's shining black head. "Brother Brigham knows it, too. But someone has to go and I'm proud to be one that can be trusted to do it."

Harriet shook her head and with a half smile said, "I sometimes wish that I'd married a coward, four foot ten and light as a thistle."

Brother Hanks' great laugh boomed through the house. He put down the two little ones he'd been holding and went and lifted his wife in his powerful arms. "Say that again," he said sternly with a twinkle in his eyes making the lie of his serious voice.

Thisbe noticed that Ma and Alicia turned toward the fire, but try as she would she couldn't keep her eyes off this great gentle giant of a man and his wife that could make a joke when everything she loved was tracking off into an eternity of cold and danger. Brother Hanks held Aunt Harriet in a close embrace. Before he put her down he gave her a slow kiss and the laughter faded from both their eyes and there was a look of sorrow and of worry and of longing where the laughter had been. It reminded Thisbe of Pa's eyes when she and Ma and Alicia had pushed the cart up the first hill that separated them from him back in Iowa.



Ephraim Hanks and Feramor Little leaving Salt Lake, carrying mail east.

Ma turned away from the fire to say, "Will you see Brother Read on your way back?" Then she corrected herself quickly, "Could you leave a letter for him if I prepared one?"

"I'll see him," Brother Hanks promised. "I'll be coming back in the spring and I'll either bring him on with me or I'll bring you word."

"Thank you," Ma said. "I'll compose it after supper."

"No hurry, Ma'am. I'll not be leaving for a few days."

After Ma had written a letter to Pa, she wrote one to be sent by post to Sam and Claire back in England. When she had finished them Thisbe asked, "What did you write in your letters, Ma?"

"Well, I told your Pa that the three of us were safe in the Valley and that he and Walter had our prayers."

"Did you tell him that Thisbe had been sick and everything?" Alicia questioned.

"No, only that," Ma said. Thisbe and Alicia exchanged puzzled looks. Ma had written four closely written pages. But Ma turned the letter to Claire and Sam over to them to read and add to if they wished. Ma had said a lot in a few pages. She hadn't had an opportunity to write since they had left the outfitting post in Iowa City. She told of Walter's loss and the separation of the family; of the big decision that the Saints made in Florence, Nebraska, to move west in spite of the lateness of the season; of the long trip; the early snow; the suffering and death of the folks in the cart company; finally of the arrival in the Valley.

"Ma," Alicia said thoughtfully, after she had finished reading it, "they'll say, 'We knew it was a mistake to gather to Zion.' They'll be glad they stayed home. They'll think that the Lord deserted us."

"He didn't" Thisbe said stoutly.

"He didn't," Ma agreed. Then she wrote again:

“My dear children, we have suffered beyond anything you can imagine. We have seen our comrades weaken and die and be buried in trenches of snow. But in all this suffering we have come face to face with God. It was God who upheld us when our weary bodies would have given up the ghost. It was God who preserved Thisbe to us when it seemed that she would never live. Yes, my children, for the first time in my life I know God. I know that He hears our prayers, and that in His wisdom all is for the best.”

Thisbe and Alicia watched over Ma’s shoulder as the slow pen tracked across the paper. “Was I about to die?” Thisbe asked.

Alicia answered soberly, “God saved you.”

Thisbe amended Alicia’s declaration, “God and Brother Hanks.”

* * *

When Brother Hanks, with Brother Little, left Salt Lake with pack and saddle animals to carry the mail east, he kissed Thisbe and Alicia goodbye just as he did his own young ones. He took Ma’s letters, then he took Aunt Harriet’s hands and said, “Don’t worry, Harriet. Brother Brigham gave us a powerful blessing. We’ll be all right.”

Aunt Harriet followed him out the front door and stood in the soft falling snow to wave good-bye.

CHAPTER EIGHT

To Thisbe and Ma and Alicia, the winter of '56 was like holding your breath and waiting for something. Ma worked most of the time, taking care of the sick, bringing babies to sisters who didn't have their own kin to look after them, even helping out with cleaning and sewing, and all manner of odd jobs. Alicia and Thisbe studied, got acquainted with the other children in the Valley, minded the Hanks children, did small chores for Aunt Harriet and for other folks, too, when the chance came. But neither Ma nor the girls felt rightly settled.

"When Eph comes back –" Aunt Harriet would say sometimes, and then Thisbe would forget to follow what Aunt Harriet was saying for thinking of the time that Brother Hanks would come back, maybe bringing Pa and Walter with him, maybe bringing just a letter. Ma's far-away eyes told plainly where her thoughts were most of the time.

Finally the snow melted and the cottonwoods along the banks of the faster running creeks began to puff out their green buds. The roads were seas of mud and Aunt Harriet showed Thisbe that the mountains were still covered with snow and not fit to be passed over, but every morning Thisbe awakened with the thought, "Maybe he'll come today."

It was the last of April when Thisbe came in one night to find Brother Hanks sitting by the empty fireplace dandling little 'Sell on his foot.

"Oh, Brother Hanks, I thought you'd never come back!" she cried impulsively. "Did you bring Pa – or a letter?"

Brother Hanks laughed the big laugh that rolled right up from his stomach and crinkled his sun and windburned face over his deep blue eyes. "Glad to see me?" he teased. Then he sobered. "Two letters," he said. "One from England and one from your Pa. But they're both inscribed to your Ma."

"I believe she's at Sister Tullidge's. I'll tell her." And Thisbe was off, her long black braids flapping merrily against her brown jacket.

She found Ma just laying supper for the Tullidge men folks. "Pa didn't come," she cried. "Brother Hanks is back but Pa didn't come." Even in her own excitement she watched Ma's gray eyes change from eagerness to disappointment, then back to the look of calm serenity they wore when anybody was watching.

"Did Pa send a letter?" she asked.

"Yes, and there's one from England."

"When Brother Tullidge comes in I'll go with you over to Aunt Harriet's," Ma promised.

Thisbe went out to the chopping block and picked up an apron full of chips while she waited. She was too excited to just stand around.

Back at Aunt Harriet's, Ma took the letters from Brother Hanks' hands. She sat down on the low three-legged stool that always stood before the fire, her back toward the folks. Thisbe watched her turn the letters over in her hands, touching them almost as if they were living things – bird's wings, or flower petals, or Alicia's soft gold-brown hair.

At last she selected one, opened it and read it. Aunt Harriet and Brother Hanks went on talking together as if they didn't know that Ma was sitting there yearning toward her folks that were far away.

Alicia came in while Ma was reading the letter, but neither she nor Thisbe asked what was in it as

Ma folded it and slipped it back into the envelope. Finally Ma spoke in her calm, even voice. "Pa hasn't found Walter yet," she said. Then after a moment, "He says he has decided to stay in Iowa."

She put the envelope into her pocket and sat looking into the blackened fireplace, her hands folded in her lap, until Thisbe said, "What is in the other letter, Ma? Is it from Sam or Claire?"

Ma started as if she had been asleep, then she took the unopened letter from her pocket, slit the sealing wax with her thumb nail, and spread out the closely-written sheets. Her eyes hurried down the page. "Both Sam and Claire write," she said. In a moment she added, "They are both studying the gospel." After a while – "My letter, they say, showed them that the gospel is something more real, more valuable than they thought. They don't plan to immigrate at this time... They ask after Father and Walter... Sam encloses one hundred pounds collected from the sale of Pa's business... They send their love to Thisbe and 'Lish.'"

After Ma had refolded the letter she turned to Brother Hanks. "Did Brother Read seem well?"

Brother Hanks hesitated. "Yes. Yes, he did."

"Does he hope to find – my boy?" Brother Hanks came over to the fireplace and stood awkwardly before Ma, his feet wide apart, his hands behind his back. "He doesn't have much hope, Ma'am."

"Then why didn't he come with you?" Thisbe cried, but no one paid any attention to her question.

"There is something – that I don't understand," Ma said. "This letter doesn't sound like Samuel."

"He wrote it, Ma'am."

Ma fell silent, but still Brother Hanks stood there, swaying a little forward and back, his weight first on his heels, then on his toes. Ma opened the London letter. "One hundred pounds!" she said slowly. "I knew the time when one hundred pounds didn't sound so big, but now –". She shrugged her wide shoulders. "I have half a mind to send it back to Sam and Claire so they can emigrate."

Brother Hanks spoke almost reluctantly. "If I was you, Ma'am, I'd take those two little girls of yours back to Iowa and personally see to emigrating their Pa."

A puzzled frown spread between Ma's eyes as she looked straight into Brother Hanks' blue ones. "It would be to your best interest, Ma'am. I'll promise you that."

The frown was wiped away and Ma's usual mask took its place. "Could we arrange transportation?" she asked.

Brother Hanks walked over to the window and stood looking out over the greening ditch banks. "I'm sure you can. You say the word and I'll see Brother Brigham about it myself. There's empty wagons going East all the time to haul freight out here. Getting there will be easy. You'll have the long summer to do it in and there'll be ways of coming back, too. I'll see to that. You think about it and –".

"I've thought about it. We'll go."

Thisbe looked from one to the other of the grown ups. The words they had used were all common words – words that she could spell, syllabicate and define – but she hadn't understood a thing that was going on. All she knew was that she and Alicia and Ma were turning back to Iowa.

That evening as she and Alicia washed the Hanks supper dishes she questioned Alicia. "There's something strange, that's all I know," Alicia answered. Then she burst out, "Oh, Thisbe, I wish Pa had come with Brother Hanks. Nobody says so, but I'm sure there's something wrong with Pa."

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In less than a week Brother Hanks told Ma that he had arranged wagon transportation for the three of them. Ma had finished her stay at the Tullidges and she and the girls packed hurriedly for the trip.

In her dreams Thisbe had often relived the journey from Nebraska through Wyoming to the Valley. But the trip back was not the same thing at all. Now there were fast horses on almost empty light wagons, and spring was green and fragrant on the Wyoming plains. When riding grew tiresome she and Alicia could lie down in the back of the wagon and sleep. Ma taught them both to do fancy knitting and often the needles clicked in time with the wheels. It would have been a pleasant trip if the girls hadn't often surprised a look of sadness in Ma's eyes, if Ma hadn't been so silent, so hard to talk to.

After the wagons rolled through Florence the girls counted the days. It would be nice to see Pa. His great dark eyes would shine with surprise when he saw the three of them. Perhaps he'd catch them up in his arms and swing them about as he had when he'd taken them off the London train when they came home from school for weekends back in the old country. They spoke often of him as their needles clicked merrily along, of the feel of his soft beard against the cheek, of the way he and Ma had of looking at each other that cut out everything else in the word.

When they reached Newton, Iowa, Brother Ellertson, who was driving the wagon in which the Reads were riding, asked about Samuel Read at the trading station. The two men lounging by the long wooden counter spoke together for a moment, then asked for a description of Pa. Brother Ellertson turned to Thisbe and Alicia, who had followed him to the door. "He's handsome," Thisbe exclaimed. And Alicia, more practical, said, "Five foot five and dark complexioned."

The two men nodded, and one stood up, hitching his trousers up as he unfolded his gangling length. "I'll show you how to get to Martha's soddy." He gave Brother Ellertson some directions while Thisbe and Alicia read a poster nailed to the rough door.

"Reward! Anybody knowing the whereabouts of Walter Read, eight years old, presumably stolen by the Indians..."

The two girls read the poster to the end, then ran to the wagon to tell Ma about it. Ma's eyes looked straight ahead in the direction the man had pointed. Not all of her wonderful self control could mask their eagerness now. Thisbe and Alicia felt the tenseness of their mother's body, the withdrawal of her thoughts from them and from the jolting wagon. Pa was at the end of a very short trail.

Finally Brother Ellertson drew up before a little cabin built into the side of a hill. Its three walls were made of blocks of brown sod and it was roofed with interlaced willows topped with dirt in which spring grass was growing a fresh and vivid green. When Brother Ellertson knocked, the door was opened by a youngish woman who was pretty in spite of her rather thin face. Yes, Samuel Read lived there, she said. No, he wasn't there just then. He was expected back soon, though. Maybe in a day or two. Could she put up Mr. Read's wife and daughters? A change came over the woman's face and she leaned forward to peer into the wagon. She hesitated but finally said that she could. So Brother Ellertson helped Ma from the wagon. The girls were already down, looking curiously at the strange house. He carried the trunk through the door and placed it between the cupboard and the fire – the only space in the little room. Then he gave Ma some instructions about how to get in touch with them at Kansas City if she wanted to, and drove off.

"Just call me Martha," the woman said. "Everybody does." She laughed at the girls' curiosity about the house with three walls. Where the other wall might have been the hillside rose abruptly. Inside

the ground had been dug away to make a square room and the wall had been reinforced with blocks of baked earth. The inside of the other three walls was of sod, too, and the floor was of hard earth.

"You're thinking," Martha said to Ma, "that this is a mighty strange place to find a woman alone."

"I was," Ma admitted.

Martha laughed. "When my man was alive we took up a claim here and I haven't been willing to lose it. Not until something else turns up at least. It's lonely, but not too bad. I have two rooms here and I take in travelers real often. Like I did Mr. Read. He's been here quite a spell."

The girls followed her out to the shed to do her milking, and after the chores were done they all sat down to supper. Martha fixed a bed for them in the kitchen right after the dishes were cleared up, and she and Alicia promptly fell asleep, hearing Ma and Martha talking in polite, meaningless conversation.

Thisbe thought she had been sleeping for hours when she was awakened by Pa's voice, first weaving itself into her dreams, then standing out clear and lifelike. She opened her eyes to see him standing, his back to the door, his face in the full light of the fire.

Thisbe would have jumped from her bed and thrown her arms around Pa's neck and faded her knees around his waist in her old-time bearlike embrace, but something in the room held her silent in her bed. It was like a dream when something is chasing you and you can't run, or cry.

Pa was just as beautiful as ever, though his clothes were less well kept and fine than they had been in London. His beard was still shining and smoothly clipped, his dark face was as smooth and fine skinned as ever. It was his great dark eyes that were different. They weren't sparkling with laughter as Thisbe had expected them to be. They weren't even filled with joyful surprise. Instead they were fixed on Ma almost accusingly, and he was saying, "But why did you come, Elizabeth?"

Ma was standing almost at the head of Thisbe's improvised bed. By tilting her head the least little bit Thisbe could have seen through the shadows into Ma's face. Ma answered simply, "I had to, Samuel. When I read your letter – well, I had to."

Martha spoke now, her voice coming from the shadows by the cupboard. Thisbe saw that the woman was sitting on Ma's trunk. "There hasn't been anything between us. Samuel Read is a good man."

Ma and Pa still stared at each other. Ma's voice broke a little. "Aren't you glad to see me, Samuel?"

"I – I'm surprised," Pa said. And the way he spoke reminded Thisbe of how he parried** Sam's blows when he had fenced with his son in the back room of the London bookstore. Ma didn't speak again and finally Pa said, "I never could keep the truth from you, Elizabeth. You can read it though you are miles away." He reached out his hand to the shadows where Ma's little trunk stood. "The truth is that I have learned to love Martha."

Ma's voice was so low that Thisbe could barely hear it. "I felt that was it, Samuel." Then Ma's voice grew a little louder and it was easy to guess at the effort it took for her to say, "You couldn't come on to the Valley without her."

Pa's eyes softened, "You always have understood, Elizabeth."

For a moment Thisbe was back in the Hanks' kitchen and she was hearing Ma say. "Seems like all we went through on the plains, cold, and hunger and exhaustion and all, wouldn't be much compared with sharing your man."

Then she was back in Martha's soddy and Ma was saying, "Bring her to the Valley, Samuel. God

has called upon his daughters to – to share their men if need be. I thought that cup would pass by me. But if you want it that way, Samuel. If you want polygamy –”.

Pa ‘s voice was unbelievably gentle and the tears ran down his face and lost themselves in his beard. “I wasn’t thinking of – *polygamy*, Elizabeth.”

Thisbe wanted to close her eyes and pull the rough quilt up over her ears to shut out the whole dreadful world. But she couldn’t. She went on listening and watching.

“You and Martha?” Ma asked.

“Yes.”

Finally Ma spoke into a long silence. “Oh – Samuel!”

“I’ve always admired you, Elizabeth. You’re a fine woman.” Pa took a step toward Ma, but she held out her hands palm out.

If Thisbe tilted her head to see Ma’s face the grown ups would know that she was awake. She turned her eyes to see Ma’s interlaced fingers. Ma took a breath that swelled her bosom under her gray linsey dress. Then she crossed the little room and walked past Pa without touching him, out through the door and into the night.

It reminded Thisbe of when they had left Pa and gone on with the hand cart. Only that time Pa had said, “I love you, Elizabeth. I love you.” And when Ma had picked up the shafts of the cart she had started on a journey that Thisbe and Alicia could share, not walked off on a road where she’d always be alone.

CHAPTER NINE

The next morning Thisbe was wakened by Alicia's merry laughter. 'Lish was out of bed in her bare feet romping with Pa and Pa's eyes were as filled with laughter and gaiety as they had been in the old days. Martha was nowhere to be seen and Ma was sitting on her little trunk watching Pa and Alicia with eyes that brought back to Thisbe's mind all that had happened the evening before.

For a long time she had lain awake watching for Ma to return; and even after Ma had got in bed with her and Alicia she hadn't been able to go to sleep trying to unravel the strange grown-up snarl which had somehow been caused by Ma coming to Martha's soddy. Pa loved Martha, not Ma, that was clear. But she and Alicia loved Ma and Pa, too, so what about that? At last she had decided not to let any one know that she had been awake when Pa came into the soddy. She'd wait for Ma to tell her what had happened, or maybe it would be Pa. Most likely, Ma, though, because Pa never did anything disagreeable if Ma could save him from it.

She sat up, rubbing her heavy eyes and Ma, seeing her, said in her practical way, "Now that Thisbe is awake you might ride into Newton. If Brother Ellertson hasn't left already we might go with him into Winter Quarters or Iowa City."

"Is Pa coming, too?" Alicia asked, and suddenly Thisbe felt years older than her older sister – older and wiser.

"Not now, Sister," Pa parried the question.

As soon as Pa had gone, Ma squared her mobile lips in a way she had when she was screwing up her courage. "Girls," she said quietly, "we're leaving Pa here and going back to the Valley as soon as may be."

"Is he going to look for Walter some more?" Alicia asked.

"He has promised me that he will. He's going to make one last effort and then come on to Salt Lake City in a Year, perhaps." Thisbe tried to think of something to say, but her tongue felt thick and heavy in her mouth. She wet her lips and tried to take her eyes off her mother's face.

"You're too young to understand these things," Ma went on. "But your father – your father –".

Thisbe put her hot little hand in her mother's. "Oh, Ma, you don't need to say it," she cried, forgetting her resolution to keep silent, "Pa doesn't love us any more, that's it. Just one winter and he loves somebody else." Suddenly she broke into sobs. Ma patted her shoulder for a minute.

"You heard, Baby?"

"I was awake," Thisbe confessed. "Oh, Ma, I think Pa is dreadful!"

Ma was silent for a long time, folding and unfolding her long fingers with Thisbe's stumpy ones. At last she said, "I didn't expect this trial."

"I wish we'd never left England. We were all happy there," Alicia declared.

Ma turned to her suddenly. "Don't you ever say that, Alicia Read. Never. We've found God, and even though we lose all else we are better off." But Thisbe, studying Ma's tight drawn face, wondered if Ma really believed everything she had said, or if she was just trying awfully hard to believe it.

It was afternoon before Pa came back with the word that Brother Ellertson had already left.

"Oh, dear," Ma sighed, "that means waiting until he gets to Kansas City to get in touch with him." Her hands, usually quiet and composed, twisted themselves together on her lap. "I'd hoped we

could go on today.”

“You stay here with Martha,” Pa suggested. “I’ll ride out and find some other place to put up.”

“Samuel,” Ma said, “I couldn’t do that. And you know it.”

“I suppose not,” Pa said quietly. Then after a minute, “What do you want to do?”

“I think the girls and I had better go back to Winter Quarters. There’s almost certain to be preparations going on there for emigrating the Saints and we can get a way back.”

“I wish you hadn’t come, Elizabeth,” Pa said.

For a moment Ma looked in Pa’s eyes, then she lifted her eyes so her gaze was over his head. “It’ll be hard on the girls – going back just any way, – maybe by foot like the first time. But still I’m glad I came. I had to know, Samuel.”

Pa’s words were almost the same again, “I suppose so.” He plucked the raveled edge of his sleeve and drew out a long thread. He rolled it between his fingers as he said, “There’s still money, Elizabeth. I’ve been careful as I knew how. You won’t have to walk if there is room to be bought.”

So Pa arranged for a rancher with a good team and a light outfit to take Ma and Alicia and Thisbe to Winter Quarters. In Winter Quarters there was a group of Saints, just as Ma had guessed, but all of the west-going wagons were filled. In Council Bluffs, where Ma had been counseled to try next, chances were little better. Finally Ma arranged to get room in a wagon leaving the last of July or the first of August. That was late – too late in the season – but she could do no better.

But that wagon didn’t leave. Neither did any of the others that were preparing to set off across the plains. Word came to halt westward movement until further notice. The air was thick with rumors. Everybody was saying that the United States was sending an army to wipe out the settlement on the banks of the Great Salt Lake. Brother Smoot, coming East with the mail, had met the army supply trains moving West. He wouldn’t believe that their destination was the Valley until he was told that there would be no more United States mail for the Mormons.

For the first time Thisbe heard the stories of mob violence in Illinois and Missouri. She listened, round-eyed, at the talk about the evil times that the Saints had lived through before their first movement West. Now it looked as if they were to be driven even farther. Mexico, some guessed.

All through the winter rumors came out of the west, but no real news. Ma, waiting endlessly, worked herself to utter weariness trying to forget Pa and Martha in an Iowa soddy, trying to make up her mind that it would be all right to live in Council Bluffs forever, if need be.

* * *

One day Thisbe sat on the ground, drawing a picture with a broken twig in the patch of loose dirt between her knees. “What are you thinking about?” Alicia asked.

“I was just thinking that Ma was grown up before she got Pa. She had lots of life before she even knew him. But we – we’ve had Pa all our lives.”

Alicia nodded, “Yes, but Thisbe, some day you and I’ll have husbands of our own. But Ma – well, Ma had Pa and she can’t begin again.”

Thisbe flared. “Well, Pa’s mean to us. To Ma and you and me. Now we can’t get back to Salt Lake – or anything.”

“Maybe when spring comes,” Alicia said. “Lots of folks say Brigham Young will send word for

folks to come west as soon as spring comes.

But it was July before the word to move west came to the hundreds of eager Saints waiting with their loaded wagons. And it was late August before the Reads were again in Salt Lake City. An American Army had come, just as the rumors had said, but it hadn't exterminated the Saints. It had marched through Salt Lake City without seeing a living soul or causing a bit of trouble, and had camped west and south of the City where the Jordan River twisted itself sluggishly from a sweet water lake on the south, north to the Great Salt Lake just as in the Bible the Jordan flowed from Galilee to the Dead Sea.

By October Ma was settled in a home of her own – one good room and a lean-to which Brother Hanks and other members of the priesthood had built for her.

The family hadn't been in the new house for more than a week when Ma got a letter from Sam and Claire. They had received Ma's letter about Pa's plan to divorce Ma and remarry. At first they had thought of sending for Ma and the girls to come back to England, but they had decided that Ma would never do that. They had made the whole thing a matter of prayer. Now they had embraced the gospel and had felt the spirit of gathering and were coming to Zion to take care of Ma and their little sisters.

Ma smiled at Sam's idea that he and Claire should take care of her, but Thisbe and Alicia knew that often Ma needed somebody to talk to, somebody to lean on, that had more grown-up sense than two little girls twelve and thirteen years old.

Through the winter of '59 they waited. But now it wasn't for Pa and Walter. Walter, in spite of their prayers, was most likely lost forever and Pa was worse than lost. Now they were waiting for Sam and Claire and the new life their coming would bring. But since they couldn't possibly arrive until the fall there was no use holding your breath.

Then something happened that drove even the expected arrival of Sam and Claire from the family's mind.

Brother Hanks had been away on one of his long winter trips with the mail, and when he returned he came to Ma's cottage almost before he took time to greet his own families.

"I have a letter for you, Ma'am," he said to Ma. Then he sat down on a thong chair she placed for him and waited for her to read it.

She slit the wax slowly, slowly shook out the sheets. For less than a second her eyes crossed the page, then her face blanched and she cried, "Oh – oh!"

"Whatever is the matter?" Thisbe asked, pushing a stool under Ma's knees at the back so she'd fall onto it, instead of on the floor. "Ma, what is it?" Alicia cried at the same time.

The color flowed back into Ma's face and she read the letter, her eyes darting across the page, across again. When she had finished the first page she handed it to Alicia. The two girls sat down on the braided rug in front of the fireplace.

My Dear Elizabeth:

Our boy is found. He is safe and well and I have him here with me. Of course you will want to know where he has been and who had hidden him away for these many months. I shall try to tell you all as I have found it to be.

You remember that you encouraged me to post a reward in the papers. It was one of these notices that finally brought the information we sought. But let me tell it from the first.

One morning a good woman was finecombing her little girl's head, and as women will,

sought about for a piece of paper to put the combings on. She tore a piece from a newspaper that had come to her home wrapped around a pair of boots from the cobbler. As she combed the child's hair she read the item in the piece of paper before her. It was my notice of Walter's loss and a posting of a reward. "Well," she said to herself, "that description sounds the little boy that comes here to play with my Jamie." She remembered that the little boy had finer manners than most children in this western country and that he spoke of the old man he lived with as uncle.

She shook the combings from the paper into the fire and carefully put the paper away. The next time the child came over to play she said, "Is your name Walter?"

"It was once," the little boy said, "but Uncle Billy gave me a new name."

"Are you from across the ocean?"

"Yes. But that was a long time ago."

She said nothing more to the boy, but that evening she got her man to go with her to "Uncle Billy's Cabin. She showed him the clipping and said, "If you don't take the child into town and give him up, I will."

So that's the way he was returned to me. I spoke to the old man who stole him. He was very lonely, he said, and when he saw the boy sitting there alone he thought he had been left and picked him up and took him away with him. There must have been some distance between the cart company and the drovers that would lend credence to his story. Walter didn't want to go with him and resisted, but he adjusted quickly, as children do, and learned to like the old fellow. The man was good to Walter, gave him the best of everything, and the child has grown remarkably. I think he must have outgrown Thisbe by now, if not 'Lish.

I know how eager you are to have him with you again, so if you wish it I will bring him on as soon as the roads are safe for traveling.

Now, Elizabeth, it is hard to say this, but I don't know just what to do. I could come just with the boy and then return to Iowa, or I could bring Martha with me and make my home in Salt Lake. I have in mind starting a bookstore in Salt Lake City, as I understand the Saints are great students and readers. In this, however, it will be as you wish.

I am your devoted servant,

Samuel Read.

When Ma had put the last page in Alicia's hands she turned to Brother Hanks. "Did you know what was in the letter?"

Brother Hanks' laugh rolled through the little room. "Of course, I knew. I saw the lad myself."

"You did!" For a moment tears filled Ma's eyes and she brushed them away with the corner of her apron. "Tell me, how did he look?"

As bright a boy as I ever saw," Brother Hanks declared, putting his arm around Ma's shoulder, "His black eyes were dancing and his black hair was clean and neat. He'd had food care. You know, Ma'am, I couldn't help but say to myself that it was through the goodness of God that that boy was taken care of and kept to cross the plains at a better time than you folks came. When I saw him, round and ruddy, I thought how wasted Thisbe looked when I met you folks for the last time."

"Yes," Ma agreed, "God has been good."

"I wanted to bring the boy on myself but his Pa wouldn't hear of it."

Ma took the last page of Pa's letter from Alicia's hand and gave it to Brother Hanks to read.

Brother Hanks read slowly and when he finished he asked, "What's your answer, Ma'am, if it is any of my business?"

“My answer is yes, of course.” Suddenly excitement seemed to run through Ma and she said, “Oh, I’ll be so happy to have my boy in my arms again. You can’t know!”

“Just think,” Alicia said, “Sam and Claire are coming from England and now Walter is found. We’ll all be together again.”

For a moment Thisbe shook with anger. Her fists clenched and she could feel the warm blood flowing up over her face. She was angry with Pa that he could break this close family circle, that he could hurt Ma and all of them like this. “Not all of us,” she said grimly.

CHAPTER TEN

It seemed to Thisbe that she was on tip-toes all the summer of '59 to look over the edge of summer and into early autumn. Ma had a letter from Claire that she and Sam were really on their way – that they were gathering to Zion.

Often after Thisbe was in bed she tried to remember just what her older brother and sister looked like. It had been only three years, but already their faces had almost escaped her memory. She could remember easily what they had said, what they had done, but not just how they looked; and she wondered if they would seem like strangers to her.

Every time a new emigrant train entered Emigrant Square she and Alicia would drop whatever they were doing and race to be one of the welcoming crowd. And at last, early in September, Claire and Sam arrived. Something clicked in Thisbe's mind the moment she saw Sam – but Claire had changed. Sam was rather short and slight like Pa with the same fine skin, heavy-lashed dark eyes, and quick, agile gestures. Claire was as tall as Ma, but more rounded. Her complexion was dark, like Sam's and Pa's, and her eyes held the same deep sparkle. When Claire moved, people made way for her with a sort of deference for her assured, queenly way. Thisbe was proud enough to burst when Claire took her hand and asked to be taken to Ma's cottage.

Folks turned to look at them as they went down Main Street, and Thisbe knew the attention wasn't for her. "Goodness, gracious," she said, skipping beside Claire to keep up with her sister's longer strides, "I bet you won't last any time at all here."

Claire laughed. "Last? Why?"

"Oh, somebody will marry you and we won't have our family together after all."

"I won't be marrying one of these polygamists, I'll promise you that," Claire laughed.

But Thisbe sobered. "We don't call them polygamists here in the Valley," she gravely corrected her sister. "We call them 'family men,' and some of the nicest men I know are 'family men'."

Claire turned Thisbe's face up to hers and looked into the calm grey eyes. "You're a funny little person," she said gently. "And oh, I'm glad to be here in Salt Lake with you and Alicia and Ma."

Ma made a great to-do over Claire, declaring that she'd grown a foot; and when Sam came in with Alicia hanging to his arm she did it all over for Sam, except she couldn't say that Sam had grown a foot because he hadn't. He favored Pa and Claire was half a head taller than he was.

Thisbe helped to spread an extra bed for Sam. He was eager to build another room or two onto the cottage, but Ma urged him to wait until he had spoken to the Brethren and had found out whether or not there was need for leather workers in Salt Lake City or if he would be sent elsewhere.

"Do you mean," Sam said to Ma, "that now I'm in Salt Lake City I won't be allowed to stay here?"

"I mean," Ma answered, "that everybody registers for the sort of work he can do when he arrives in the Valley, and President Young sends him to some community where he is needed and where he can best make a living?"

"Well, I'll be –" Sam said explosively, but he didn't finish, because after all he had embraced the gospel and understood that Brigham Young's voice was the voice of God on earth. Besides, he admitted, it stood to reason that Salt Lake shouldn't have a hundred harness makers while some other towns had

none.

When Sam and Claire registered she was told to work right in Salt Lake City. In England she had been apprenticed to a milliner and there were already many fine ladies in Salt Lake who would like to have their hats made by a milliner direct from London. Sam was told to work for a time with a harness maker in Salt Lake City, and that when spring came and there was a chance to build himself a home elsewhere, he would be expected to go down south to Salt Creek.

Ma was glad that Claire was to be in Salt Lake City; glad that Sam would be home for the winter, too, but sorry about Salt Creek. She had counted on having him with her until he found himself a wife.

With Claire and Sam at home with Ma, the days hurried by and winter went faster than it had any time since the Read family reached the Valley. Always there was laughter in the house and plenty of young company. There were girls who came to call on Claire and boys who came to see Sam, only everybody knew it was the other way about and some shy, curly-haired miss would walk Sam straight to the marriage altar if he didn't keep his head.

One day Aunt Harriet Hanks came to call on Ma. She met Claire and Sam, who were home for Sunday afternoon, and talked to them a little of the outside world. Then she said to Ma, "What I really came for, Sister Read, was to see if you'd lend me Thisbe for a few days."

Ma hesitated. The Hanks family had left Salt Lake and moved up to a ranch east of Salt Lake City between Little and Big Mountain. The place was called Mountain Dell. Here Brother Hanks ran a stage station and a trading post. Aunt Harriet ran a sort of hotel for the people who traveled by stage, cooking wonderful meals and making the highest in the land as comfortable as they would be at home.

"Do say yes," Aunt Harriet urged. "I'm lonely for the child. "She used to be as much a fixture in my kitchen as my brass kettle or my baby."

Ma smiled. "It's up to Thisbe. I hate her to miss school, but --"

"I'll see that she doesn't fall behind in her lessons," Aunt Harriet promised, and Thisbe hurried away to pack her few belongings in Claire's portmanteau.

Aunt Harriet laughed as she called after her, "Not so fast, Thisbe. We'll call for you in the morning."

* * *

Thisbe was entranced with Mountain Dell. Even with the country covered with snow, it looked like a country of magic. She watched Brother Hanks break road with his two great oxen, she played with the children, she helped Aunt Harriet with daily chores, but often she just sat in the warm kitchen and luxuriated in idleness.

It was at one of these times that Aunt Harriet brought her knitting and sat down close to the crackling fire. "Thisbe," she said, "I've been wanting to talk to you. That's the real reason I invited you up. Did you know that?"

Thisbe felt a little embarrassed. "I thought there was a reason, Aunt Harriet. I didn't know what it was."

Thisbe had never seen Aunt Harriet more serious. It seemed that she was making a real effort to bring herself to say what she had to say. "Thisbe, do you like Brother Hanks?"

Thisbe turned her gray eyes up to her questioner. "Of course I do."

“Could you love him?” Thisbe smiled. All this seriousness for nothing, she thought. “I already do. I don’t believe there’s anybody in the Martin Company that doesn’t love Brother Hanks.”

Thisbe fell silent, thinking of the joy in the impoverished company when Brother Hanks found them, despairing on the snow covered plains of Wyoming.

Sticking her steeled needles into the ball of black yarn, Aunt Harriet reached out for Thisbe’s hand. “That isn’t exactly what I meant,” she said gently. “Do you think you could love him as – well, as I love him.” Then, as Thisbe was silent, her eyes turned away to the fire, “As a *woman* loves a man.”

Thisbe moved uneasily. She took her hand away from Aunt Harriet’s grasp and locked it, with her other hand, under her knees.

“I didn’t mean to frighten you, but you are growing up, Thisbe. And Eph has told me that he has loved you for some time.”

“He’s always been good to me,” Thisbe said, remembering the first gift of Indian moccasins and fishing tackle. “I’ve thought of him sort of like Pa, only bigger and kinder and more to be depended on.”

“But that love would grow into something else,” Aunt Harriet seemed almost to be arguing. “I told Eph you had seen him angry. He doesn’t anger often – but when he does! It’s a sight no woman wants to see. But if you love him –”.

In Thisbe’s mind a half forgotten scene began to shape itself. She waited for it to come clear, then struggled to put its meaning into words. “Aunt Harriet, once you told my mother that she had figured it right when she said no hardship could compare with the pain of sharing your husband.”

“Yes,” Harriet admitted slowly, “But I’ve passed that now. Besides, Eph isn’t my real husband – my *whole* husband, I mean.” Thisbe’s eyes questioned her and she said, “I shouldn’t have said that, not to a child. It’s too hard to understand.”

Wordlessly Thisbe waited for Aunt Harriet to go on. “Before I met Eph I was married and had one little boy. I was happy enough – and then my husband died. I was a widow when I first met Eph. He knew that when we were married, and he promised to raise my little boy as if he were his own. And he’s done that, too. After a while my life with Eph crowded out the memory of my life with my first husband. Eph is so big and strong and vital that he draws a woman to him like the roots of a tree draw water from all the soil about. I found I had no life but with Eph, so I asked him to have me sealed to him, and to have my little boy sealed to him, too.”

Harriet took the bright needles from the somber yarn and knitted the stitches from one needle onto another. Thisbe, watching the woman’s face, knew she was checking a flood of emotions before she went on with the story. When she did her voice was almost natural. “He said no. I begged and pleaded. I told him he had all my love. He answered, ‘Harriet, I might rob a living man, I’ll never rob a dead one.’ And so I and all my children, my first one and the others, too, will belong to my first husband in the next world. Eph won’t be mine at all.” Harriet took a deep breath and said, “Now, I have told you what I promised myself I would never tell anyone. That’s why I said Eph isn’t my whole husband.”

“You love him just the same, though, Aunt Harriet?”

“More, I guess, because with my woman’s love is honor for his strength and goodness. Perhaps that’s why I want him to have you as a wife if some day you are willing.”

“Do I have to say yes or no right now?”

The seriousness in the child’s face brought a smile to Harriet’s lips. “Goodness, no, child. You don’t have to say yes or no for years, yet, if you don’t want to. But from now on, if both you and your

mother are willing, Eph will visit you when he is in Salt Lake. You try to think of him as a man. Don't think of him as my husband, or the children's father, or even the saviour of the Martin Company. Think of him as – well –'.

"It will be hard at first, I guess," Thisbe said. "But I'll try." Then in an impulsive burst she cried, "I do love him, Aunt Harriet, and I love you, too."

The two never spoke of the matter again, but when Aunt Harriet asked Thisbe to call her just plain "Harriet," Thisbe felt that she knew the reason. To herself she practiced calling Brother Hanks "Eph." It made her feel a little sinful, like calling Ma "Lizzie."

Early in the summer of '60, Thisbe understood why Aunt Harriet had borrowed her for the little visit. The road through Echo Canyon was completed and the stage road no longer ran by Mountain Dell. Brother Hanks sold the ranch and trading post there and bought him another ranch up in Parley's Park. That is farther from Salt Lake City and if Aunt Harriet had waited she might never have been able to tell Thisbe the things that were on her mind.

At about the same time as the Hanks family moved from Mountain Dell, Pa and Walter arrived. Pa left Martha in town while he brought Walter out to Ma's. But he didn't seem like Pa. He was nervous and quiet and – different. Ma did her best but couldn't set him at his ease.

And after Pa left it was hard to set Walter at his ease, too. Ma had been saying time and again how she wanted "her baby" in her arms, but Walter was taller than either Thisbe or Alicia, and he was shy of women's ways. Alicia and Thisbe tried to be good to him, and when Ma wasn't out nursing she put herself out to fix him special treats, but it was easy to see that he missed Pa. Sam took to taking him with him when he went to the harness maker's and then Walter was happy. Ma's eyes as she looked at Walter were troubled. Anytime now Sam would receive his call to go south to Salt Creek and then what would Walter do?

But when Sam's call came to move south the family had already decided what to do. Ma and Walter would go with Sam; Claire and the girls would stay in Salt Lake City. Claire promised to keep the home for Alicia and Thisbe, because after all, they were both courting. Orson Arnold was calling on Alicia, and Brother Hanks had come several times to sit in Ma's parlor and talk with Thisbe and the others. He had told Ma what his intentions were and Ma had agreed.

The first time Claire met Brother Hanks, Thisbe watched the two standing by the door talking together with a strange feeling deep inside her. Claire was tall enough to look almost straight across at him, and in his eyes there was the admiration for her beauty and strength that Thisbe saw in the eyes of all the men. What, she wondered, will he ever see in me, after he has seen Claire! She almost sighed out loud when he suggested that Thisbe might like to take a walk.

"I see Eph Hanks is courting again," folks said, and Thisbe heard it but she didn't care. Proudly she walked by his side, making herself as tall as possible, conscious of the long black braids that flapped at her back, the skirt that ended above the tops of her black brass-toed shoes.

"Ma," Claire scolded at supper, "you shouldn't let Alicia and Thisbe plan to marry right away –".

Ma looked up wearily from the buns she was toasting, English fashion, on a long fork over the coals in the fireplace. "They are both good men."

"But, Ma!" Claire shook her shoulders angrily. "Whether they're good or not doesn't have anything to do with it! Yes, it does, of course, but I mean –". She stopped to find words, then burst out, "Ma, you're so different, so different from what you used to be."

“I know,” Ma agreed quietly.

Claire spoke what the younger girls never dared mention, “its Pa’s fault. He did it to you. You used to be always at the head of things. Now you’re willing to – oh, I don’t know.”

“I don’t know either,” Ma agreed. Her voice became firmer and her shoulders squared. “Thisbe and Alicia shan’t marry without love. I’ve told both men that. But if they can find it in their hearts to love these men – then they’ll be taken care of as I can’t take care of them.”

“I’ll take care of them,” Claire insisted stoutly.

Thisbe sat silent, as if the words of the two women were flowing over her head – as if it didn’t make a difference in the world to her and Alicia who won the argument. Then, suddenly she spoke up, and her voice surprised her as much as it did the others.

“I love Eph Hanks and I’m proud and happy that he wants me for his wife.”

CHAPTER ELEVEN

April the 5th, 1862, just twenty days before Thisbe's seventeenth birthday, was the date set for her wedding day. Ma came up from Salt Creek early in March to help her to get ready. But it was Claire who sewed evening after evening, sometimes by candle light, sometimes by the light from a saucer wick, that Thisbe might have a real wedding dress.

When Thisbe first wrote to Ma that she and Eph had set the date, Ma wrote: "Brother Hanks saved your life. It is fitting that he should be rewarded with your hand." Then she wrote about the responsibilities of a wife and mother. At the very end of the letter she wrote: "Don't forget your father in your time of happiness. I believe he would want to know about your plans and would be happy to share them with you."

Claire smiled at the first sentence of the letter. "Brother Hanks would have to be a better man than anyone living if he asked the hand of everybody whose life he'd saved."

Thisbe was angry at the light tone in her sister's voice, but she had to agree with her words. Eph had saved more lives than most any one. There were all the folks in the Martin Company; there were goodness knew how many who would have died at the hands of the Indians if Eph hadn't known so well how to handle the red men and keep them happy and friendly.

At the last bit of advice Claire nodded. "I think you should go to see Pa. Next time your man is in town take him to call on Pa. It's the least you can do."

So the next time Eph was in Salt Lake he and Thisbe went to the little shop that Pa was just opening up. Like the one in England there was a room in front for books and one behind for private things. In England Pa had kept his collection of swords, all his fencing things, in the back room. In Salt Lake City he and Martha had fixed up the back room for living Quarters, at least until something else presented itself. Thisbe was happy to see the swords on the rough wall. They brought back in a flood of memory the bookshop back home, and Pa didn't seem a stranger somehow, as he had when they entered the store.

Thisbe looked at her father – such a little man by the side of Eph, yet a man whose dignity and grace and charm would never let him seem insignificant with any company. Pa's eyes were a shining brown, his smooth skin as young looking as in the old days, his soft brown beard as carefully cut into a neat V. He greeted Eph, kissed Thisbe, and invited them into the back room. For awhile he talk to Eph of his adventures in the Burmese War and of his life with books. Then he took the swords from the wall and pointed out their qualities.

Thisbe, watching, felt the kinship of the two men. Pa, little and graceful and polished; Eph, big and rough, but so good. Yet there was some quality that they shared and she struggled to determine what it was. After a time Pa offered to fence with Eph, but Eph just laughed and said if Pa would give him a horse he'd "exchange him a buffet" any day.

At the end, just as they were ready to go, Eph said, "Brother Read, I came to ask you for Thisbe's hand in marriage."

"What does her mother say?"

"Yes."

"Then it's yes."

“I already have two wives, but my prospects are –”.

Pa waved his slim, graceful hand. “Never mind about that. You know your own circumstances and you wouldn’t want to marry my little girl if you couldn’t take care of her.”

“I’m not one to bite off more than I can chew,” Eph agreed. Then Pa kissed Thisbe and gave her money for her wedding clothes.”

As Thisbe and Eph walked down the street, Eph said, “The lines in your pa’s face aren’t deep, but they’re there. A body could tell from a distance that he’s the kind of man that must be master of his own soul.”

“So that’s it,” Thisbe thought. “That’s how Pa and Eph are alike.” Aloud she said, “You know, I think I understand why Pa left Ma – why he had to leave her.”

Eph looked down inquiringly.

“You just said it. He had to be master of his own soul and while Ma was with him he couldn’t be. Oh, she wasn’t –”. Thisbe searched for a word but gave it up. “Ma was always good to Pa and she loved him – terribly. Even when we were little ones we felt that Ma treated Pa more like another of her children than like –”.

Eph’s lips smiled, but his eyes were sober. “That isn’t how God means to be, Thisbe. God means man to be the master. The Bible – the letters of Paul – tells us that.”

“Ma was older than Paul, and bigger, and somehow a better manager.”

“And when your Ma went on without him and he felt how it was to captain his own ship –”.

“I guess I’m not angry at Pa anymore,” Thisbe said. She felt a sudden lightness, as if the burden of anger she had been carrying around had been a real stone’s weight.

Eph put her long slim hand through his elbow. “Thisbe, it won’t be that way with us. I’m more than twice as old as you are – and almost twice as big, if you count weight alone.” Then his voice grew gentle. “But I’ll never mistreat you or press you against your will. I don’t want a wife to look me up or down. I want her to look across.”

Thisbe thought, “Like Harriet does,” but she didn’t say it. Somehow she knew Eph didn’t like to think of Harriet or Jane when he was having these gentle moments with her.

Claire squealed with delight when she saw the money Pa had given for the wedding outfit. She took it into her own keeping and almost without Thisbe’s assistance chose the materials and the style.

The dress was of soft gray mull, a gray which changed the half hazel gray of Thisbe’s eyes to a true gray. It was to be made with row after row of tucks. The bosom was tucked, too, and between the tucks ran delicate drawn work which Claire’s creative sense added to the picture, and which Claire’s needle executed with care and perfection. Under the mull was worn an underdress of pink dimity. The flounces on the underskirt gave life to the soft mull that was worn over it.

For the wedding ceremony there was a simple white dress. Claire made it carefully so that the yards of good material wouldn’t be too cut up to make into baby dresses when the time came. No woman in her right mind would want a white dress to wear for anything but an endowment and a marriage.

On the morning of the wedding Claire experimented with Thisbe’s hair. First she tried drawing it smoothly back and making a bob high on her head. Then she tried making a bob low on the neck. Every way looked wrong. Finally she braided it in the usual braids, but instead of allowing the waist-long braids to hang free she pinned them in a shining crown around Thisbe’s head.

“You’re beautiful. Isn’t she, Ma?” Claire asked as she finished buttoning the gray mull.

Ma looked Thisbe over from her shining blue-black hair to the new high shoes that Claire had bought with her own money. "Pretty is as pretty does," she said, but her eyes were full of pride. "You want to stop by and let your father see you."

When Eph came for her he laughed and joked. "Where's Thisbe?" he asked Thisbe when she rushed to open the door to his knock. "Yesterday I left a young-un here and today I find a great lady." Then he grew sober, "Harriet and Jane will meet us at the Endowment House. Everything will be in order." They waited for Ma to smooth her hair, then the three walked together toward the Endowment House.

"This is the most important walk you'll ever take in your life," Ma said, and Thisbe was surprised to see tears in her mother's eyes.

After the ceremony that made Thisbe Read the third wife of Ephraim Hanks, the whole wedding party including Harriet and Jane went to the tiny cottage that had been Ma's before she moved to Salt Creek with Sam. It was Claire's now, and she had stayed home from the shop to prepare a real English dinner of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding with all the proper fixings. Everybody talked and everybody laughed and everybody ate. Everybody but Thisbe. She silently moved her food from one side of the plate to the other with a fork that wavered because her hand trembled. She was wondering if being Thisbe Hanks felt any different from being Thisbe Read.



Harriet and Jane will meet us.

After Eph had taken Harriet and Jane to Jane's home he came back for Thisbe. He had promised Gurney Brown he'd bring his new wife down to Utah Lake for the Browns' approval, Eph said. But Thisbe knew as well as if he had told her, that camping out alone with each other, somewhere on the way to Gurney Brown's place, would be the right way to begin their life together.

“Will we live in Parley’s Park?” Thisbe asked Eph as they sat together on a blanket before the crackling fire.

Eph looked directly into her eyes. “It’s up to you, Thisbe. How much courage have you?”

“Courage?”

“If we go to Parley’s Park Harriet will be there. She has the home running as sweet and smooth as molasses. But you know Harriet. That would be the easy thing to do. Harriet loves you and will make you welcome. But she’ll be the head of her house.” He stopped a minute and studied Thisbe’s face. “I’ve bought a Saw mill with a lot of acreage up in Provo Valley. If I take you there it will be the two of us together – that is, for the time that I can spend with you. When I must be away you’ll be alone – just two other families thereabouts. What do you say?”

“It’s up to you, Eph,” she said quietly. “But I’m willing.”

They made the trip by wagon, with supplies and a few pieces of household furniture stored in the back. The place where Eph had his saw mill and his acreage was up near the head of the Provo River, where the water was wild and turbulent between new cut banks, where the silence was so deep that you could shout to your heart’s content and get back from every mountain wall a ringing echo; where the trees were evergreen and aspen, not the cottonwood of the lowlands; and where you could walk a few steps from your door and be waist deep in plumed fern fronds.

“This is – home,” Eph said, pulling up near a square of clearing.

At the back of the cleared spot was a cabin made of logs with the rough bark still wrinkled and grayish brown on them. At the end was a rock chimney. The rock chimney told Thisbe that Eph had expected her to choose Provo Valley for her home.

“I didn’t marry a child. I married a woman,” Eph would often say, praising the way she kept the cabin, the speed with which her vegetables grew, the good food she had prepared. He was gentle with her, and helpful, too. When the only fresh meat he could bag was badger, he cleaned it and skinned it for her, then showed her how to cook it in one fresh water after another until the strong taste was gone. When he saw she had been crying from sheer loneliness, he would take her for a leisurely walk under the white summer moon and tell her about the birds, and the flowers, and even about God, who is always close, until she was comforted. He never said a word out loud about it, but often his eyes said to Thisbe, “I understand what it is to be a married woman away from all your folks, when you are just seventeen.”

It was in November of 1863 that Thisbe learned a new method of keeping track of the years. The fall of ‘63 would always be with her and Eph, “the autumn Ella Marriah was born.” And 1865 would be “the summer Walter came.”

Ella Marriah was a tiny infant, with a cry as fragile as the little fingers that Thisbe loved to wrap around her own. “She’s more angel than baby,” she had said to Eph when he first looked down at the little one lying in the crook of her arm. And the words had been a prophecy. Almost before Thisbe had got used to her she was gone. Thisbe’s arms felt more empty than her heart.

But Walter was a sturdy little fellow. Almost from the first he could turn himself over and lift his own little head and stare around when he was lying on his stomach across Thisbe’s knees.

Thisbe mourned for Ella Marriah, even while she played with Walter. She longed for Ma and Alicia and Claire. She missed seeing folks, because she had always loved people. But every day she grew in wisdom, and assurance, and love. God seemed closer than He had in town – even closer than He had in the days of crossing the plains. Often she and Eph walked to the warm springs and watched the steaming

water welling up from unmeasured depths. Trees and grass and flowers grew near without even as much as a notion that they were next door to a chimney of hell.

“Eph, wouldn’t it be fine to have a ditch of this water running past our house? Then I could wash my clothes without making a fire under the brass kettle. I could even take a bath without a bit of trouble.”

Eph laughed at her quaint notion. “Guess you’ll have to come up here to take your bath,” he suggested. Then, seriously, “It could be done, I guess. Bathing, I mean. But you’d have to have something to use for a tub, and a way to cool the water a little, and –”.

“I know,” Thisbe interrupted, “like the ‘baths’ of England – the watering places.”

Eph shook his head. “That would bring too many people. When folks get that thick up here I’ll want to be somewhere else.”

Having God so near was one thing, and having Eph close was another. When Thisbe could see him working in the clearing, even when she could hear the scream of his saw at the mill, she was happy. It was only when he went to spend some time with Harriet or with Jane that she was desolate.

One night when Eph had gone down to the settlement and she had settled herself in bed with Baby Walter against her breast, she heard a peculiar sound at the back door of the cabin. Or was it a sound? Thisbe raised herself on her elbow to listen. She thought she heard a movement at the side of the cabin. Yet the dogs didn’t bark and if – but there it was again. This time she knew it was the sound of stealthy feet at the front of the cabin.

Eph had left a gun for her. It was hanging over the back door, and it was loaded. Day after day when the weather was fine he had taken her out to teach her how to shoot a gun so she could take care of herself. But now she knew suddenly, with knowledge that was more intuition than anything else, that no matter what happened, she couldn’t use a gun. There must be something else.

She slid out of bed and made her way across the floor on her hands and knees. Lifting herself just enough so that she could see over the sill of the back window, she looked out on the night-blanketed valley. The stars and moon were bright above and a gray wash of half light lent mystery to even the familiar trees and clearings. Everything looked quiet, sleeping. Only a pin point of light that must be a shepherd’s fire grew and diminished and grew again.

Suddenly Thisbe knew what she must do. She and Eph had talked with the herder the day he had made camp. He had seemed a gentle, quiet man, yet strong, too. The thing to do was to take Walter in her arms and go to this stranger for help. The fire would guide her, even though she didn’t know the direct way to the place.

Quietly and without striking a light, she dressed and wrapped Walter in a blanket. For a moment she dropped on her knees to ask God to direct her. If Eph were here to ask God, most likely it would be easier to make God hear. Eph had such a way of talking to God as if He were just above the ridge pole of their cabin. But if Eph were here she wouldn’t need to call upon God. Eph would know all that was needful to know.

She made a try. “Dear Heavenly Father, someone is trying to get in this cabin and I fear for my life and my babies. Help me to find help.”

Then she quietly opened the back door of the cabin. Looking both ways, she saw no sign of movement. Silently she followed the moon shadow of a great fir tree to the protection of the woods, then she stumbled along the slight path through the heavy growth. It seemed to her that she was unbearably slow. Every minute she feared to hear the crackling of twigs behind her. Momentarily she expected

Walter to waken and cry and give away their position. But nothing happened. She reached the herder's fire. She called softly, but there was no answer. Evidently the man was making the rounds of his herd before he went to sleep. She fed his fire and sat down by it, Walter at her breast.

Somehow the fear vanished and when, after about an hour the herder returned she felt a little foolish to tell her story of fear. "Maybe there wasn't even anybody there," she quavered.

"There might have been. Ma'am," he said simply.

Fear thrilled through Thisbe again. She felt herself shaking all over. Though she tried to control herself, her teeth chattered and her hands trembled as they picked at Walter's bonnet strings. "I was so afraid. But I knew if I could reach you, you would take care of me."

"I'll do that, Ma'am," he said. He gave her a warm drink, then he took the baby from her arms and walked back to her cabin with her. "If you'd like me to, I'll stay until morning," he offered.

Thisbe fixed him a bed in the kitchen. Then, without undressing she curled up with Walter in her arms and fell asleep.

The next morning when she awakened the herder was gone, but he returned in mid-morning to see if she was all right. "Why, you're just a girl, Ma'am," he said, watching the sunlight glint on her blue-black hair, hanging in two braids over her shoulders.

Thisbe smiled and gestured toward Walter in his crib. Then she said, "A scare like that grows one up pretty fast."

"After you went to sleep I got scared, too," he confided. "I got to thinking of all the snakes that might have got you on your way to my place last night. This is right pretty country, but for the snakes! I've never seen such snakes."

Suddenly Thisbe felt herself trembling again. "I didn't even think of the snakes – then," she answered.

But when Eph came home that night she threw herself into his arms and shook from head to foot, just reliving the horrors of the night.

Eph laughed at her story, but anybody can tell that the laugh was play-acting for her benefit. His face was as sober as a funeral.

"Eph," she cried, "don't leave me alone again!"

"I can't promise that, Thisbe," he said, loosening her hands clasped around his neck and bending to put down the blanket-roll he still carried. "But I won't leave you unless I really have to. Then I'll find somebody to stay with you. You won't have to go through that twice if I can help it."

With an effort Thisbe controlled the quivering of her muscles. "What do you want for supper, Eph? Would bread and milk and some dutch cheese on the side suit?"

CHAPTER TWELVE

“How would you like to leave the Valley?” Eph asked Thisbe one summer evening in ‘67.

“You mean to move to Salt Lake for the winter?” Thisbe asked, putting little Walter at the far side of the bed where he wouldn’t roll off before she went to sit by her husband on the front step of the cabin. When Eph didn’t answer she raised her eyes to his. “Anything you say, Eph. I – I’ve been happy here.”

Eph’s hand stroked her shining black hair. “I didn’t mean for the winter, Thisbe. I mean for good.” He spoke slowly as he always did when he was uncovering some deep emotion for some one else to see. “This last trip of mine hasn’t been long. Not much more than a couple of weeks, but I’ve thought about you all the time. I love you, Thisbe, and I don’t like to leave you. Besides, with another little one coming –”.

“I’ll be all right, Eph,” Thisbe said brightly. “I’ve gone through it twice now and I’m not afraid.”

“Thisbe, I want you to go to Parley’s Park this time. Harriet’ll take care of you. We’ve just talked it over and she wants you.”

“While the baby comes it might be best,” Thisbe agreed reluctantly. “I know it would be best for Walter. But not for long, Eph. I wouldn’t like it for long.”

“We’ll see,” Eph promised. “You’ll be happy with Harriet for a spell.”

So it was that Martha Georgiana was born at Parley’s Park instead of Provo Valley.

As soon as Thisbe and the baby were able to travel Eph came for them and little Walter and took them back to the headwaters of the Provo. Not back to their mountain cabin, but to Heber Fort. The Indians were getting mighty bold and Eph didn’t dare leave Thisbe and the little ones alone while he was away taking care of his other holdings.

All through the winter, living with other folks in the crowded fort, Thisbe dreamed of the pleasant cabin, or the wooded mountain slopes, of the fern and the aspen and of the hot water, bubbling up in the hot pots that either God or the devil must have made on purpose. When spring greened through the mountain’s Valleys Eph decided that it was safe to leave the fort, but he took Thisbe, not to her own little home, but back to Parley’s Park. He had sold the sawmill and the forest he had owned on the upper Provo. Thisbe’s disappointment was partly wiped out when Eph told her that she was mistress at Parley’s Park. Harriet had returned to Salt Lake City so her children could be in school, so Thisbe was head of the house.

It amused her to look out over the clearing to the mountains and count the cattle that grazed on the sharply green pastures. She liked to look at the great barn where hay and feed were stored during the summer looking ahead to the long winter months. Now the barn was nearly empty, but soon the first crop of wild hay would be cut and piled beneath the gray roof. If only Eph could have been at home more, she would have been completely happy. Eph had to spend more and more time in Salt Lake City and time and again he’d been called out to negotiate with the Indians, who wouldn’t talk with anybody but the “scout” they’d learned to admire and trust. She wasn’t all alone, however, when Eph was gone. There was a hired man, Jack, who took care of the stock and kept things in running order.

One morning when Eph was away, Thisbe felt a shroud of apprehension drop over her. It hushed the song in her throat and caused her to go time after time to where Georgiana slept in her crib, or to look

out of the window to catch a glimpse of Walter's blond head as it rounded the barn, following after Jack.

In mid-morning Walter came in and asked for a drink. Thisbe scooped a dipper full of water from the bucket and held the dipper for the child.

"I need to wash my mouth," Walter explained. "Jack gave me some burny stuff from a bottle." Thisbe lifted the child into her arms. She kissed him and sniffed. That was what the matter was. Jack was drinking. And Jack knew that Eph had expressly forbidden the stuff on the place. Jack was no good drunk, as any one could tell, but even more important than that was that the Indians called at the ranch almost daily and just a whiff would change them from friendly neighbors to barbarians who cared nothing for life or property.

"I wish I had Jack's bottle. I'd empty it out the window," she said half aloud to the child. And when Walter had gone out to play, with instructions to keep away from the barn, Thisbe couldn't take her mind from the bottle and plans to acquire it. But each plan had a flaw.

At the first call for dinner Jack came lumbering in. He didn't stop to wash his face and hands and when he had seated himself at the table, set with a dinner of ham and eggs, fried potatoes and steamed bread, he called to Walter, "Come and bless this hash!"

Walter's eyes went to Thisbe and when she nodded assent he stepped up to the table, thanked God for the food and asked that it "nourish and strengthen our bodies." Jack began to eat, his whole attention on his plate. Thisbe watched him. Finally she said, so suddenly that he didn't have time to think of a lie, "Where did you get that bottle of whiskey, Jack?"

"John Tarman came by this morning," he stammered. "I had a headache so he sold me some.

"How's your headache?"

Jack glowered. "Pretty good."

Thisbe took a deep breath to make her sound unafraid. "Since your headache is cured I want you to bring me the bottle."

Jack's eyes, raised to her face, were sullen and angry. They said what Jack didn't dare speak to his employer's wife.

"Jack," Thisbe insisted, "if Chief Tabby comes along and smells that whiskey on you, you know what it will mean."

"I'll blow their damn heads off. That's what I'll do."

"No, Jack, no! You mustn't start – Oh, Jack, with the two babies we can't start anything like that."

"I know how to use a gun." Jack's bragging was as ominous as his threat, and Thisbe felt sick with fear.

"Ma." Thisbe looked around for Walter. He had slipped out while she was arguing with Jack. Now he called from the kitchen. She closed the door after her, and Walter, not quite four years old, put the whiskey bottle in her hands. "I knew where he had it," he said.

Thisbe uncorked it and emptied the contents out of the window. She recorked the bottle and slipped it into the pocket of her voluminous skirt.

Quietly she carried a second piece of pie to Jack. "Eat this, then take a quilt out under a tree and lie down. That'll make you feel better."

He ran his tongue over his lips. "I'll sleep in the barn," he answered. "That's what'll make me feel better." He slouched out, but returned in a second and reached over the door for the gun.

“You’re not taking the gun,” Thisbe said sharply. When she saw that her words had merely irritated him she changed her approach. “Please, Jack, if the Indians come I’ll feed them, just like Brigham Young says.”

“Feed ‘em if you want to. But they’re not going to get the drop on Jack.”

“With your headache, Jack, you couldn’t shoot very straight and –”.

“They killed my pa on the Oregon Trail. Just let me get a chance at them.” He pushed her away with his shoulder and his hand was on the gun.

“Jack,” she said sternly. “Get out of here and leave that gun alone.” It was the voice Ma would have used and the way she would have gone about things, Thisbe realized.

“Ah, Mrs. Hanks –”. Jack’s arm dropped. He headed for the barn.

Thisbe stood looking after him, thinking how old she felt for her twenty-one years, when Walter pulled at her apron. “There’s the Indians, Ma,” he quavered.

Thisbe followed his pointed finger. Old Chief Tabby and two other Indian braves mounted on long-legged ponies were coming single file out of the canyon at the right of the house. The shroud of apprehension settled more closely and Thisbe felt that she couldn’t breathe. Ordinarily she would have greeted the Indians, put a loaf of bread into their hands, and invited them to ride on. Now she felt that the feeling that had depressed her all morning was a warning or a portent. Perhaps it was the smell of whiskey on Jack’s breath, perhaps his desire to use a gun – perhaps the feeling was from God, sent to forewarn her.

She led Walter by the hand to Georgiana’s crib. The two knelt by the sleeping child. She prayed aloud. “Heavenly Father, I’m afraid. Here are these two children and me and we’re defenseless. Jack’s no good. He’s worse than no good. Help me to know what to do. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

Quickly she rose from her knees and went to the back door, a pie in one hand and a loaf of bread in the other, to greet the Indians. The three had dismounted, leaving their guns in their saddles, but carrying their knives. Jack was lumbering up from the barn, the courage of whiskey giving him the stride of a bully.

“Food?” Tabby asked, and Thisbe held out the bread. Just then Jack pushed his way into the group. Tabby got a whiff of his breath. He turned from the bread and said, “Firewater. Heap sick – me!”

“Keep your nose out of my face or I’ll knock you down, you –”.

“Jack sick,” Thisbe said pointing to Jack. “He drink firewater. All gone.” She reached into her pocket and drew out the empty bottle. Jack, who had evidently been looking for the bottle in the hay, reached for it at the same time as Tabby did. Tabby won. He uncorked it, put it to his lips, and drew off a single drop. “More bottle,” he demanded.

Thisbe shook her head, holding out the food. The three Indians pushed past her into the house and began a place-to-place search for another bottle. Even Georgiana’s crib was felt into by curious hands while Thisbe stood by, her heart beating wildly. Jack, fired with the courage of drink, seized the small fire shovel and hit the Indian who was searching the crib over the head. Then he jumped for the gun over the door. Thisbe jumped too, grateful for her lithe body and long reach. She seized the gun in both hands. Jack wrestled it away from her, but she kept him from pointing it at the three warriors by hanging on to his right with all her weight. “Get out, get out,” she cried to the Indians. “This man is mad; he s crazy.”

The word crazy was like magic. The two Indians who were standing helped the third to his feet and the three rushed out of the door and out to their horses. They mounted and rode swiftly back in the

direction from which they had come.

Jack looked after them for a moment. "Not worth killing," he declared, and he put the gun back in its place. Thisbe sank down beside Georgiana's crib. Her knees were trembling so that they wouldn't support her.

When Eph returned and heard the story, he declared that never again would he leave Thisbe alone with the children. He even said that the thing he should do was to move all of his families to Salt Lake City where they could live like proper folks.

Thisbe was pleased by his concern for her, but now that she was over the fear, she felt a sudden urge of vigor and strength and assurance. "Eph Hanks," she said, "Your wife isn't a child any more. She knows how to take care of herself. Yes, and of her children, too." Eph smiled down at her, but there was appraisal in his eyes.

"I think you do," he said soberly.

But, Eph," she added, "I hope you'll put the fear of the Lord into Jack. Yes, and into John Tarman, too, for selling him the stuff."

"Sure you don't want to do it yourself?" he teased her. But he took her into his arms and the world was right side up again.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

One spring day in 1870 Eph appeared suddenly at the back door. It was just before noon, and Thisbe, sitting in a low rocker with her four month-old baby, Amy Alicia, at her breast, looked up and signaled to him to be quiet. Eph disregarded the signal. "Thisbe," he said urgently, "come with me."

Obediently Thisbe rose, and putting the baby in the cradle, she followed Eph to the back stoop.

"How strong do you feel this morning?" he asked her, when she stood by his side. He pointed with a "wide gesture of his arm to a place on the hillside, barely in sight of the house. Could you walk up there, if you went horseback as far as the edge of the meadow?"

"Why – I think so," Thisbe hesitated. "You call Walter and ask him to look after Georgiana and the baby while I get ready."

"Eph saddled her horse and lifted her up, then he walked beside her. "What is it, Eph?" she questioned, but he didn't answer.

"I couldn't work this morning. Didn't feel like plowing, so –".

"So we're going for a picnic," Thisbe laughed.

"I've already been," Eph answered laconically; then his voice changed and he said with such an undertow of excitement that she was carried by it, "Oh, Thisbe, Thisbe! You've been a good wife to a poor man. What sort of wife will you make to a man with money?"

Thisbe frowned. "I'm satisfied with the man I have."

Eph laughed. "I'm mighty glad of that. But you wouldn't be against him being rich, would you?"

Thisbe laughed, too. "Depends on how he got it."

At the edge of the meadow she dismounted and Eph hobbled the horse in the tender spring grass. Then he took her by the elbow for a time they followed a narrow foot trail, then left it and struck off through the brush. Thisbe was puzzled. But the going was hard and she didn't waste energy or breath on talk. At last they left the scrub brush behind them and were face to face with the outcropping rocks of the mountain-side. And there lay Eph's new pick-ax.

He turned to her, his face radiant, "You had to see this for yourself, Thisbe. I've struck it rich. This morning just for fun I knocked off a piece of this rock and it looked so good that I dug farther. There's a big vein of the stuff."

"Of what?" Thisbe asked.

"Of lead – and silver."

"Oh, Eph!" Thisbe's knees gave way suddenly and she sank to the rocks. All the stories of quick wealth she'd ever heard flooded through her mind. Riches... store clothes... store provisions... enough of everything so Eph wouldn't have to puzzle about what to give Harriet, what to give Jane, what to give Thisbe... "Oh, Eph."

Eph sat down too, his long legs stretched out in front of him. He waved his arm. "See, Thisbe, there's our house and barn. It won't be long before there'll be a town in Parley's Park. Then it'll be Parley's City. Or maybe Park City, and we'll be in the middle of it all."

"Not you," said Thisbe. "As soon as there is a town you'll sell out and find a new place in the woods."

"Maybe you're right. But I'll take a fortune with me." He reached out and put his great hand over

hers. She could feel him trembling with excitement.

Every fibre of her body thrilled to his excitement, but she forced herself to speak with studied calmness. "Eph, tell me again what President Young said to you and the other Battalion Boys who wanted to stay in California and work their rich gold claims."

Eph's eyes turned away from the ore in his hands and met serious gray ones. His puzzlement wrinkled his brow in horizontal furrows. "What are you trying to tell me, Thisbe? When Brigham Young requested us to leave our holdings and come home, I did. You know that." Thisbe's eyes were still on his face and he went on, half unwillingly. "The church has been against its members working in the gold fields. Is that what you wanted me to say?"

"That's what I wanted you to *remember*, Eph. Thisbe answered.

There was a half angry note in Eph's voice. "Brigham Young called us home from California, and now I hear that Sam Brannon, who didn't come when he was called, is one of the richest men on earth. Eilie Oram was another that didn't come home when she was called. She used to be a wife of Bishop Hunter, and when Brigham Young called the Saints home from Carson City. Bishop Hunter came, but Eilie didn't. Now, I hear, she has diamond door knobs."

Thisbe didn't answer. She moved her hand from under Eph's trembling one, and folded her hands in her lap. She let her eyes leave his face and climb the mountain front of her.

Eph put his hands on her shoulders and turned her back so that he could watch her face. "Thisbe, this is different. Don't you see that? I think God led me to this place right on my own property."

"I don't know that it's different," Thisbe said, her voice not much louder than a whisper.

Eph went on as if to convince himself. "First, I'll stake out my claim, then I'll ride down to Salt Lake City and tell Brother Brigham all about it. If he tells me to give it up, I will."

"Eph, what if this mine is rich? What if it turns out to be the monster that will destroy us?"

Eph's laugh echoed through the hills. "You've named it, Thisbe. It'll be called 'The Monster.' 'The Green Monster.'"

Sitting uncomfortably on a pile of rocks, Thisbe waited while Eph staked out the claim, then arm in arm they walked back to the Hanks pasture. Thisbe was silent but Eph dreamed out loud all the way down.

Before he went to Salt Lake City to talk to President Young he rode around to tell Harriet and Jane of the strike. It was only fair that all three wives should join in the news of the good fortune.

And good fortune it proved to be. The vein was deeper and richer than even Eph had hoped, and as soon as the news of his strike was out, others by the dozen were in the mountains prospecting and staking out claims. At first the place looked like a great camp; soon it took on the features of a town. There was money and to spare. Eph bought finer horses, his wives more attractive clothes. The children of his three families had the best of everything.

One night as Thisbe lay with her head on Eph's shoulder she said, "Eph, I'm frightened."

Eph was alert at once, "What's the matter?"

"We're going at such a pace, Eph. Often I think of what Ma said one day when we were crossing the plains. I think Pa had just dropped out and we were going on alone and we found it pretty hard, just the three of us. Alicia said to Ma, 'Wouldn't it be nice if the way was all down hill, then we could let Ma ride like a queen and we'd just have to run along.' And Ma said, 'That wouldn't be fine at all. That would be too *easy*. It's the hard things we do that make us strong.'"

“Well?” Eph said, brushing his beard against her forehead.

“Well, this is too easy. We’re just riding along like – like queens.”

Eph put his lips where his beard had been. “You don’t have to worry about thing being too easy, Thisbe. You’ve had hardships enough to last a lifetime. That journey with the Martin Company. And your life with me hasn’t been too easy. You’re just twenty-three and you’ve had four babies and lost one.”

Thisbe took time to choose her words carefully. “When you’re going through those experiences you think they’re terrible and that God must be blind and deaf to let you suffer so. But after it’s over you realize that God was close and it wasn’t so bad.” Eph didn’t speak, just held her closer. “When Ella Mariah was born – well, I guess I was as much surprised at the pain as anything else. I kept thinking, ‘nothing can hurt like this,’ and I was sure I’d die. But when she was washed and dressed and you brought her to me – Eph, it was a wonderful feeling. All the thoughts of pain were washed away and I felt like I could lift myself right out through the roof if I wanted to, I felt that light and free... and then when the little thing died – I’d never known sorrow like that; and I was hurt, too, that God hadn’t answered my prayers raised in full faith. I thought I’d die when they laid the little thing in her grave and I knew I’d hear her little voice just in my dreams. But I didn’t die. Seems like the other little ones in my arms have healed the wounds.”

That’s the way it is, Thisbe,” Eph agreed. “It’s when we get to the place where we can’t get up after we’ve been knocked down, that we’re really defeated.”

“I still think things are too easy for us now,” Thisbe insisted.

“And you still feel that mining isn’t the best way of life? I promise you – and this is a sacred promise – if Brigham Young ever asks me to sell out and go somewhere else. I’ll do it in a minute.”

But President Young didn’t seem to be against mining silver and lead when they could be found in one’s own back yard and Eph’s mine grew from a one-man venture to a regular commercial mine with two crews of workmen, a commissary, and a train of wagons that carried ore to Salt Lake and brought back the necessary supplies.

Although all of Eph’s wives went on caring for their children and doing their own work, some folks whispered that money had gone to their heads. Though Eph himself worked every day from sun-up to sun-set, and on the ranch as frequently as at the mine. Thisbe could see a subtle change in the attitude of the other settlers toward him.

Fatal Bill was an example. Bill was a prospector who had hunted for a paying strike long before Eph thought of prospecting. He’d spent several winters up on Silver Creek. One day Eph had tried to counsel him, and had advised him that the soil gave more to the farmer than the prospector. Bill had made a daring wager: “I bet you *‘my life’* against a bob-tailed cow that inside of another year I’ll be riding in style while you’ll be walking at the side of jack-asses.”

Eph had taken the bet and had said quietly, “It’s a good thing you get your life, because that’s all you’ll have if you spend another winter up on that worthless claim.”

The next time Fatal Bill came down from his claim, Eph had struck it rich and already Parley’s Park was becoming a town. Bill hadn’t gone to Eph to pay up on his betting debt. Instead he had broken into the commissary of the Green Monster and helped himself to all the supplies he needed.

Thisbe heard that the commissary had been robbed and when she questioned Eph he said calmly, “I looked at the animal marks around there. It was Fatal Bill. Poor fellow, guess he needed that stuff to keep alive!”

No one saw anything of Bill until midwinter. Thisbe, dressed in the first fur cloak and bonnet she had ever owned, was tucked in beside Eph on the front seat of the fast cutter. Eph's friends, a Brother Kimball and his wife, were in the back seat. Eph and Thisbe had been visiting in Salt Lake City and now they were taking their friends back to Parley's Park for a spell. The cutter, drawn by four fine white horses that Eph had bought with some of his new wealth, slid over the snow at high speed. The four in the cutter laughed and sang and shouted.

Suddenly, as they neared Parley's Park, ahead of them in the trail they saw a man on foot, struggling under a load. All the laughter went out of Eph's face. "That's Fatal Bill," he said soberly. "He bet me his life and I'm going to collect that bet."

Thisbe remembered that Eph hadn't been angry about the commissary theft, but she shook, now, with an unnamed fear.

"Bill," Eph called.

The man stopped and dropped his load. Eph had been right. It was Bill. Eph pulled up the horses and handed the reins to Thisbe. "Don't let them run," he told her, then he jumped lightly from the cutter.

He walked over to Bill and said quietly, "You bet me your life. Now you are going to pay up."

Bill's face was a bluish gray. He stood still while Eph took the gun from the side pocket of his worn coat.

"Is Eph mad?" Thisbe wondered, feeling sick, and their friends in the cutter sat as still as death.

"Get down in the snow and roll over three times." Eph ordered. Bill obeyed. "Twice more." Bill obeyed again.

Eph helped him to his feet, brushed the snow from him, and passed him back his gun, never looking to see if it was loaded. Then he made room in the cutter for Bill's pack beside the Kimballs and for Bill beside Thisbe. "Next time you need a stake," he said, "you ask for it. I'll stake you. Only don't steal it. That makes me mad."

Bill was silent, and behind his closed features Thisbe could read the fight between relief and humiliation that was going on in his mind.

Often Thisbe saw on her neighbors alien closed countenances where she had been accustomed to see the open faces of friends. It was fine to have plenty of money, but it wasn't fine to be folks that had money. Thisbe saw the distinction, but she couldn't show it to Eph. When she tried, Eph would laugh his great rolling laugh and say, "You're dreaming in the daytime, Thisbe," or maybe he'd say with a tinge of crossness in his voice, "Why are you, always trying to make something out of nothing?"

When Thisbe was working about the house she couldn't help keep her mind off the problem. It wasn't exactly envy or jealousy that she read in the actions of the folks around her. It was more like distrust. As Thisbe fumbled, trying to put her finger on the emotion that was shutting the Hanks family from the hearts of the community, she came near to the truth. It was fear of money and those who had money. And folks who feared worldly riches had plenty of scriptures to back them up, too. What was it the Bible had said about a rich man and the eye of a needle? about a rich man begging crumbs in hell? Seemed like Jacob in the Book of Mormon had said that worldly riches brought a "falling away."

But Eph persisted in not seeing what was happening in the minds of his neighbors until something stranger than Thisbe's words opened his eyes.

The Indians, never too friendly about sharing their hunting grounds with the white settlers had put up with the scattered ranchers because the ranchers' wives made good bread and passed it out

liberally. But the growing town of Park City was something different from a few scattered farm houses. Now the houses stood close together. There was hardly a path through the mountains that white men's heeled shoes hadn't trod, now that every one was looking for a second Green Monster.

The Indians showed their anger at first by carrying off fat cattle from the valley pastures. Next, they grew brave enough to steal supplies from pits and cellars and sheds and barns.

Eph, deaf to much that Thisbe poured into his ears, was the first to read the signs of approaching danger. The Indians must be placated, he decided, and called upon the other settlers to decide upon a plan. Thisbe knew in her heart that Eph could handle the red men; she knew, too, that he wouldn't get the chance to do so. Neighbors who would have turned to Eph, the Western Scout, were unwilling to turn to Eph the mining man; and each settler took his part of the Indian problem into his own hands.

One man, against the counsel of Eph laid in wait for Indian thieves and fired a volley of shots after the Indians' horses when, surprised in a robbery, they turned to flee.

As if the shots had been a signal, the Indians began to burn barns and outbuildings, shoot at folks who ventured alone out to their wood lots. They even rode, screaming, into the center of the new mining town, sending men and women and children, like startled chickens, toward the closest cover."

Eph raged at the mistakes of the white men. He tried to talk with the Indians, but the Indians seemed to know that he couldn't speak for anybody but himself. "Why won't folks listen to reason? I could handle this!" he told Thisbe one night when the Indians had been exceptionally bold.

"I've been trying to tell you, Eph," Thisbe said. "You advise folks to give more to the Indians to make up to them for their loss of hunting grounds, and they say, 'Eph Hanks has plenty to give away. I *work* for my living.' You tell them to give up prospecting until the Indians aren't so restless, and they say, 'Why should I stop hunting for minerals so that Eph Hanks can find more?' Eph, folks are different now that --".

Thisbe stopped at the hurt puzzlement in Eph's eyes. "I'm not any different, Thisbe. You know that."

"Other folks don't though, Eph; and that's what counts right now."

But Eph was helpless to do anything and things went from bad to worse. One at a time the families moved away planning a return when the Indians could be suppressed. Finally, Eph, bold for himself but afraid for his families, moved them to Salt Lake City.

"The Green Monster's at the bottom of this," Thisbe declared.

Eph didn't laugh. He didn't even argue. "We'll be going back," he declared. "It won't be long before we'll be going back."

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Thisbe sat behind the built stretched taut on the quilting frames, her eyes watching the fine line that guided the short, even stitches. If she raised her eyes and looked across the expanse of Jacob's ladder, she could see Claire, her handsome face in repose as she quilted without seeming effort. Alicia was so close to Thisbe that their knees touched when Alicia got up to hurry to the kitchen, where a fat chicken, boiling in a pot, was giving off a heavenly fragrance. At the end of the quilt, to the right of Alicia, was a many-paned window just at eye level. Through the window Thisbe could see her own young-uns romping with Alicia's any time she cared to raise her eyes to look.

For a time Thisbe kept her eyes on the line, and tried to keep her restless mind there, too. There was such peace in Alicia's house. The same sort of peace that had dwelt in hers before she and Eph and the children had come to Salt Lake. But try as she would to control her mind, it insisted on harking back to every unpleasant thing that had happened since the three wives of Eph Hanks had been near neighbors. Not that it was anybody's fault that they hadn't gotten on smoothly. Harriet was – well. Harriet tried her best to be the same person she had always been: and Jane wasn't any different. Yet at times the three of them – and Eph, too – had had to fight against letting their anger break out in a regular rash.

Something Claire was saying caught Thisbe's ear and made her look up. "We'll let Thiz write –" Claire was saying.

"Who is Thiz going to write to?" Thisbe asked.

"Where's your mind?" Alicia scolded gently. "Thiz, you don't act like yourself a bit."

Thisbe took a long time to roll a knot in the end of her thread, set her needle into the quilt, and pull the knot through to the inside with a jerk before she answered, "I'm a stranger to myself, too."

Claire brought her left hand from under the quilt and folded her arms with her long fingers lying quietly on the dark silk of her sleeves. Her voice was so matter-of-fact that Thisbe couldn't take offense. "Thisbe, 'Lish and I think it would do you good to have a visit with Ma."

"I think of Ma often," Thisbe took off her thimble and needle guard. "I like to think of her as she was before Pa –".

"What we were saying," Claire hurried on, "was that you could write Ma and tell her that you are in a family way and that you need her. Then we'd all have a chance to visit with her. She won't come unless she thinks there is someone in distress."

Thisbe laughed, "Ma'd never believe that being in a family way was 'distress', at least not when it's with a fifth."

Alicia put in, still in her gentle scolding way, "Well, I'll write to her and tell her that you need her but that you're too proud to ask."

Thisbe put her thimble on and off her finger. Finally she sighed and picked up her needle. "I do need her, and that's a fact. Not that Harriet or Jane wouldn't do for me –".

"Or 'Lish and I for that matter," Claire said.

"Well, all right," Thisbe agreed, "Maybe I better talk to Eph first."

Claire laughed. "Brother, Eph! He can stay with Harriet and Jane if he doesn't like company."

"Oh, he likes company and he likes Ma," Thisbe said quickly. "You write, 'Lish."

Thisbe went back to work, remembering how Ma knew half way across the country that

something had happened to Pa. She'd be quick to see that the Hanks family – but she put the thought out of her mind. It would be wonderful to see Ma."

"I'm going to sit the young-uns at the table first," Alicia said, "then when Orson comes in we'll eat with him. I have half a mind to roll this quilt up and stand it, frames and all, in the corner until Ma comes. Nobody that I know can quilt like Ma."

"Unless maybe her daughter Claire," Claire said modestly, and the two women giggled like little girls.

"I don't know how George puts up with you," Alicia snipped the string that fastened the quilt to the end frames, getting it ready to roll.

"He doesn't put up with me, he loves me," Claire declared.

Thisbe looked at her older sister speculatively. How would it be, she wondered, to be like Claire, and not a bit afraid to say anything that came into her head. Now, she knew that Eph loved her, but she'd never think of mentioning it to anybody. Love was something that was just between her and Eph.

So Alicia, so certain that Ma would come that she put her quilt in a corner to wait for Ma's needle, wrote. She didn't show the letter to Thisbe, but Thisbe wondered just what Alicia had told Ma.

In ten days time Alicia had a reply that Ma would come.

Thisbe went about her little cooped-up, makeshift cabin, with Ma on her mind instead of the useless worries that she was carrying. What would Ma be like now, she wondered. It had been ten years since she had seen Ma; not since her own marriage to Eph, and lots had happened. In the first place, Ma had married again, a Brother Rodwell, and she was starting a new life just as if she were young and of an age to start at the bottom of things. In the second place, Ma had been disappointed about Walter. She had gone to Salt Creek with Sam particularly because Walter felt more at home with Sam than with her, after having lived with men for so long. But Walter hadn't been happy in Salt Creek. Folks were nice, but Walter had English ways and he was "different", Ma had written. So Ma and Sam had talked things over and then they had written to Pa. Pa had been happy to take Walter back to Salt Lake and make a home for him. Walter had done well in Salt Lake. He'd hustled himself a job carrying drinking water for the men who were laying the tracks for the Salt Lake City street railway. The company had liked him and he had gone from one job to another, always going up a step. Now he was marrying Martha Pond, the daughter of the head of the street railway. She was a beautiful girl, with ways as sweet and unassuming as if she didn't have a purse lined with money. The Jacob's ladder quilt standing in Alicia's corner, waiting for Ma's needle, would be a wedding present for Martha and Walter.

Thisbe thought of Walter, handsome, built like Claire, with broad shoulders and almost no hips at all, and more than six feet tall. His black hair lifted from his forehead in a smooth arch. And he wasn't a bit conceited about his rise in the world, either. It had been a good thing for Walter to leave Salt Creek, but it must have been a hard thing for Ma to let him go.

The next time Thisbe sat behind the Jacob's ladder in Alicia's parlor, Ma sat on the other side of the quilt. Claire had come, but she had left early to tend to some business. She and her husband owned the Sydney Hotel and Claire was as quick at business as he was, and often tended to things for him when he was busy with his mining interest.

Alicia was in and out, tending to the young'uns, getting dinner, making the beds, doing all manner of odd jobs. Ma and Thisbe settled down to the visit that Thisbe had longed for – and feared.

Ma didn't ask any searching questions. With a quiet ease she led Thisbe a way from thoughts of

herself and her worries. "I've been reading a lot, lately, Thisbe. More than I've had time to in my life before."

"I don't know when I've picked up a book, except the Bible," Thisbe answered.

"The other day I came upon a line that should have been in the Bible. It sounds like the Bible. 'God tempered the wind to the shorn lamb.'"

Thisbe was thoughtful. "Does He, Ma?" Then after a few seconds, "Doesn't seem like the winds that have blown on you have been 'tempered'."

There was quiet assurance in Ma's voice. "Oh, yes they have, Thisbe. I've never been asked to bear a burden I couldn't bear."

"You've had to hump your shoulders to do it, Ma."

"Yes, but that's what God expects us to do. This line about the 'tempered wind', that doesn't mean that the shorn lamb won't be cold. It means it won't be more than he can stand."

Thisbe didn't lift her eyes from the quilt. She watched the needle flash in and out, leaving a tail of tiny stitches behind it.

"It was more than some of the Martin Company could stand," she said finally.

"You mean they died? Yes, they did die. A lot of them. Do you know, Thisbe, one of the mistakes we make most often is that we think that death is the worst thing that can come to us."

"Well, it's pretty final."

"But it isn't the worst. As I grow older, Thisbe, I see that death opens the door to a bigger and better world, as well as closing it on this one. You never saw a door in your life that didn't have something on both sides of it."

For several minutes Ma was silent and Thisbe could hear Georgiana singing as she "worked up" in the swing hanging from a branch of the great boxelder tree at the side of the house. At least the children could still sing. The trouble between the Hanks grown-ups hadn't touched the children – yet.

"Ma," Thisbe said out of the silence, "I'm a shorn lamb, and – the wind isn't tempered; not that I can see. We all love each other, Harriet and Eph and Jane and I, but we –".

"You don't need to tell me," Ma said. "I know."

"Ma, do you think I ought to give Eph up? Give him back to Harriet?"

Ma shook her head. She ran her needle into the quilt top where she could find it again readily and came around the frames to the chair beside Thisbe which Alicia had set for herself. "Thisbe, you can't give a man that loves you to another woman. Once I thought that was possible. You remember back in Iowa? I thought if Martha wanted to she could say to your Pa, 'Go on, Sam. Go back to Salt Lake with your wife and girls.' And I hated her because she didn't say it. But now I know that even if she had said it, it wouldn't have made any difference. It was Pa who had to decide which way his heart would go."

Thisbe didn't answer. She was remembering Martha's soddy and thinking that she and Alicia had never guessed that Ma had blamed and hated Martha. Oh, Ma was a strong one. It was hard to think of Ma was a shorn lamb in any wind.

"God'll 'temper' this wind," Ma said, putting her arm around Thisbe's shoulder in a gentle, reassuring embrace. "And you better believe it, because I've come all the way from Salt Creek to tell you so."

Ma got up and went back to her place on the other side of the quilt. "Thisbe, after your baby's come and you look like yourself again, let's you and me walk down to the bookstore and visit with your

Pa and Martha. As I remember it she was a very handsome woman!”



Ma visited her and Eph in their makeshift cabin.

Ma and Thisbe never talked about Thisbe’s troubles again. Ma visited her and Eph in their makeshift cabin and she was there when the baby was born. Thisbe never knew whether it was Eph or Ma who decided that the little one should be named Thisbe.

After the baby came Thisbe was happier. Maybe it was because her body felt light and free again, maybe it was because Ma’s words, “A woman can’t *give* a man to anybody,” had taken the weight of decision from her shoulders. She waited, now, for Eph to do something to make life smooth again. Perhaps he would move Jane back to Heber City. Perhaps –

One day Eph came into the little cabin and sat down heavily on a low thong-seated chair. Little

Georgiana hurried to get a stool for his feet. He turned to the child, almost crossly. "Run out and play with the others." Round eyed, and with quivering chin, she obeyed. Thisbe finished cutting the salt pork into the kettle of beans that were simmering on the fire before she turned to him.

"Thisbe," the words came out slowly and painfully, "Harriet thinks she knows what would end the strife between us."

"Strife?"

"Well, none of us have been happy. Things don't run smooth. You know that, Thisbe."

Thisbe nodded in agreement. Since the three wives had been neighbors Eph had found it harder and harder to treat all three alike. Often Thisbe had seen perplexity in his face when he found that he had hurt one or the other of them. Frequently she had seen pain when he realized that unconsciously he hadn't been fair. "What does Harriet say?"

It was several minutes before Eph answered. His head in his hands and his big shoulders hunched as if he were cold, he just sat and was silent. Finally, without looking up, he said, "Harriet wants a divorce."

"Oh... No!" Thisbe's words were involuntary.

Time after time she had thought of withdrawing from Eph's family. She had never thought of Harriet doing it. She couldn't help but see in her memory the way Harriet used to look Eph in the days when Thisbe had been just a visitor in their home. She couldn't help but remember Harriet's voice asking her "Could you love him as – I love him?"

"Yes." Eph looked up. His eyes were flooded with misery. "It isn't that she's quit loving me, she says. She says she thinks I'm a fine man – but I hadn't ought to have embraced polygamy."

Thisbe sat down on the stool Georgiana had set for Eph's feet and put her hands on Eph's. "You've tried, Eph. You've always tried," she said, trying to take the pain from his eyes. But she thought, maybe Harriet's right. Maybe Eph isn't the kind of man that can live polygamy. Eph could fight cold and death and hostile Indians, but –. It was impossible for her to bring her confused thoughts into order. She only knew that Eph, impetuous, vigorous, lovable Eph couldn't act one way and feel another. He had to follow his feelings even when following them led him into favoring one wife over the others.

"Has it been harder since the Green Monster?"

"Yes. No. Oh, I don't know, Thisbe. It's been hard ever since I was sealed to Jane."

"And what does Jane want to do? What does Harriet say about Jane?"

"Jane's marriage isn't like Harriet's. It's a church sealing. If she's tired of her bargain the two of us can get a church separation."

Eph's head dropped into his hands again. "But it isn't that easy, Thisbe. Oh, I'm willing for Harriet to have her house here in town with everything that's in it. I'll be glad to give her a good yoke of oxen. Anything she asks for is all right, but –". Again he lifted his head. "It's my boys and girls, my own sons and daughters. They're my flesh and I love every one of them."

"You love Harriet, too," Thisbe reminded him gently.

"She's been a good wife," he answered simply. "There must be some other way."

But there didn't seem to be any other way. In '73 Harriet received her divorce. A little later Jane got a church separation and soon remarried. In '74 Thisbe had another little son. She called him Knowlton, because Knowlton was Eph's second name and he already had a son called Eph. The little one had died and was buried almost before she got used to having him in her arms. As soon as she was well

enough to be about she and Eph went before a justice of the peace and were married with a legal ceremony. For twelve years Thisbe had been Eph's wife in the eyes of God and her Mormon neighbors. Now she was Eph's wife in the eyes of the world, too.

Thisbe thought often of Ma's words about God tempering the wind to the shorn lamb: "That doesn't mean the lamb won't be cold." Now, though the divorces had brought an end to the uneasy feeling that had bothered the four of them, for two years, happiness and content and good-feeling were lost; things would never be the same again. It was the worst wind, Thisbe was sure, that had ever blown on her and Eph. And she was "cold."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Early in the spring of '74 Thisbe moved back to Parley's Park. Eph hadn't been content in Salt Lake City, not a minute, and he'd been going back and forth all the time. It seemed to Thisbe that if Eph was safe from the Indians, things would be all right for her and the children, too. It was the growing town at Parley's Park that had upset the Indians. If all the folks had just sat back and let Eph handle their arguments there wouldn't have been any Indian depredations.

Eph never allowed a breath of whiskey near the Indians, but he trusted the ones he knew with firearms. After Thisbe started keeping house again she asked Eph about his gun that had always hung over the door. "Well," he said in a matter-of-fact way, "I don't have time for hunting like in the old days. There's the ranch and there's the mines. I loaned Tabby my gun and he's going to bring in some venison and other game."

A deep wrinkle came between Thisbe's eyes, but Eph smoothed it out with a rough finger. "Tabby's to be trusted," he said.

But during the summer Old Chief Tabby died and even Eph began to worry about the gun. By Indian custom all of Tabby's belongings would have gone to his son. Eph sent the boy a message: "Bring back my gun or I'll come after it."

One evening after the children were put to bed and the supper things cleared away, Thisbe and Eph sat under the lean-to bowery that Eph had put on the front of their house for a porch. The sun was out of sight but it was still light – would be for an hour or two. Suddenly Thisbe felt, rather than heard, a sound. Before she had time to stand up Eph was on his feet. "Indians," he said quietly. "Go in the house."

Thisbe hesitated, but the shrill war cry of the Indians sent a wave of gooseflesh over her, and with her teeth chattering she went in and sank behind the front window where she could keep her eyes on Eph. No use to beg him to come in, too. He wouldn't do it even for her.

The Indians were over the hill now and coming toward the house, their ponies on a dead run. In the lead was Tabby's son in his father's feathers, and behind him were four slender young braves, their faces striped with paint. Just a few yards from the bowery the riders drew their mounts in so suddenly that the horses stood for a minute on their hind legs, their front hooves pawing the air. Eph's voice was loud and firm. "Get down from those horses," he said. "Come and sit."

The Indians dismounted wordlessly and suddenly took the chairs Eph offered them. Thisbe gasped when Eph shook each Indian's hand in turn as if they had come on a social call. He called to her. "Put something good on the table for our guests."

With knees that would scarcely hold her, Thisbe went to the fireplace and raked up the coals. She looked about for something to feed the strangers. There wasn't any pie or cake in the house. Not even bread. She filled the great kettle with milk. No one had ever said Indians liked lumpy-dick, but they'd like it tonight or go without.

When the lumpy-dick was done she poured it into large bowls and called Eph.

The Indians came in smiling and sat down at the table. Thisbe was so relieved that she felt sudden tears come to her eyes. From war cries to lumpy-dick! Eph explained to her as the men ladled the strange food into their mouths, "My fault all along, Thisbe. When an Indian dies it ends all of his contracts. I should have remembered that." He spoke a few words to the young chief. Then he went to Thisbe's

cupboard and prepared a knapsack. Rice, sugar, flour. He gave the supplies to the painted Indian and the boy, in return, gave him the gun. "I have to buy it back," he explained to Thisbe.

Thisbe lifted her shoulders. Eph was wonderful with the Indians. Why didn't all the settlers let the Indians, explain their actions before going to war with them? If the folks in Parley's Park had done this, the Indians wouldn't have driven them away for two years.

Thisbe loved her home in Parley's Park. When she had been married she had longed to live in Salt Lake City, but now, like Eph, she found peace and happiness away from the hustle of a big town. The mines had changed Parley's Park. The settlers who had left with Eph and Thisbe had returned and more came every day. The quiet park was now a town and its name had been changed to Park City. Thisbe was glad it wasn't a mining camp, that it was a mining *village* where one had the same sense of long life and security that one had in a farming town. Folks here mined for a living, but still they had their gardens, their pastures, their woodlots, just as if the lead and silver weren't pouring out from the earth's bowels. From her door Thisbe could see the mountains rising to the clear blue sky, she could see the shades of green like a carpet stretching up them – grains, grasses, shrubs, trees – and the cool softness of the colors brought a sense of well-being to her. "Singing colors," she called them, because they brought songs to her lips.

The mountains could be treacherous, the winter storms almost vengeful, but still Thisbe loved the exhilaration of the changing seasons. She loved to ride horseback over their holdings, drinking in the keen air and forgetting for an hour or so that she had five little ones hanging to her skirts, two asleep until Judgment Day and another on its way.

Once Eph's brother Sydney had ventured out in a storm which turned to a blizzard. They never knew how he had become lost. All they knew was that Eph had found him the next spring when the thaw set in and the blanket of ice and snow that had covered him through the winter had melted away. It was Sydney who had brought Eph into the church. And if Eph hadn't come into the church where would the Martin Handcart Company be now? Where would she be? Where would their little ones be who had waited in Heaven for her union with Eph to give them bodies so that they might dwell in the flesh?

Thisbe cried in spite of herself when Sydney's body was brought in for burial. She scolded herself because her crying was a little selfish. She couldn't help but think, "It might just as well have been Eph."

And it was the following winter that Eph had his close call. Early one morning Eph left for Salt Lake City on horseback. He had promised Jane and Harriet he would come to town to do some business for them as he often did and even though there was a light snow falling he wouldn't break the promise. Thisbe watched him go with a heavy heart. A feeling impending disaster came over her when she reached up to kiss him good-bye. "Oh, Eph," she said. That was all, but he understood her concern.

His laugh was somehow reassuring. "Passing storm," he declared.

But the storm wasn't passing. All day it snowed, and as soon as the sun went down the wind came up, lifting the snow from the fields back into the air again in ever-widening circles of flying crystals. Thisbe tried to content herself with singing to the children, with hearing Georgiana and Walter recite their lessons, in doing some extra baking, but every few minutes she went to the window.

It was totally dark at five o'clock and Thisbe lighted the lantern and put it in the window. The fences were covered with snow where it drifted and from the front window she couldn't see any familiar landmarks when she lifted the lantern and peered through the whirling whiteness.

From five until midnight she alternately walked the floor and knelt by the baby's crib. The new life growing within her made her feel heavy and cumbersome and unusually weary, but still she walked.

After midnight she gave up walking, but not praying. Firmly she told herself that she was risking a life in walking, walking, walking, just as Eph had, in starting out in the snowstorm. At least there was a muffled sound on the porch and she opened the door wide for Eph to stumble in. She led his trembling horse through the house to the back porch because she dared not risk losing herself to take him to the barn. When she went back to the living room Eph was struggling with his boots. He had the left one off but was still working with the right.

"Frozen," he said, looking up at Thisbe and gesturing to his foot. "Frozen to the bone."

To the prayers of thankfulness that had been pouring through her heart Thisbe added a petition: "Don't let him lose his feet, God."

She remembered with a horrifying clarity the condition of the Martin Company when Eph had found it on the plains of Wyoming. Ever so many of them had had frozen legs or arms and after Eph had given them buffalo meat and had anointed and administered to those who were suffering, he had done a grisly job of amputating the frozen limbs to save the lives of the people.

But she mustn't stand remembering. She brought a tub and filled it with icicles knocked from the eaves of the house, with the handle of her broom. Eph put his feet in the tub and she wrapped him with blankets to keep him from chilling and gave him cup after cup of warm gruel. She didn't ask any questions, but she watched his face, as they worked through the night to save his frozen feet. Sometimes he talked, telling her of how he walked beside his weary horse, how finally he had mounted her and given her her head in hopes that her instinct would guide where his intelligence failed. He told her what the light in the window had meant to him, in assurance of warmth and home and love. Sometimes he dozed in the warmth and his head fell forward on his chest. How tired he looked, how unutterably tired!

It was nearly morning when he sent Thisbe to bed. "My right foot is all right," he said. "I need a doctor for my left one."

Thisbe read his face. "Oh, no, Eph!" she cried.

"What's five toes compared to a life?" he said.

When the weather cleared and a doctor could get through. Eph sat in his living room and directed the operation of removing his toes. "An anesthetic?" the doctor asked.

"No," Eph bellowed and the doctor went to work. Thisbe shepherded the children into the kitchen. It might be a fine thing for them to know first hand what a courageous man their father was, but she couldn't have stood seeing Eph suffer, and no doctor could work with a pack of curious children ringing him, wide eyed.

In April, when the new baby came, Thisbe said, "He's going to be named Sydney Alvarus."

Eph was tickled at the tribute to his brother. Thisbe didn't tell him she had chosen the name because – well, because it hadn't been Eph who had been lost in the snow drift. She didn't like the sound of the name too well, though; she preferred to call the little mite "Alvay," shortened from his second name.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

It was the summer of '77 that Eph began to act strange. Thisbe went about her work, her mind divided between what she was doing and curiosity regarding what was on Eph's mind.

Frequently he went to the mines and stood about watching the men go or come. In order to buy equipment to operate the Green Monster he had sold large interests in it. More, he found out later, than fifty per cent of the stock. The purchasers had got together to crowd him out of its management and he had been at first furious, then hurt, then disgusted with himself for not using a better business head. For awhile he had stayed away from the workings, but now he wandered up every day or two and when he came home he had nothing to say to Thisbe.

Other days he would mount his horse in the morning and ride from one end of the ranch to the other, his eyes studying every leaf, every blade of grass. One afternoon little Alway came in and seized Thisbe's apron string. Following his tugging she went out to the long tow shed that adjoined the barn. Eph was sitting on it, looking out over the valley to the surrounding mountains. For a time Thisbe watched him, then she lifted Alway to her shoulder and went back into the house. An hour later when she went to call Eph for supper he was still sitting there, looking first one way then another.

In her mind Thisbe sought for some way to question him, but she could find none. When Eph was ready he would speak. Not sooner.

One evening as Thisbe was throwing the dish water out the back door she felt Eph's arms around her. Heedless of the dishpan she leaned back against him and tipped back her head to fit in the hollow just below his chin. Looking out and up she saw a magic world of black and gray and pale gold. The intense green of day time was now a shadowy gray; the mountains were like cutouts of black paper against the star-pointed sky; a wash of pale amber spread from the moon to the earth.

"Do you like it here, Thisbe," Eph's voice was almost a whisper.

"Yes. Oh, yes, Eph."

Eph was silent for a long minute, then, "I do, too. It's part of me, I guess – this valley is."

Thisbe was silent. Eph was ready to talk if he could just find the words, and here she was holding a dripping dishpan away from her clean checked apron. Most likely if she interrupted him to hang it on a nail he'd be out of the mood to tell her what was on his mind.

"Thisbe, let's walk over to the wood lot."

She hung up the dishpan and reached for her jacket. "Not too far, Eph."

"Not too far," he agreed, and she could feel his eyes for an instant on her bulging apron. It was near time for another little one.

Slowly they walked toward the wood lot, his arm around her shoulders. "Remember the promise I made you when I first showed you the Green Monster?"

What promise? Thisbe wondered. "I don't know, Eph, seems like it's in the back of my mind somewhere."

"It isn't in the back of *my* mind. It's sitting right at the front." Eph laughed, but the sound was hollow, "I promised you that if ever President Young asked me to give it up, I would."

Thisbe reached up to touch his hand that rested on her shoulder. "I'm not sorry, Eph. The Green Monster hasn't brought us happiness. First of all the miners crowding in frightened the Indians. Then

Harriet and Jane –”. Her voice trailed off, then strengthened again. “You haven’t been happy, either, especially since – well, lately it’s been more an aggravation to you than anything else.”

“Then you knew that President Young had asked me –?”

“I didn’t know anything, Eph. I was just worrying myself sick over your strange goings-on, that’s all.”

Eph sat down on a log and drew her down beside him. She studied the pattern of quivering leaf shadows that crossed his earnest face. “Brother Brigham wants me to sellout here and go down to run Lee’s Ferry.”

Thisbe wanted to cry out, “Sell out here!” Instead she asked quietly, “Where’s Lee’s Ferry?”

“It’d be a hard thing to tell you,” he answered slowly. He took up a stick and scraping it in the soft earth before him he drew a rough map. “Here is the Colorado River. Here are the church’s southern outposts. Way up here is Salt Lake City.”

No reason to wonder now why Eph had been sitting on the shed putting the picture of the ranch in his mind to last forever. “When do we go?” she asked quietly.

Eph turned her face up to his, his great hand under her chin. For a moment he looked into her eyes, then he put his lips on hers. “Thank God for you, Thisbe.”

He hadn’t answered her question, but the next day she began to sort, discard, patch, mend and pack. She would be ready as soon as Eph could sell the ranch and put his affairs in readiness.

They could take what they could carry in two wagons, Eph decided. That and their stock would be the foundation of a new life. Walter was twelve and he could drive a wagon or help with the stock, and Georgiana was ten and could mind the young ones on the long trip.

Thisbe wouldn’t let herself look as long at the home they were leaving as Eph did. She had learned long before – maybe when they had left England – that it was easier to turn your back on the old if you had your face to the new; so she tried to build in her mind a picture of the life they were going into. Certainly Brother Brigham knew what he was doing. Pride in Eph helped Thisbe over the darker moments of worry and uncertainty. It was fine to be part of a man whom President Young would choose to take over for the church as important a place as Lee’s Ferry. Eager as they were to be off, Eph wouldn’t hear of them going until the baby had come. Ray Elijah was born on the fourteenth of August and on the 29th, just when Thisbe was beginning to feel like traveling. President Brigham Young died.

To Eph, the President’s death was a heart-breaking personal loss. To Thisbe, as to other members of the church, it was the loss of a prophet and a leader, and mingled with her grief was a pondering of the question, What will this do to Eph’s plans?

For a time the plans seemed unchanged. Packed into the two wagons with the herd trailing after them, Eph and Thisbe and the children traveled slowly toward the south. Eph had stopped in Salt Lake City for instructions. Everybody knew that Apostle Taylor would be President of the Church, but he hadn’t yet been approved by the people and so he couldn’t speak as the head of the church. He and his counselors had suggested that Eph find a suitable place to winter his cattle and make a temporary home until spring. When spring broke they would decide what the next move should be.

Eph was happy about his instructions. He sang or whistled as they traveled along. Sometimes when the children grew restless he told wonderful tales of the Indians he had known; sometimes stories of his own childhood back in the states.

Thisbe smiled when Eph sang, and listened to his stories, but she was silent. She wouldn’t look

back, like Lot's wife, but it did seem of little use to be going down to this new country when not even the heads of the church knew what was in store for them. In the front of her mind she kept the tasks of the day. It was no easy matter to travel with so many little ones. In the back of her mind went round and round the problems that would face them in the new country. Only the thought that here was a job that God really wanted Eph to do kept her from crying out, "Let's go back home!"

Suddenly autumn was upon them. Eph said that it was because they were on higher ground that the leaves were turned to red and gold and the mornings and evenings were touched with frost. Thisbe tried to keep her mind off the messenger who, she hoped, was on his way from Salt Lake with instructions for Eph. Maybe the church wouldn't take over the ferry; maybe Eph would be allowed to return north.

One night they made camp by the edge of a Lake. The body of water kept the air warmer, Eph said. After supper the family knelt in prayer, and then Georgiana and Walter helped her put the little ones in bed. Baby Ray was always at her breast. "Thisbe," Eph said as they sat by the fire, his eyes on the soft brown head of the child against Thisbe's gray linsey dress, "We are to stay here for the winter."

"Did a messenger come? I didn't -".

"No messenger." Eph was silent for a long time looking into the fire. "I somehow feel that God has spoken and that we are to stay hereabouts this winter."

Thisbe stretched out her hand despairingly to the wilderness around them, her gray eyes bleak.

"Not right here, Thisbe," Eph went on slowly. "But in this valley."

"Is there a settlement, Eph?"

"Yes, Burrville, a little farther on. There are four or five families there." He moved over so that he could put his big hand on her knee. "Look, Thisbe. You trust me, don't you?"

"I trust you. But -".

"Thisbe, I know, I know what it means to you to be off this way with the young-uns. But -".

"Don't worry about me, Eph. I'll hold up." She turned her eyes away from his keen blue ones. It would hurt him to see her cry.

Eph put up a strong fog house. Its three rooms seemed crowded after the nice home in Park City, but Thisbe knew that she was fortunate to have a home as weather tight as this. There wasn't time for extensive barn building. The best Eph could do was a shed, open on three sides with a roof of branches like a bowery.

The first winter was an open one and the cattle grazed on the hills until almost Christmas. The folks in Burrville were pleasant neighbors and Thisbe tried to put out of her mind the distance between the tiny town and real civilization. She was grateful that Eph really seemed happy here.

Spring came early and Eph was out putting in crops and cutting the first stand of wild hay. Always there was a song, sung or whistled, spiraling up to heaven through the clean, crisp air. Thisbe smiled when the wind was right to carry Eph's satisfied tunes to her ears. When the messenger finally came from President Taylor with the word that the church had given up the idea of sending Eph Hanks to Lee's Ferry, neither Eph nor Thisbe was disappointed. Life could be very pleasant in Burrville.

In the summer of '79 Lilly Marriah was born. The little girl was Thisbe's ninth child, and there had been three little boys since there had been a girl. Thisbe felt a special warmth of feeling for the tiny one, though she couldn't have told why. Perhaps it was because Eph, away from the worries and problems that had made him miserable those last few years up north, was mellowing, somehow. He was

as thoughtful and gentle as he had been the first year of their marriage. Maybe that was why, when the little one was in her arms, she had looked up at Eph and said, “Do you mind, Eph, if I call her Marriah after the little lost one? Oh, I won’t call her Ella, because that name belongs to the other ones and I’ll call her that when I take her in my arms on Resurrection Day – but Marriah, with something else to go with it?”

“She’s a pretty one,” Eph said, leaning over Thisbe to study the mite lying in the crook of her arm. “Not red, like most. White as a lily.”

“Lilly Marriah. That’s pretty,” Thisbe said, lifting her gray eyes to his deep blue ones, so that their love could flow together like a stream over their newest one.

So Eph planted and cultivated and reaped. He built fences and barns and kept the log house in tight repair. But all the time it was nip and tuck to keep food on the table, clothes on the children’s backs. Thisbe wasn’t surprised when Eph took over the Burrville blacksmith shop. He’s learned the trade years before and he had a gentle way with animals and a magic hand at fixing tire rims and broken springs. His boys hung around the blacksmith shop helping their father, or getting in his way, Thisbe never quite knew which.

One day Georgiana and Alway, who had been near the blacksmith shop, came rushing in to hide under the cot in the bedroom. Thisbe thought to question them, then decided it would be best to see what danger had driven them in so that if need be she could round up the other children.

Going out the front door, and shading her eyes with her hand she looked toward the shop and saw two ponies tied out in front. That wasn’t strange, though she couldn’t name the neighbor that owned such lithe, long-legged horses. She picked up Lilly Marriah and took little Ray by the hand. She felt a trembling in her knees, perhaps excitement, perhaps fear, she couldn’t tell which.

Almost running, she hurried toward the smithy. When she got about thirty yards away a man came out of the shop. An Indian! It wasn’t that Indians were uncommon anywhere in the southland. It was that this man was in full feathers and his face and naked body were painted in inch-wide stripes of white and red. She stopped in her tracks, fighting for a deep breath to calm her. He strode to his horse and put his gun on the saddle.

Two ponies – then there would be two Indians, and this one was in war paint! It hadn’t been long since a group of oxcart travelers between Richfield and Glenwood, only twenty miles north of Burrville, had been killed by the Indians. Was Eph all right, or had they killed him for the poor possessions in the smithy? She wanted to hurry forward, she wanted to run back to the house as the children had done, but her feet wouldn’t obey her changing mind. She sank down upon her heels and drew Ray close to her.

Suddenly she heard from the blacksmith shop the roll of Eph’s great, good-natured laugh. She went dizzy with relief. Why would she never learn that Eph had a way with the Indians? She watched until another Indian came out to his pony until a third led his pony from the shop. Then all mounted and rode away. Eph came to the doorway to wave goodbye and saw Thisbe half kneeling by the side of the path.

He came and lifted her to her feet. “I thought –” she began.

His arm was around her and her face was against his shirt smelling of fire and horses and Indians – a beautiful smell.

“I know what you thought. I thought so, too. But I was able to trade with them. Horse shoes for the promise to leave Burrville unmolested.”

“Oh, Eph,” Thisbe said, still leaning against him. Then, practically, “Georgiana and Alvy are under the bed. I better look up the other children.”

But in spite of all Eph’s efforts, in spite of his way with men and animals, the Hanks family was very close to want. It hurt Thisbe to say, “You have had your share of lumpy-dick, Ray. No, Alvy, no more butter. See, you can see the yellow on your bread.”

“But you just spread it on and scrape it off,” Alvy protested, and Georgiana put in, “You can’t taste it just ‘cause you can *see* it, Ma.” And it wasn’t just butter and lumpy-dick. It was bread, and milk, and vegetables and everything.

One afternoon at about two o’clock the stake president of Sevier Stake and his two counselors drove up to the blacksmith shop for Eph to shoe their horses. Eph sent word by Alvy and Ray that the gentlemen hadn’t eaten and they would honor the Hanks household by having dinner there.

Thisbe counted the items in her larder and began to use the provisions she had counted on to last for a week. “If there are plenty of biscuits folks don’t want much else,” she reasoned, so sour cream biscuits were the basis of the menu. The table was spread for Eph and the three guests, but the children could not be driven from the room. They stood about, their eyes on these high church dignitaries. The president broke open a steaming biscuit and reached for a liberal helping of butter.

Alvy’s eyes were round with horror. “Just look what a big chunk of butter that man took!” he cried.

Thisbe hustled him into the bedroom. But she couldn’t find it in her heart to punish him. It was hard to raise a family in need. Hard on the children and harder on their Ma, especially if she happened to be proud.

Even though there wasn’t any money to spend on clothes the children were the best dressed in the Burrville school. Alicia, who was almost wealthy up in Salt Lake City, sent down boxes of her family’s outgrown clothes and Thisbe washed and turned and made them over. She took pleasure in seeing the children in fine feathers, even while she was hurt at taking charity.

One night when Eph brought in a big box that a freighter had left, Thisbe opened it up and took out the garments one at a time. The children, happy as if the clothes were new, ringed around her. Their game was, “I choose that, I choose that,” as the things were unfolded and examined.

Thisbe’s face was sober and she didn’t have a word to say.

“Ma,” Georgiana asked, “aren’t you happy to get all these nice things?”

“No,” Thisbe said, and then she shook her head as if to rid herself of her bitterness. “Yes, I guess I am. I’m ashamed of myself. I have a lesson of humility to learn and I might as well learn it. These things will be just like new for you young-uns when I get through with them. I’m going to learn to be grateful.”

Thisbe delighted in the way the children were learning in the little school. Georgiana, especially. Maybe she’d be a teacher some day. It wouldn’t be bad to live out a lifetime in Burrville. Things were bound to get better.

But things didn’t get better. They got worse. In the fall of ‘81 nature took a hand: the winter came even before summer had said good-bye. It swept down suddenly like a hawk and swallowed them all. The snows piled up around the tiny cottage. Thisbe stayed by the fire, but Eph had to brave the weather to take care of the stock. He did what he could for them, but the feed was scarce and difficult to get at, and the animals were unaccustomed to the rigors of such a winter.

One day just before noon he came in, stamping the snow from his feet and beating his reddened

hands together. "This can't go on," he exclaimed. "It can't go on!" He stamped around the kitchen and Thisbe shakingly realized that he was in one of his rare rages. "I can't sit by my fire and have those critters suffering and dying. Dying they are, standing side by side on four legs. Not even a chance to lie down to die, with snow up to their bellies."

Thisbe laid Lilly in her crib and set Ray in his high chair. "What is there to do, Eph?" she asked.

"I'm going to find winter ground for them, that's what there is to do. Only a fool would have stopped in this high basin and I was that kind of a fool."

"You didn't know --," Thisbe began, but Eph bellowed, "I should have known. I liked the looks of the place and I made myself think my likes was God speaking."

Thisbe said nothing, just spooned some mush into Alway's bowl and poured some milk and a little molasses on it.

Eph turned to her. "Get my things packed. I'll not waste any time."

Thisbe turned to do his bidding. "When do you want to go? Will I have time to make some fresh rising bread or will you take soda biscuits in your sack?"

Eph came over to her and put his hands on her shoulders. "Don't hold this against me," he said, suddenly quiet. "I can't stand to see suffering, especially suffering of dumb beasts that haven't got the chance to take their head."

"Where you going?" Walter asked from the bench by the fire. "Can I go with you?"

"You'll stay here and take care of your Ma," Eph answered. "And I don't know where I'm going. I'm taking the stock that's alive to winter feeding ground, and when I can I'll be back for you."

So Eph and the remnant of his herd went, and Thisbe and the children stayed. Eph had been careful to leave enough provisions, but the winter was long and cold and lonely. Eph's feet had frozen in Salt Lake Valley snow storm. No telling what they'd do in this God-forsaken country.

When the first buds broke along the gray brown willows, Eph came back. He'd found, he said, the most beautiful country that God ever made. It wasn't beautiful in the same way as the slow rising meadows of Parley's Park had been, but in a fierce, primitive way that stole your breath and made your head light.

Thisbe sighed. Eph and his love of the wilds!

That night, after all the children were in bed and asleep, Eph sat down on the floor and leaned his back against Thisbe's knees. "Which hand will you take?" he said, holding his two great fists out to the fire.

Thisbe laughed at the childish words and the monstrous closed fists. "The right one."

He turned and unfolded his hand on her lap. She picked up the rocks which fell onto her skirt and held them to the fire light. "Ore?"

"Richer, I guess, than the Green Monster." His face took on the look of eagerness which Thisbe had learned to almost dread. "This time I won't sell my holdings like I did before."

"This time?"

Eph's eyes sought hers and he was silent.

Thisbe gathered her courage in her two hands. "Eph, did the Green Monster bring you any happiness?"

"We had money. We had more than we'd ever had in our lives."

Thisbe's eyes held his. "That's not what I'm asking, Eph."

“Happiness? No, I guess not. Seems like ever so much that wasn’t happy stemmed from it. We lost Harriet – and Jane... I –.”

“You weren’t cut out to be a miner – a business man. You were worried and miserable most of the time.”

“You’re right, Thisbe. Right as a dollar.”

“Don’t say ‘next time,’ Eph.”

“You mean I should just let that mine go without staking a claim? I should leave my pickax and shovel up here to rot?”

Thisbe smiled. “No. You get your pickax and shovel. Eph. You’ll need them for ranching.”

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Seemed like Eph had barely come home when he was ready to go again. This time, he decided, he would take Walter and Alvy with him. He was going back to the primitive wonderland he had found, and the two boys could be a deal of help in putting in early crops. Thisbe, tired of the winter of loneliness, had suggested that they all move together, but Eph's eyes had gone to the bulge beneath her apron and then to her face. His eyes, when they reached hers, were unhappy but he shook his head. "It's powerful rough country between here and there, Thisbe. It wouldn't be right for you to travel until this little one has come." Thisbe didn't answer, just dropped her eyes, so he went on, "Here in Burrville we have neighbors who can help you out when your time comes. There, as far as I know, you'd be the only woman within horse distance."

Thisbe turned away. Everything Eph had said was true and reasonable, but that didn't make it a whit easier to be left behind. Seemed like every time she wanted to do something she must put it off until a new baby had come into the world. Unconsciously she smoothed her apron. It ought to be early in May. Maybe Eph would wait.

He read her mind in the disconcerting way he had. "We'll be back before the baby comes," he promised. "And Georgiana's a big girl. She'll see after her Ma."

Thisbe stood at the door the morning Eph and the boys loaded the Wagon. Eph stopped beside her. "Good-bye, Ma," the boys shouted excitedly, and Alvy lifted his face to be kissed. Thisbe kissed him, and Walter, too, though Walter was almost a grown man, now. She turned her face away from Eph as he stood beside her in the doorway. Gently he put one of his great hands under her chin and turned her face to his. "Thisbe, I know you're out of sorts with me, but –"

She waited for a word of explanation. Why did he always have to be pulling his family up by the roots to set them down someplace else, goodness knew where? But the words she expected, he didn't speak, "You'd understand it, too, most times. You're not acting like yourself. Oh," he hurried to explain. "I'm not blaming you. It's because you're in a family way."

Her heart beat so hard against her ribs that she was surprised that Eph didn't hear the knocking. She could feel the hot blood tingling in her face. She wanted to shout, "I'll always be in a family way! You're always foot loose and on the go. You don't care –!" But silently she turned her face up for his kiss. It wouldn't be right to send Eph away angry. He'd be miserable and so would she.

The heavy days dragged on. Thisbe was torn between her desire to be delivered of her burden and her longing to have Eph home again. On the evening of the 13th of May his light wagon rattled into the yard. The baby, another boy, was born on the 14th. He was called Arthur Eugene – a real English name.

Eph had left Walter and Alvy to take care of the crops while he returned to move the family. Thisbe was worried about the boys, but Eph laughed. "Why, I was out alone in the world when I was Walter's age," he declared, "Walter'll look after Alvy and the child will be company for him." He chuckled to himself and when Thisbe raised enquiring brows he said, "You should see Alvy work. He goes after it like a real man."

Thisbe wanted to say, "I don't want him to. I want him to have some childhood," but she and Eph would never see some things through the same eyes, so she held her peace.

It was late July when Brother George Rust brought the two boys home. They were sights – so

ragged and dirty. Walter showed through his overalls in several places and Alway had on the strangest garb that Thisbe had ever seen. "Come here. Let Ma see your trousers," she said.

Alway inched up to her, his face bright with embarrassment. "Well," he explained, "there wasn't nothing left of my pants, so Sister Buhannon made me these out of Walter's underpants."

Thisbe studied the pants. Sister Buhannon had evidently used the legs of Walter's underpants, then unseamed them a ways from the top and sewed them together. They were tight all around. Not an opening anywhere; and they were held up by one gallus that was attached by both ends to the left side and that fitted over the boy's right shoulder.

Eph laughed until Alway squirmed. "Son," he said, "those are the most unhandiest looking pants I ever saw!"

Thisbe's voice was almost angry. "Eph, don't tease the boy. It's hard enough to be destitute." She turned to Georgiana. "Go get that new pair of trousers and the white waist I just made for Alway." She fixed a tub of warm bath water in the kitchen and helped him dress in the new clothes. The children were just leaving for Primary and Alway went along, tickled to be dressed up once more.

Walter said that Brother Buhannon would look after the place, but Eph couldn't wait to get down, now that Walter wasn't there to run things. Thisbe had mended slowly, but now she supervised the packing of their household goods and Walter helped his pa to pack the wagons. They'd take three wagons. One they would borrow from old Brother Richardson, and he'd go along to drive it. For Eph and Thisbe, their eight children and the goods they needed to keep house and run a farm, three wagons would be none too many.

Early in August, Eph headed the horses almost due southeast of Burrville, though the road seemed to lead directly toward the mountains. The road was rough and grew rougher. The wagons jolted from side to side and Thisbe steadied Arthur's head against her breast with the palm of her hand. "How many more moves, God?" she asked in her heart, but to Eph she said nothing. She raised her eyes to his face. His eyes were wrinkled against the sun, his lips were puckered for whistling, and his face mirrored complete satisfaction. Eph could be so happy when he was having his way, and his way was always the hard way. The hard way for a woman.

The wagon didn't turn when it reached the mountains, instead the trail lay up and over. The wagon crawled along, the metal tires clinking against the rocks that pushed sharp edges through the thin layer of soil. The horses pulled with effort and Eph let them take their time, choosing their own footing even when outcropping boulders rocked the wagon.

At last they attained the summit and Thisbe looked down upon a broad valley. Here and there were scattered ranches and a few settlements – tiny, but settlements, with their rough houses, their churches, their large barns and yellowing cultivated fields.

"Rabbit Valley," Eph said, gesturing with his whip.

Thisbe's heart leaped. Why, this wouldn't be bad. She had thought Eph was headed for some place off the edge of the earth.

"We cross this to get where I'm going." Eph turned to her, his face glowing. He let the lines lay slack on the backs of the horses. "Oh, Thisbe, I can't wait for you to see the place I've got picked out for us."

Thisbe lifted her hands, palms up, and let her eyes go from the valley before her to Eph's face and then back to the valley. "Isn't this – it?"

Eph's laugh boomed out over the quiet valley. "This!" he cried. "Why, this is nothing. It's *settled!*"

That night they stopped near Thurber with Brother Jerry Stringham and his wife, Mary. The Stringhams made the whole family welcome and insisted on preparing supper though Thisbe insisted she had planned to camp-cook on the way. After Thisbe had settled the children and even their hosts had gone to bed, Thisbe and Eph still sat by the supper fire. She watched the flames play over his excited face.

"What's it like, this place you've picked for us?" Thisbe asked.

"I couldn't tell you, Thisbe. Nobody could. There aren't words to tell things like that. God made it and it still shows the marks of His hands. That's the best I can say."

That night as Thisbe lay wakefully beside the sleeping Eph she treasured those words – "You can still see the marks of His hands."

"Ma," Walter said at breakfast, "just wait 'til you see Pa's canyon."

"Canyon?"

"Isn't it a canyon, Pa?" Walter turned to his father.

"A box canyon, as the saying goes," Eph answered intent on his much. "You boys round up the cows and have them ready by the time Georgiana picks up the breakfast things."

"A box canyon," Walter repeated. "Whew, Ma, you can't even dream of how those mountains rise. Whew!"

Thisbe, getting the description piecemeal from her men, felt excitement growing in her. She hurried to get the things packed in the wagon so they could be on their way.

For two more days they traveled, still to the southeast. Suddenly the valley seemed to end in a lofty rise of sheer rock walls. Eph turned the horses a little to the south and they faced the breathtaking box canyon of which he had spoken. On three sides the grayish red rock walls rose straight up to a height of two thousand feet. The only opening was the one through which they were entering, so Thisbe started into a closed fortress. The tiny valley enclosed in the walls was about three miles square. A small stream of water, Pleasant Creek, flowed down across in expanse of sagebrush and prickly pear. The crops which the boys and Eph had planted and which Walter had tended made a ribbon of bright green across the edge of a little bench.

"Isn't it a wonderland?" Eph exulted, stretching his arms out as if to embrace the valley with its everlasting walls.

Thisbe fought a desire to cry out, "No! No!" and closed her eyes tight against the tears of disappointment and discouragement that wouldn't be held back.

Eph turned to her. His expression changed from joy to incredulity, to tenderness. "Why, Thisbe, girl. I guess I should have told you about it. More about it, I mean. It's so big it scares you. It did me at first, to, but it grows on you. It gets inside you."

Still the tears dropped from Thisbe's chin. It wasn't like her to cry and she hated herself for it, but she couldn't stop. Maybe she was too tired.

Eph put his arm awkwardly around her shoulders. "The soil is good, Thisbe. Look at that garden stuff. There's pumpkins that it'll take two men to lift into a wagon. There's cane and corn and melons. We can have orchards, too, when we get started. And there'll always be feed for the cattle."

Thisbe wiped her eyes with the edge of Arthur's shawl. She smiled up at Eph. She wanted to tell him that she trusted his judgment, that everything would be all right. But her lips wouldn't shape a single

word.

Eph drove the wagon up through the Valley, Thisbe silent beside him. He drew up before a door made of split logs, hanging from a wall that seemed to be part of the mountain. He got out and helped Thisbe down. He swung open the log door and Thisbe saw her new home. A cave, no more than fifteen or sixteen feet square with a log wall at the front and reinforced dirt and rock walls on the other three sides. She could almost reach up and touch the dirt ceiling reinforced with cross pieces of split logs. Ten of them in this dugout!

But Thisbe had had her cry. "We had better get the beds fixed first," was all she said.

That night after Thisbe had gone to bed, she turned away from Eph and made a great fuss about nursing Arthur. Eph put his arm around her and his voice, quiet so that it wouldn't waken the children, went on and on with his plans.

"I won't ask you to live in this cave. Not for long, Thisbe. I'll build you the best house you ever had and put it where you can have grass and flowers, too. There'll be other families settle near. We can have a school and church for our young ones. You'll see."

When Arthur slept and couldn't be goaded to take another taste, Thisbe laid him down carefully and turned toward Eph. She put her head against his shoulder and felt his own confidence seep into her nerves and muscles. She didn't like the valley much as it stood there with God's mark on it. Perhaps she'd like it better with Eph's marks there.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Almost at once it was harvest time, and everybody from five year old Ray to seventeen year old Walter had his special job. First there was the sweet corn to gather, husk, cut from the cobs, and put out to dry. Then there was the sugar cane to cut, grind by hand through an old fashioned mill and boil down to make sorghum molasses. Thisbe, bone tired from the constant work, felt her heart grow lighter as she saw the food put away for the winter; as she helped Walter and Eph load the surplus into the wagon to take over to Rabbit Valley to trade for things they hadn't raised. The Hanks family had left want behind when they moved from Burrville.

After the day's work was over and supper had been eaten and cleared away, each member of the family would take a chair or three-legged stool and go out to sit in the clean-swept dooryard. Sometimes Eph would tell stories of the fabulous days when he rode the plains as a western scout. The children marveled at these stories, and in spite of herself Thisbe did, too. Eph was so different from that dashing rescuer of folks in distress. Not that he wouldn't give to help anybody that needed it, but now he limped slightly because of the loss of his toes. Now he was content – almost content – to cut corn or cane, to sit with his children and watch the western sky glow with the sinking sun, to watch Thisbe as she moved about in her daily tasks, with love so warm in his eyes that she could almost feel it seep into her bones. Eph walking up to the Martin Company with the best of a buffalo tied to his horse and his pack horse, and her Eph were two different people. Living, even in the dug-out, wouldn't be bad if he didn't take it into his head to move again.

Often Thisbe thought of the rich mine that Eph had found in this wonderland. But Eph never mentioned it. One morning he took Walter with him and they spent the best part of the day retrieving the pickax and shovel he had left to mark the claim. Thisbe put worry out of her heart. Eph must really be content.

One night seven year old Alway, sitting in front of the dug-out's door, noticed a crawling varment making for the house, evidently with its mind set on going between his two bare feet. Without a word he rose from his little rocker, picked it up, and dropped the rocker across the back of the crawler. The girls screamed; Eph declared that each of the varment's stinger-ended legs was as poisonous as a scorpion; Alway insisted on going hunting after the creature's mate and family; but Thisbe sat still with pride growing in her. Alway, just seven, was already meeting trouble two-thirds of the way with a steady hand and a clear head. It was good to feel that the boys were going to take after their Pa.

The harvest was in and Eph and Walter had started to build a log room to add to the living quarters of the dug-out when a messenger rode up with two letters for Thisbe. Thisbe took them with surprise and dread fighting for possession of her mind.

They were addressed from Salt Creek, but the writing was strange. Sam's perhaps, or maybe Sam's wire. Why hadn't Ma done the writing?

"Open them," Georgiana prompted, and Thisbe slid her toil-blackened thumb nail under the seal.

Dear Thisbe:

There doesn't seem much use in your coming now if you haven't already left. Mother passed away this morning. Love,

Sam.

Quickly, Thisbe tore open the other.

Dear Sister Thisbe:

Our mother has been ailing for some time. Now she is ailing fast. She talks often of you and Claire and Lish. I know it's asking a good deal of you, with your family needing your attention, but I know it would make her happy if you could come and spend a few weeks with her. We are fixed to accommodate you and your small children if you wish to bring them with you.

I sincerely hope that you can favor our mother in this matter.

Your loving brother and humble servant,

Samuel Read.

Eph had stopped his work when the boy had ridden up; now he stood behind Thisbe, reading over her shoulder. He put his big hands at her waist to steady her. "Your Ma was a gallant woman," he said.

"If I'd only got this word sooner," Thisbe said again and again.

The boy shifted from one foot to the other with embarrassment. "I'm sorry, Ma'am. When the first letter came we figured on holding it until Brother Hanks or Walter drove in with another load of produce. Then when the second one come three days after the first we thought it must be something urgent so I drove over."

"You were kind to come all this way," Thisbe said. Then, "Three days. It would have been too late, anyway. Too late." She stood with her arms crossed and hugged close to her body, her head bowed, her tears splashing onto the bosom of her dress. Suddenly she turned and walked out over the bench of higher ground toward the dust-red cliffs that lifted like a wall in front of her.

When she returned, the rider had gone and Eph had set the children to their chores, but he was waiting for her on the hard-swept ground in front of the dug-out. He put his arms around her and said, "Thisbe, would you like to go over now? Would it ease you to see how she has been laid away?"

"No," Thisbe answered, leaning against him for strength. She wanted to tell him what she had been thinking as she had walked alone. How Ma had said that there never was a door without something on both sides of it and that Ma was finding, no doubt, a new work for her ever-capable hands, but she didn't have the words. "No, Eph. Maybe it's better this way. I know that Ma is gone, but unless I stop to think about it, I'll *feel* that she's still living over at Salt Creek and that --". But she didn't finish. She raised her lips for Eph's comforting kiss.

Eph went on with the building of the log room and Thisbe busied herself with getting Georgiana ready to go away to school. Georgiana would be away from home, going to school over in Fremont, and the whole family would miss her; but Thisbe was determined that Georgiana should have an education. Summer when there wasn't any school Georgiana could teach her brothers and sisters the things she had learned during the winter.

It seemed a very short time to Thisbe before Eph had fulfilled the promise he made to her when they moved out of Burrville. On a fertile bench he put in more than two hundred fruit trees and dammed Pleasant Creek to water them. Pleasant Creek's precious water would only be lost when it emptied into the Fremont "Dirty Devil" River. On the curving end of the same bench he built a fine frame house with

grass and flowers and shrubs around it. He planted corn and sugar cane and potatoes and garden, and everything grew in this warm, productive climate as if God's smile were upon it.

There was just one promise that Eph couldn't keep. Neighbors didn't come to the area, and even the families who had been near moved away. There was no school for the eight Hanks children, no Sunday School, no life at all except what the family, could make for itself. But in this Eph and Thisbe were blessed, too. They knew how to knit a family circle in such a way that the children, from the youngest to the oldest, were happy and hardworking and content.



He built a fine frame house.

Thisbe worried most about the school. When Georgiana came home from Fremont, Thisbe set her to teaching the others. Every day, no matter what other chores there were to perform, she called all of the children into the kitchen and set them at their studies. It didn't work too well. The boys liked to tease Georgiana, and sometimes they found things that Georgiana couldn't answer and plagued her with their questions. But it was better than no school at all, and Thisbe, working about in the next room, minding the babies, heard what was going on with half an ear and remembered the days when she and Alicia went to school in London.

In the fall of '84 Nettie May, Thisbe's eleventh child was born. That was the fall that the older children left home for the first time. There had been a fine crop and the wagons had been loaded with surplus goods to take over to Rabbit Valley for sale or trade. Already Eph's sorghum had made a name for itself, and when he came home from his trading trip he was in an expansive mood.

"Thisbe," he said, sitting before the supper fire watching the meat on the spit while Thisbe set the table, "how did Georgiana manage with the young-uns? In school, I mean?"

Thisbe lifted her shoulders. "Georgiana's just a young-un herself. I've been thinking the children ought to go over to Teasdale to school. All of them that's big enough, that is."

Thisbe leaned against the table. She would never have dared suggest this to Eph. She'd been

praying for it for a long time.

"I've not said anything to you about it 'cause I didn't know if we could do it or not. But we can. The young-uns'll have to help themselves, some, but we can do it." So all of the children from Alway up went to school. Ray was just old enough, but Thisbe figured it wouldn't hurt to have him wait another year. He'd be a drag at Teasdale and a help at home.

The ranch prospered, and when the young trees flowered out Thisbe named the little valley enclosed by the precipitous gray-red cliffs, Floral. In '88, Clara Ellen was born and Thisbe was at peace with the world.

Clara Ellen is our last, she told Eph, the day he gave the child a name and a father's blessing.

Eph laughed. "Ten children, that's just a starter, Thisbe."

"Twelve, Eph," she reminded him gently. "There was Ella Marriah that we laid away in Provo Valley and Knowlton that we buried in Salt Lake."

Eph was silent, but he was drawn to Thisbe by her mood and drew up a chair and sat by her as she rested on the low couch.

"Seems like when there's a new one I get to thinking about those two little ones. It takes me back, somehow."

Gently Eph stroked her thin, strong hand. "Other times you don't have time to think, Thisbe."

She paid no attention to his rough fingers on her wrist. "They say that when a new baby is born the mother goes down into the 'Valley' to receive the new soul from heaven."

"I never did follow that kind of talk, Thisbe."

"Anyway, it seems true. I always feel closer to my little ones that – got lost in the Valley."

Eph moved uncomfortably. "Well, twelve suits me, Thisbe. There's Harriet's seven and Jane's seven. Quite a family. Quite a family."

"You wouldn't know, Eph, how it feels to be a woman. Always you've got a baby at your breast or one is on the way, and everything you'd like to do, like run after the quail, climb up over these mountains, even chase with the children, you can't do because you've got another life besides your own to think about. I'm not complaining, Eph, but I've got a taste of what it means to be free and light. Nettie had been weaned for two years before I began to wait for Clara Ellen. Those were two wonderful years, Eph.

"You've been a good wife, Thisbe. I didn't know you – hadn't been happy."

"Will you give me something, Eph? Something I need to – enjoy my freedom."

"Of course. You've never asked for any thing for yourself, Thisbe."

"Well, I want a horse!"

Eph's laugh shook her cot. "I've not understood much of what you've been talking about. But I do understand horses."

And the next time that Eph left the ranch and crossed over the mountains he came home with Black Bess.

The children who had run to meet his two-wheeled cart saw Bess being led and were wild with excitement, but Eph made them promise to keep quiet while he got the new mare in the stable. After he curried her until her black coat gleamed he sent for Thisbe.

She came hurrying out with Clara in her arms and almost dropped the baby in astonishment. Black Bess was the finest horse Thisbe had ever seen. She was coal Black, with a beautifully arched neck

and a flowing mane. Her eyes were fiery and her fine nostrils quivered at Eph's affectionate touch. Her legs were long and well formed.

"Golly, I bet she's speedy!" Walter said his eyes on her legs.

"She wears a twenty collar, weighs almost twelve hundred pounds and can out pull any thing on this ranch or any other ranch," Pa declared.

"She's mine!" Thisbe cried.

Eph took from his cart a saddle he'd bought especially for Thisbe. She lifted her long skirt and petticoats and climbed up. Of course it wouldn't do to ride around the ranch, even, with skirts tucked up like that, but she had to feel the mare between her knees.

Claire had sent in a box of clothes to be made over for the children – Thisbe still didn't spend money for clothes when they could be made from hand-me-downs from Salt Lake – a divided skirt which Thisbe had marked for school skirts for Amy and Thisbe. Instead she cut the skirt down to fit herself, and was really equipped to enjoy the mare.

"Why ever did you buy such an expensive horse?" she asked Eph one afternoon after she had ridden around the ranch with the baby in front of her on the saddle.

"I didn't buy her. I went out praying that could find a horse that I could afford and Black Bess was offered to me as a gift."

"Who?"

Eph moved restlessly as he always did when people praised him. "A friend who said I'd saved his life on the plains," he answered. And that was all Thisbe ever knew.

Black Bess was Thisbe's but the entire family loved her. The children saved their sugar and carrots for her, and took turns riding. Time and again they tried to make her ride double, but she always refused in a polite and ladylike way by simply tossing both riders off and then standing and waiting for one of them to mount again.

Bess worked, too. One day Walter, Alway and Ray were cultivating corn with Bess. Ray was uncovering the corn behind the shovels. Alway was on Black Bess, and Walter was holding the cultivator. A little cloud floated low over the summer sky and a little streak of chain lightning came out of the cloud. The three boys and the horse were all dropped in their tracks. Bess got to her feet first and with the cultivator banging behind her she raced for the stable. The shovels had missed Alway by a fraction of an inch. When the boys regained consciousness they followed Bess to the stable and unhitched her from what was left of the cultivator.

Thisbe had seen Bess's wild dash to the stable. She saw the three boys weaving their way toward the stable. When they came in, white and sick, she made them a warm drink of barley coffee and put them to rest. Then she went to the stable and stroked Bess and talked to her. Under her hand the mare's trembling ceased, the terror left her eyes.

With the coming of Bess a new chapter in Thisbe's life began. She often left the indoor work to the growing girls and rode the range. She didn't mind rounding up the stock. She loved the limitless speed, the long distances, the breeze in her face and through her hair. Too long she had been a houseplant. She belonged out of doors. She belonged beside Eph, learning the close companionship with nature that he had always known.

Yet home held a new interest, too. Floral Ranch became a regular stopping place for friends and strangers.

In '82 the Federal Government had passed the Edmund Tucker Act which made it a crime for a man to have more than one wife. As if by magic most of the fine men in the church became "criminals." According to the law men who had married more than one woman might continue to support all of their families, but they must choose one wife with which to live.

To Thisbe and Eph the law made little difference. Harriet and Jane were neither of them Eph's wives now, and Thisbe and Eph had been married by the law of the land. Word about the law and its enforcement came to them from time to time but they paid little attention. It was not until men who had been "marked" – because new babies had arrived in homes where the father was not supposed to be living – sought refuge from the United States marshals in the Hanks home, that Eph and Thisbe heard all of the sorrow and concern that the Saints were suffering. Some of these men were from near by towns, some from as far north as Salt Lake City. All felt that the law was unjust and that in disobeying it they were following the commandment of God: "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder."

In her heart Thisbe felt that it was well that polygamy had come to an end, but she never said so to Eph or to her children. Often she thought of Harriet saying, "Eph's a fine man but he never should have gone into polygamy." Well, she and Eph had been happy. Jane had married again and was making a new life. Harriet's sons were taking care of their mother and were proving themselves excellent men. If there hadn't been polygamy she would never have borne its rich fruit. When the fleeing "cohabs" – that is what the Federal marshals called the men who still lived with more than one wife – came to her home Thisbe entertained them with food and beds and evenings of entertainment and pleasure. Eph was always expansive when he had guests. It did Thisbe's heart good to see his glowing face and hear his still young laughter.

When word came that the marshals were on their way to the Hanks ranch to track down some offender, the guests were hurried away to a new hiding place and Thisbe put clean sheets on the beds for the men who were pursuing them.

Eph was as pleasant to the marshals as to the fleeing polygamists, but he had a sly way of discouraging them. It made him angry that these government agents weren't so intent on enforcing the law because it was their duty as because they were collecting fifty dollars a head if they could bring about a capture and indictment.

One night after they had entertained two marshals who were chasing a neighbor on the next ranch, Eph prayed, "We thank Thee for officers of the law who are *not* bent on the persecution of some of our scattered brethren, but only on the enforcement of the laws of the land. We are grateful for the Manifesto given to Thy prophet and for the disposition of the majority of the Saints to live up to the same. We thank Thee that these officers here tonight are unlike some who frighten people by forcing themselves into their sacred homes with a pistol in one hand and a search warrant in the other. Preserve these friends from accident and harm that they may return to their homes in safety."

Thisbe felt a little annoyed with Eph for his pointed prayer, but all the time she knew that the marshals' ears were as open as God's. Often the Stake Presidency of Wayne County stopped at the ranch both going and coming as they paid their semi-annual visits to the Saints in the eastern wards and branches. At these times Thisbe remembered entertaining The Sevier Stake Presidency at Burrville when she hadn't had enough food to put on the table, and she said a special prayer of her own which she didn't put into words but which would have sounded like this: "Lord, I thank Thee I have food to put on my table."

For there was always food, and songs, and love, and happiness, but often very little besides. One time Eph returned from a visit to a friend who had sent an invitation from Cedar City, with a new team hauling a new wagon. The horse he had ridden away was tied on behind. In the wagon were several sacks of flour, sacks of potatoes, a big sack of peach pits for planting, many packages of seeds. But best of all there was an up-to-date molasses mill made from government steel tires burned off a supply train that had been destroyed by fire in the early days. There were also in the wagon blacksmith tools, farm implements, a set of harness, and enough horse shoes to outfit the ranch for several years.

Thisbe stood by as the children exclaimed over every treasure unpacked. "Eph," she finally asked, "who made this outfitting day on Floral Ranch?"

He put his arms around her shoulders. "A man who remembered," was all he said.

But that night when the two of them paused a moment on the front porch looking out on the quiet country under the pale white moonlight, he said, "The man who remembered was from the Martin Company."

Thisbe stood with her back against Eph's chest and pressed her head hard into the niche just below his chin. The Martin Company. For a moment Eph was young and lithe and quick, not crippled by the loss of his toes and by the misplaced hip he had got in a fall from a horse. He had been a prince in shining armor to her then, with the whole world lying before him. Now their whole world lay around them. The children, Floral Ranch, Eph's work among his friends and neighbors – that was all. You wouldn't have dreamed this would be the end to the story of Eph Hanks, bravest and keenest, yes and most Godly, too, of the Mormon Scouts. But it was a good end, nevertheless.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

It was in February of '87 that Walter came home with the mail in such an excitement that Thisbe left her work to talk with him.

"A mission, Ma," he said. "A mission!"

Thisbe's thoughts went to the young men who had brought the gospel to the Read home in England. It would be fine if Walter were going to go back to their old neighborhood. "Where to?" She wiped her hands on her apron and reached for the letter which Eph had been reading.

"Northern States."

Thisbe said nothing. It wouldn't do to disappoint the boy, but maybe one of the other boys would be called to England.

"Wouldn't it be wonderful, Ma?" Walter said, searching her face. "I do wish I could go."

"You can," Eph said flatly.

Walter shrugged his shoulders ever so slightly. "I'd sure like to, Pa. When I first read the call I thought I could go, but now, looking at Ma's face, I've begun to realize that --"

"You can go, Walter."

"I was just wishing you could go to England," Thisbe said. Walter laughed shortly. "If I haven't the money to go to the Northern States how would I get to England?"

Money? Thisbe remembered the Elders telling Pa how they were traveling without purse and script. But then it would take some money, too.

"All our ready money has gone to improving the ranch," Walter said. "I know that, Pa. I know how much money we don't have as well as you do."

"There'll be a way provided," Eph said again, as if his declaration left no room for argument.

Walter was silent, but when Thisbe went back to her work in the kitchen he followed her. "Ma, you know how I'd like to answer the call," he said soberly, taking the dishtowel from her hands and going to work on the breakfast plates.

"How much would it take?"

"I'd have to have suit of clothes, the proper books, some other clothing, the fare to Chicago." Walter kept his eyes from his mother's. "I know it can't be done."

"Maybe we could sell something."

"You'd have to sell a lot. Even if you travel without purse or script you have to have *some* money."

"We've molasses, dried fruit, corn on hand," Thisbe suggested.

"Yes, and you need flour and rice and salt and a dozen other things."

Thisbe made no answer. Walter had thought the whole thing through and his mind was quicker and surer than hers.

Eph came into the kitchen. He sat on a chair backwards, his knees at the sides of the chair back. "Don't you two fret. Walter is going. If we can't raise the money for transportation some way, I can take a packhorse to carry bedding and provisions and Walter and I can go horseback to Chicago."

"Pa!" Walter said, incredulously.

"I've made that trip many times and it wouldn't hurt you to do it once." Eph's tone softened.

“The Lord has never failed me yet, Walter, and I don’t expect Him to do it now.”

So Walter and Thisbe worried and stewed, and Eph went ahead planning on a pack trip to Chicago in the days of the through train.

But as it turned out, it wasn’t Eph that the Lord used for an instrument in bringing about His will. It was a wisp of a girl, Mary Ellen Stewart. Walter had been keeping company with her for a time and they had thought of marrying “some time.” Now they decided to marry before Walter left. While he was gone Mary Ellen would continue to teach school and thus help him to fulfill his mission. It was Mary Ellen’s mother’s gift of forty dollars, which she acquired by selling two yearlings, that paid Walter’s original expenses, and the gifts of friends and neighbors at his farewell party in the church that bought his railroad ticket.

Eph and Thisbe planned to go to Salt Lake with Walter and Mary Ellen. It would be the first leg of Walt’s trip to Chicago; also his wedding trip.

The trip north took two weeks by wagon, but it wasn’t tedious or tiring. Walter and Mary Ellen were so excited and happy that they couldn’t think about such small things as muddy roads, hard beds, monotonous provisions. Thisbe, lying beside Mary Ellen in the wagon box bed, could feel the girl’s excitement communicated to her. “Oh, Mother Read,” Mary Ellen whispered, drawing Thisbe close in a quick embrace, “I’m glad you know what it means to be happy! That way you don’t think I’m plain foolish.”

“Yes, I know what it means to be happy,” Thisbe agreed. It would sound silly to tell Mary Ellen that she had never been happier in her life than she was on this “wedding trip.” She might tell her that this was the first trip she had ever taken with Eph – the first long trip – that there hadn’t been a baby in her arms and a crowd of noisy, singing, boasting, sometimes quarrelling children in the back of the wagon. Not that she hadn’t loved the children and been glad to have them along; but now to know that they were all safe and well taken care of while she rested and sang and visited with Eph and the young folks, filled her with a sense of well-being that was almost ecstasy.

The feeling of happiness was beyond Thisbe’s ability to analyze. It was more than the absence of worry and concern and trouble. It was something positive. It was the presence of – but what was the use of trying to put it into words. Walter and Mary Ellen were certainly sharing it. And Eph, too.

She went to sleep looking through the folded back flap of the wagon cover at the bright blue sky with its millions of points of dancing light. Folks sang in the church about “where sweet joy supernal never is dimmed by night.” Perhaps that was it; the feeling she had was “sweet joy supernal.”

The next morning, sitting beside Eph on the wagon box, she tried to tell him something of her thoughts, but he only answered, “I thought you’d enjoy it, Thisbe. It’s been a long, long time since you had a real outing.”

“I’m going to have enough happiness this two weeks to last me the two years that Walter is away on his mission,” Mary Ellen declared; and Walter, sitting in the back of the wagon with her, put his hand over hers and said, “I’m not thinking of those two years at all, Nelly.”

When they reached Salt Lake they went at once to Alicia’s.

“Thisbe, you look ten years younger than you did ten years ago,” Alicia laughed, alternately hugging Thisbe and holding her off to look at her.

“Quit flattering me,” Thisbe laughed, showing how pleased she was in spite of herself, because Alicia never said anything like that just to be polite. “I must have looked like an old lady ten years ago.”

Thisbe couldn't tell Alicia that she looked younger, because she didn't. Alicia had grayed considerably. Not a pepper and salt gray like most people get, but in wide ribbons the silver hair lay against the brown. "I've never been happier in my life, 'Lish," she said. "Maybe that's why I look younger."

And Alicia wasn't the only one who spoke of how young Thisbe looked, radiant with her happiness and excitement. In the Salt Lake Tabernacle, sitting beside Walter and Eph, she was taken for Walter's bride. And she was eighteen years older than Walter, and the mother of a dozen children!

Eph was having the time of his life, too. The first visit he made was to Harriet. The two talked through a long afternoon. Next he visited his children in Tooele, Salt Lake, Heber City. It was wonderful to see them all again, he told Thisbe. Fine that they still loved him and were glad to get reacquainted with him.

While Eph visited his family, Thisbe followed Alicia around her house, making beds, darning stockings, paring vegetables – anything that Alicia was doing. Then together the two sisters visited Claire at the Sydney Hotel and chatted and laughed with her in downtown ice cream parlors where Thisbe saw more people pass by in fifteen minutes than she had seen in a summer in Floral Ranch.

"Pa was still running his bookstore on the corner of First South and Main, and the three girls called on him there. "You know, children," he said, "I don't remember the things I learned yesterday like I should, but that has its compensations. I find that every day now I'm remembering things that happened a long time ago with greater clarity."



His beard and hair were white.

Then he talked to his three daughters of the early days in London – days that they remembered but slightly, that they had forgotten entirely, or that had passed by before they were born. While he talked Thisbe followed his words with a detached part of her mind while she studied him. Except for three horizontal wrinkles across his forehead and little etched crow's feet at the outer corners of his eyes, his face was as smooth as it had been in the days he was recalling. His beard and hair were white, but his hair lifted in a smooth thick arch over his forehead, and his beard was neatly trimmed and perfectly cared for. God, she thought, had never had to “temper the wind” for him. Or perhaps he wasn't a “shorn lamb.” That was it, he had never allowed himself to be sheared. But there was no bitterness in the thought. Ma had withstood the wind, and the battle with it had made her strong. Perhaps strength was even better than

what Pa still had. Perhaps.

Suddenly the vacation in Salt Lake City was over, Walter had gone east and plucky Mary Ellen was in a hurry to get back in her school. "Sorry to be going home, Thisbe?" Eph asked as they started south in the wagon that seemed empty without Walter.

"Now that we're really going, I'm anxious to get home to the children," Thisbe answered. And it seemed to her that with the turning of the horses' heads to the south, she was leaving somewhere by the roadside the light, gay, irresponsible person that she had been for the month she had been away.

Back in Floral time hurried by. Georgiana was married, Walter came home, there was a grandchild, then another. One day was like the last, one week like the next would be.

It was in August of '93 that something happened to make a new milestone.

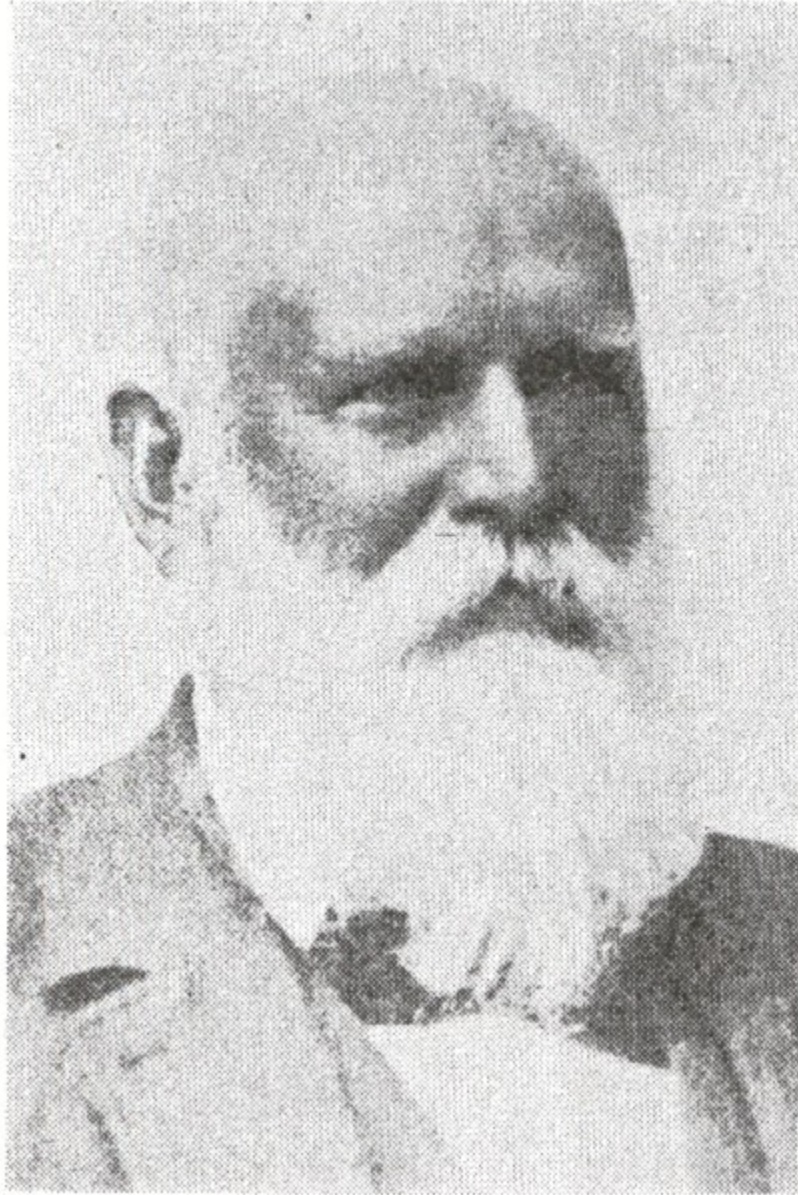
It was a conference in Wayne Stake and Brigham Young Junior was the official visitor. Before the session he looked up Eph and talked to him about the days when Eph had made more than fifty trips back east with government mail at a thousand dollars a trip, of the missions he had performed for Brigham Young when he was president of the church and the first authority in the Valley as well. Thisbe, standing close to Eph, listened to the pleasant conversation and thought how impossible it seemed that Eph was the same man who had lived in a cave on one of these trips with the mail, eating nothing but dried beef rolled in flour, until the winter snows melted enough for him to be on his way again.

The change in Eph had come slowly – almost it had crept up, it seemed to Thisbe.

Even after the service had begun, her mind stayed with the stories that young Brigham had mentioned so casually. It had seemed in the old days when she had married Eph that surely some day those in authority would see his real worth and that he would be chosen to sit with those who were high in the councils of the church. When he had been asked to sell out and take over Lee's Ferry she had been happy that Eph's value had been recognized. The plans had fallen through and Eph had stopped in Burrville, then come on down to Floral.

When young Brigham arose to talk he said that he would first take care of a little matter of business. Wayne Stake had need of a patriarch. Before he had spoken another word Thisbe knew what he was going to say. Eph Hanks was really the father of Wayne Stake. What better choice could be made for patriarch? She was annoyed with herself when she felt the tears hot in her eyes and salty in her mouth. This was a new kind of happiness – a happiness that made you helpless in its grip, that left you too full to say a word. Walter was in the stand and Eph had been called up, too. Next to her Nettie was sitting with her hands folded in her lap. Thisbe put her hand over Nettie's and held so hard that Nettie whispered, "What is it, Mama?"

After Eph had been ordained, Thisbe tried to tell him something of her pride in him, her joy in his selection. She couldn't find the words. There had always been two sides to Eph. There had been the side that dared the early blizzards to bring two horses packed with buffalo meat to the starving Martin Company. There had been the side that humbled himself before God and administered to the sick by the authority he held in the Church. Thisbe, sorting over the thoughts in her mind, thought that the first Eph was *the man*, the second was *the spirit* that dwelt in the body because Eph loved God and because he had been set apart by those in authority to work in God's place.



“What better choice could be made for Patriarch?”

When she tried to speak to Eph of these things he looked puzzled. “I’m glad to be given this calling, Thisbe,” he said. “I expect to magnify it.” When Walter and Alvay, told him how happy they were he said quietly, “I shouldn’t wonder if one of you boys, or both of you, might be patriarchs some day.”

From the time of his ordination Eph was a different man. Gone was his irritability, his quick rages, his impetuous rejection of suggestions before he had considered them. He was starting with himself, to “magnify his calling,” and Thisbe, watching, felt that Eph had filled the niche for which he must have been foreordained.

CHAPTER TWENTY

All through the autumn of '95 Eph was tired. Thisbe watched him anxiously and went with him whenever she could even if he was just bound for the farther pasture or the woodlot. In these days Thisbe felt very close to him – closer than she ever had in the days of bearing and rearing children. True, the house was still filled with the laughter of young folks; there were still nine sitting at the table every time dinner was put on; but somehow it was different. Big children don't cling like little ones. Each has his way to go and his own way of doing it.

Eph's tiredness didn't make him crotchety, that was one thing to be thankful for each day he seemed to mellow more. He wasn't so set in his ways, so determined in his views. Sometimes he let the children's breaking of an established rule go by without notice because it was more pleasant that way.

The only times he left the ranch were to go on calls to give patriarchal blessings or administer to the sick and injured who thought nobody but "Brother Hanks" could call on the Lord with full certainty of an answer. Sometimes Georgiana went with him on these trips to wash and anoint the failing ones; sometimes Walter's wife, Mary Ellen, was his companion. It seemed that Eph got closer to God every day. Often Thisbe remembered the power of healing that he had had given to him when he met the freezing Martin Company. He had administered to the dying and brought them to life again. Now again and again he went into homes where death waited with the family at the bedside and called upon God, through the authority he held, to send death out the back door.

"I'd like to see all my children," Eph told Thisbe one evening as they sat beside the fire and listened to Clara and Nettie May singing as they washed the supper dishes.

"I guess they could all come home for Christmas," Thisbe said thoughtfully. "It would be quite a crowd." She began naming them on her fingers: "Walter and Mary Ellen, Georgiana and Dan, Amy and Johnnie, Thisbe and Sam. With the grandchildren and our six young ones that would make thirty-one."

Eph looked into the flames. His voice was quiet. "I didn't mean *our* children, Thisbe. I've seen them all along. I was thinking of Harriet's children and Jane's."

"I'll write to them," she said. Then she was silent. It wasn't often that Eph let her look into the wound that wouldn't heal. Thisbe's ten couldn't make up to him for the others that had been taken from him. "I'll write. I'm sure some of them could come."

She lit the lamp and put it in the center of the dining-room table. Carefully she began the letters that were to go to Eph's other children. Nettie and Lilly helped with the letters. Thisbe waited hopefully for the answer. "Just thought I'd like to see them," he said, patting her hand gently.

Christmas came and went and Eph tired even more readily. He would soon be seventy and he had lived in his seventy years more of trial and danger than most men could have put into nine lives. He had a right to be weary.

But with the coming of spring Eph's energy flowed back and he was once again out and around the ranch and Thisbe felt the burden of concern lifted almost like a cloak from her shoulders.

Eph's birthday was the twenty-first of March and the girls and Thisbe planned a great party. The family arrived for the evening. The girls did all the work and Thisbe sat by Eph, her heart warm with gratitude. There were recitations and songs and Lilly played the organ while Eph kept time with his triangle. Eph didn't seem old any more – or weary. He seemed like Eph.

The next afternoon as the children romped with their children on the wide lawn Eph said, "Thisbe, you know what? I'm getting set for a move."

Thisbe, her attention divided between him and the game going on on the lawn, answered lightly, "Where?"

"Well, I want to go up to Salt Lake City and see my families."

So that was it.

"Then when we get tired of visiting around, you and me --". He stopped and turned to her until her eyes met his, "I've been thinking some of leaving Floral."

Thisbe caught her breath, Eph, still thinking of moving.

"How would you like to spend a season in Manti doing temple work? Or if we didn't like it there there's Salt Lake or St. George."

"I think we could arrange for the girls and Arthur," Thisbe answered.

"Yes," she smiled slowly, thinking of what such an experience would mean. "Yes, Eph, that's one move I'd be willing to make even before I took it."

Eph's brow drew into lines of puzzlement and Thisbe laughed at her own inarticulate words. "Seems like all our lives we've been moving," she explained. "And every time something inside of me fought it. But always I went along and sooner or later that something died or went to sleep or something and I knew the move was all right. But there it was, ready to come to life, or wake up and put up another fight inside of me when the next move came along."

"Why didn't you tell me, Thisbe?"

Thisbe spread her fingers apart and looked at the knuckles that were growing heavy and knotted. "Wouldn't have been much use, Eph, would it?"

Eph put his arm around her shoulder. "You've followed in what Paul said, Thisbe, and it's made you and me closer together than most mortals ever get."

"I know, Eph."

And so the plans were made for the trip north and the season of temple work. Alvay and Ray would take over the ranch. Everything was ready.

Just one week after his birthday Eph was sitting on the front porch looking out to the west when he suddenly cried out and put his hands to his head. The girls came running. So did Thisbe. Eph didn't have a word to say and Thisbe sent Clara running for the boys. Together they got Eph to his bed.

After a time he found his speech again. "I know why I wanted all my children together," he said. Thisbe nodded. She knew, too, and the certainty seemed like to break her heart.

The boys rode away to bring the Elders of the church and they came to lay hands upon Eph's head and bless him.

Thisbe knelt in the next room and listened to their voices. "Dear Brother Ephraim Hanks, by the authority of the Melchizedek priesthood in us vested, we thy brethren lay our hands --". Each time that the Elders came their calm, reassuring voices called upon God, who had always been so close to Eph to relieve his suffering. Never once, and Thisbe noted the omission, did they promise him that he would be well again.

Then the pain ceased in Eph's head but his legs grew cold as death. The pain in them brought beads of sweat to his forehead, but he didn't cry out or murmur.

One morning Alvay called Thisbe into the kitchen. "Ma, I'm going for a doctor."

Thisbe's troubled eyes were on the door to the next room. "It don't do any good, Alway. No good."

"It might, Ma."

"I've listened to the Elders, Alway. I've prayed every minute I've sat by your Pa's bed. I know – it won't do any good."

"I'd like to try, Ma."

"All right. Try."

So Alway rode away. He planned to travel day and night, only stopping to change horses.

Then angry streaks of red began to run from Eph's legs up towards his body. Thisbe, bathing him from a basin, tried to cover them from his eyes, but he seemed to know. "It's blood poison," he said. "I've seen it a thousand times."

Then Eph began to talk – talk with more ease than he had since the pain first struck him. Sometimes he talked of the old days of courage and danger, sometimes of the ranch and of his family, but most of the time his thoughts were with God and the eternities to come.

Walter had come at Thisbe's request and on the morning of June the ninth he was having his turn with his father when a change came. He seemed to be struggling for his breath and Walter lifted him up into a sitting position, supporting Eph's back with his own strong shoulder and arm.

That was the way that Eph went to sleep. Walter had called to the family and they came in in time to see a look of peace and hope spread over Eph's tired face, wiping away the lines of suffering and weariness. Only Alway, riding after a doctor, was not there.

For a moment Thisbe's breath seemed to stop in her throat. Everything went black and whirled around her and the sounds of her own sobs seemed to come to her ears from a distance. But the spasm lasted only a second, then she dropped on her knees at the foot of the bed. She found no words for a prayer, but her heart asked God for strength and comfort.

"Come, children, this will never do. Pa didn't want us to mourn. We must get to work," she said.



The grave was dug in Caineville.

So, with the unshed tears behind her burning eyes, Thisbe sat with her daughters and made his burial clothes.

The coffin was made and the grave dug in Caineville, about eighteen miles away, where Walter was Bishop. Riding back from the funeral Thisbe kept her hands locked tightly together. "It was a beautiful funeral, Mother," Amy said.

For a long time Thisbe was silent, her eyes on her gnarled knuckles. Finally she spoke and her voice was so low that Amy had to bend closer to hear it. "Oh, death, where is thy sting; oh, grave where is thy victory?"

Home again, Thisbe wasn't happy. The children suggested that she take the trip that she and Eph had planned, but going without Eph would be too great a hurt. Walter had her come to live at Caineville in a little house he had built for his father when he had hoped that Eph would quit his active work on the farm. Still Thisbe felt lost, almost useless.

"You're still a young woman," Alvay told her. "Why don't you –?"

"I'm half a person only, Alvay," she answered quietly. "Pa was the other half. The biggest and best."

But still there was living to do. Thisbe worked on, thought on, dreamed on. And mostly her

dreams were of the years spent with Eph, though sometimes her mind went back to the days of the Martin Company when Eph had been the saviour of the Cart Company. She remembered Ma's words: "It wouldn't be fine, really, if all the way was downhill. That would be too easy. It's the hard things we do that make us strong. You wouldn't want a weak mother, would you girls?"

And Ma had been strong through trials that Thisbe had never been called on to face. All her life – since she was just a child – she had had Eph, with never a moment of worry about where his heart was. The things he had asked of her had been hard at the time, but always he had borne a big part of the burden. Life had been good.

"You've got years before you, Ma," Lilly insisted. "How much older than you was Pa?"

"Twenty years. It sometimes seems strange to me to think of how much of Eph's life he lived without me."

And so she was back in her thoughts again – back to her aloneness with Eph gone.

It was queer how many things that happened every day made you miss your man. There were the jokes that you thought of and saved until evening so you could hear his laugh roll through the house. There were the special dishes you got all the ingredients ready to fix before you realized that he wouldn't be sitting at the table to enjoy them. There was the way the sunset looked from the front porch of the house, and you needed him to take your hand and say, "Pretty, ain't it?"

Then there were the times when she came face up with the realization of how much they had all depended on him.

The first time the family moved from a winter in town back to the ranch, the children got everything packed and ready to save Thisbe the trouble. When they were all in the wagon and far away from other folks and their supplies, Thisbe asked, "Did any of you put in the matches?" No one had. The boys searched through their pockets and Ray found that he had one match. When they arrived at the ranch house and Thisbe was ready to make a fire to heat water for the cleaning she wanted to do she asked, "Where's the match, Ray?" And they all stood around afraid it wouldn't light or that the kindling wouldn't catch. When the flame really blazed up everybody laughed. Everybody but Thisbe. She was thinking that never in his life did Eph forget the important things.

When there was company at the table Thisbe missed Eph and his way of putting people at ease. She was gentle and courteous – all the things which in England had been associated with "being a lady," but sometimes the fineness of her manners seemed to frighten her guests.

Once there came to her house an Englishman who tried to out-do her in her own manners. He was a gentleman, turned tree-pruner, whom the boys had got to prune their orchard in return for winter feed for his animals. At the table he asked for tea. Thisbe hadn't ever served tea at her table, with the children growing up and with her desire that they should see at home only those things they should partake of themselves. She had a package on hand, because sometimes she brewed a cup as medicine for a headache or a stomach cramp. Now she climbed on a chair and brought down from a high shelf a silver teapot which had been Ma's.

She placed the teapot before her guest. "Let me serve you to a cup, ma'am," he insisted, and the Hanks family watched the elegant crook of his little finger as he lifted the ancient teapot.

"No, thank you."

"Do allow me," he insisted. He reached the teapot toward her. The handle, which had at one time been tight enough, had become loose with age. It came off at the bottom and turned tipping the boiling

contents of the pot on the gentleman's lap. Thisbe passed her guest two large napkins. It was the most – and the least, that she could do. But she needed Eph to direct the attention away from the guest's troubles. Alvy and Ray and Arthur started snickering. They raced outside where they stood with their backs against the house and went into spasm after spasm of delighted laughter.

Another time when the Stake Presidency stopped by in their usual way, Thisbe put on a quick dinner with her famous cream biscuits. She lectured Alvy about his manners and let him take his Pa's place at the table since he was the oldest boy at home.

Alvy slit a biscuit with his knife. Then, reaching for the butter, he began to tell an exciting story about how the dog had chased a snake under the house through a small opening in the foundation. He helped himself to a liberal serving of butter. "It was right there," he explained, gesturing with the hot knife on which the lump of butter was beginning to melt. The butter struck Brother Robertson's vest and rolled down to the bend of his leg where it nestled in a wrinkle and continued to melt.

Thisbe again reached for a large napkin to clear up the situation. If Eph had been in accustomed place, instead of –.

But Thisbe went on living – in the summer at Floral, through the winter at Caineville. Alvy spent two years away on a mission, Arthur was away for a winter, working in the temple. Ray, too, came and went. Alvy, Lilly and Nettie were married. If Eph had been home there would have been big celebrations. She hadn't the heart to do such things alone. Eph had loved people so.

One day, Arthur, who had been working in Salt Lake City, happened home for a visit, and Walter, too, came up to Floral for the night. That was the night that Thisbe died. She had been bothered for a long time with kidney trouble. This night she had a terrific attack after having suffered all day. Walter administered to her then sat holding her hand.

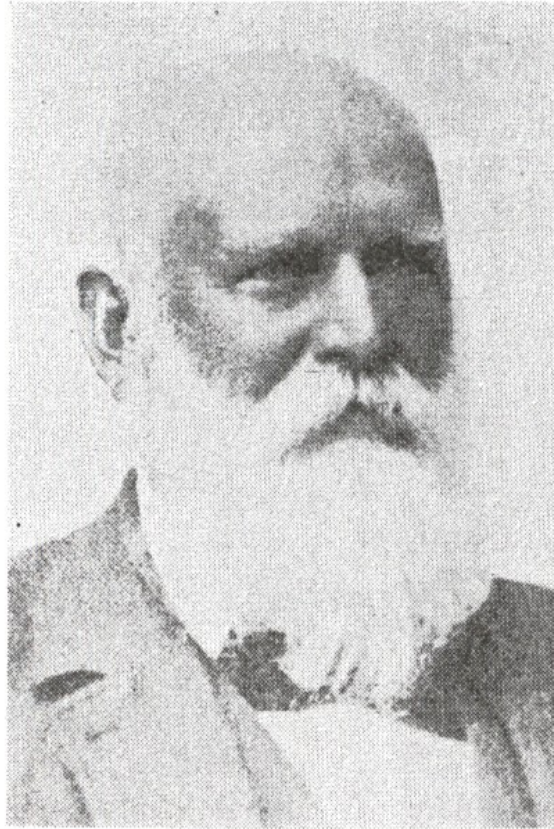
For an hour her body and mind were at rest. She held Walter's hand, and the children who were on the ranch came into her room. She smiled at one, then the other, but her eyes clung lovingly to Walter's face. "You are a good and noble man, Walter. You have never told me a lie. God will bless you and Mary Ellen and your children."

She was silent for a time and Walter stroked her hand as Eph used to do. "Walter, Georgiana, Amy, Alvy, Thisbe, Lilly. All married in the temple. All blessed with precious children."

Her eyes went from Walter's face to Arthur's. They were clear and gray and bright, "I wish I could stay to see you three young folks married in the temple –". She sighed and her eyelids wavered, but her eyes were open again. "But if you pick good company marry in the temple and raise good families, blessings will come to you."

With an effort Thisbe kept her eyes open and looked into the anxious faces of the children. It would be more pleasant to close them and look into the beyond for Eph, who would surely be waiting close somewhere. He'd never let her come alone. But the children drew near now and there seemed to be tears in Nettie's eyes. She must reassure them. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil."

She gripped Walter's hand a little tighter with her left hand. Her right hand she could see laying gnarled and weary on the coverlet; but it seemed to her that she was reaching it – young and vital and ready for new work – toward Eph, waiting just beyond.



EPHRAIM HANKS



WALTER ERNEST HANKS



AMY ALICIA HANKS



**MARTHA GEORGINA
HANKS ALLEN**



THISBE HANKS ALLEN



SIDNEY A. HANKS



THISBE READ



RAY E. HANKS



LILLIE HANKS



ARTHUR E. HANKS



NETTIE HANKS GILES



**CLARA E. HANKS
BODENHAMER**

CHAPTER TWENTY ONE

Appendix

People who read THE TEMPERED WIND without a knowledge of Mormon history and philosophy are almost certain to wonder about a few questions that arise in the story. To make all of these points clear in the course of the narrative would have kept the reader teetering on the edge of suspense while the author went into a citation of historical materials. The reader wouldn't have liked this and neither would the author.

That is why, in this appendix, I shall endeavor to give the reader, unfamiliar with Mormonism, the answers to some of the questions that undoubtedly arise in his mind.

What sort of people were these immigrants from the United Kingdom who were willing to walk 1300 miles to their Promised Land?

To answer, I quote from THE UNCOMMERCIAL TRAVELER by Charles Dickens. Dickens describes a visit to the ship "Amazon," which sailed from London on June 4, 1863, carrying some nine hundred Saints.

"Now I have seen emigrant ships before this day in June and these people are so strikingly different from all other people in like circumstances whom I have ever seen that I have wondered aloud, 'What would a stranger suppose these emigrants to be?'"

"The captain of the 'Amazon' is at my elbow, and he says: 'What, indeed! The most of these came aboard yesterday evening. They came from various parts of England in small parties that – had never seen one another before, yet they had not been a couple of hours on board when they established their own police, made their own regulations, and set their own watches at all the hatchways. Before nine o'clock the ship was as orderly and quiet as a man-o-war... If you hadn't known, could you ever have supposed?' 'How could I? I should have said they were in their degree the pick and flower of England.' 'So should I,' said the captain.

* * *

"I afterwards learned that a dispatch was sent home by the captain before he struck out into the wide Atlantic highly extolling the behavior of the emigrants, and the perfect order and propriety of all their social arrangements.

"I went onboard that ship to bear testimony against them if they deserved it, as I fully believed they would; to my great astonishment they did not deserve it; and my predisposition and tendencies must not affect me as an honest witness. I bent over the 'Amazon's' side, feeling it impossible to deny that, so far, some remarkable influence had produced a remarkable result."

Why did such people want to leave England?

To Latter-day Saints it is enough to say that they "felt the spirit of gathering," but other readers

would demand a more explicit explanation.

At the time that Mormonism was introduced into England the country was passing through the mid-Victorian period. The Victorian period had been one of great social and industrial changes. For years the manufacturing industry had been carried on in the homes of the workers. Or if not in their homes, in central shops where the workers took their tools and thus preserved their independence. The coming of machinery changed all this, bringing manufacturing to central points where power and transportation and workers were available. This caused the sudden growth of great cities, where workers flocked to the factories. There was the worst housing shortage in history. Three families sometimes lived in one room. Cheap tenements were thrown up to meet the demand for shelter. It was before the time of modern sanitation and these houses were unbelievably filthy and foul. To make matters worse the government taxed such buildings according to the number of windows, so landlords built as few windows as possible and even boarded up ones that existed in older buildings.

The working hours in the factory were long – sometimes a shift lasted sixteen hours. There were no accident guards on the machines, little light and no sanitation. In some of the mines, in spite of the introduction of the steam engines women still toiled up winding stairs with baskets of coal from the mines far under ground.

People were imprisoned for debt and the debtors' prisons were uncrowded and unsavory. Everywhere crime flourished.

The government tried again and again to right these wrongs with legislation, but the wheels of the law move slowly and meanwhile thousands and thousands were drifting into degradation and decadence or saving themselves by turning to God. It was during this time that the Evangelical Movement had such great impetus, that the Oxford Movement which strove to purify the Church of England had its birth and that Mormonism gathered out hundreds and hundreds of those who sought "after righteousness."

To read any of Charles Dickens' novels of social reform will give an idea of why the people were eager to leave their own country, and when the impetus of religious zeal was added the Saints were willing to undertake a great deal to reach "Zion."

What about those with money who found England a pleasant place to live?

Many people of the upper middle class, even of the petty nobility were drawn into the church. It is evidence of the feeling of brotherhood in the church that these people who had money were willing to share it with the others, thus making possible the immigration of even the very poor. The Reads, who were rather well-to-do and were willing to share with others and walk the long distance behind handcarts, were all example of this feeling of brotherhood. It has always been axiomatic in the Mormon Church that none should suffer as long as anyone had sustenance to share.

How were the finances handled?

In order to help people to reach the valley both in America and from abroad, the church established what is known as the Perpetual Emigration fund. It was initiated by the first presidency of the church and funds were subscribed to by the Saints in Utah as well as by those in England. The details for the administration of the fund are given in an epistle of the first presidency to Orson Hyde, in charge of

the emigration on the frontier, under date of October 16, 1849, and the funds were made in the form of loans to people, especially to the Saints in Great Britain and other European countries, "that they might gather to Zion." Funds began to pour in from all parts of the continent, and it was only a short time before a total of 71,138 shillings had been subscribed abroad. By 1850 the people in Utah had raised \$20,000. Donations as high as four hundred pounds were made by individuals. It is said that subscriptions came from people residing near the foot of the Himalaya mountains in Central Asia. In September, 1850, the general assembly of the "State of Deseret" passed an ordinance entitled, "Ordinance incorporating the perpetual emigrating fund company." It says that "the company is organized for the purpose of promoting, facilitating, and accomplishing the emigration of the poor." Brigham Young was chosen president of the company, September 15, 1850, and with him a large number of "assistants."

"It required careful planning and wise direction to carry out the will of the First Presidency in relation to the use of the fund. However, that it was wisely used is attested by the fact that thousands of people were able to make their Zion from all parts of the world, particularly England and the continent of Europe. The people were poor, as a rule, and their only dream was to reach their Zion. One Utah historian, Mr. Andrew Denson, says: "It is presumed that such a journey as this was never undertaken by so large a number of people and with such limited resources. An ocean had to be traversed, rivers ascended and plains crossed, and the whole provided for before embarkation." It was in September, 1852, that the first company under the perpetual emigration fund direction reached the valley of the Great Salt Lake." (The above is quoted from "The Salt Lake Tribune" Centennial Section, entitled The First Hundred Years, April 6, 1930, Salt Lake City, Utah.)

Why were the handcart pioneers allowed to leave Florence so late in the season?

The Mormon Church has always been an intensely Democratic organization. One of the "Articles of Faith" declares: "We believe that man shall be punished for his own sins and not for Adam's transgressions." Calling it "Free Agency" the church teaches that each man must choose for himself and take the responsibility of his choice. In this case the Saints were shown both sides of the picture and voted to go on.

However, Brigham Young held the leaders responsible for the disaster, since, as he pointed out, the immigrants did not have the necessary experience upon which to base a decision.

What did Brigham young send to the unfortunate companies?

As soon as the unseasonable cold weather touched Salt Lake City, Brigham Young grew apprehensive about the safety of the handcart pioneers, and when the missionaries, who on their way home from Europe had seen the condition of the Saints, reported their position and condition. President Young called at once for donation of clothing and bedding and for volunteers to join the relief parties. The relief parties traveling with wagons loaded with provisions, clothing and bedding and drawn by the best horses available, moved as rapidly as possible towards the east. However, they met with the same storms that had buffeted the hand-cart companies and were forced to camp and wait for better weather. Ephraim Hanks left his loaded wagon and went on with pack horse and saddle horse. Some names mentioned in the manuscript accounts of the rescue are: David P. Kimball, George W. Grant, Stephen

The Tempered Wind

Taylor, Allen Huntington, Ephraim K. Hanks, William H. Kimball, Cyrus H. Wheelock, James Ferguson, Abel Garr, Daniel W. Jones, Thomas Alexandre, Ben Hampton, Robert T. Burton, Charles Decker, G. G. Webb, Hosea Stout, Isaac Bullock and Joseph Simmons. The names of others who assisted have not been mentioned in these manuscripts and are lost. The people at Fort Supply also extended aid.

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a search fee is payable in addition.



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information which
which appear in
the margin of the
original entry.

Application Number P.A.S. 159856/55/P

REGISTRATION DISTRICT STEPPNEY										
BIRTH in the Sub-district of			in the County of Middlesex							
1845										
No.	When and where born.	Name, if any.	Sex.	Name, and surname of father.	Name, surname, and maiden surname of mother.	Occupation of father.	Signature, description, and residence of informant.	When registered.	Signature of registrar.	Name entered after registration.
306	Twentyfifth of April 1845 at Mile End House Mile End Road Stepney	Thisbe Quilley	Girl	Samuel Read	Elizabeth Georgiana Read formerly Dale	Gentleman	Samuel Read Father Mile End House Mile End	Twenty fourth of May 1845	Samuel Castleden Registrar	—

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a Register of Births in the District above mentioned.

Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, SOMERSET HOUSE, LONDON, under the Seal of the said Office, the 17th day of November 1955.

*See note overhead.



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Notes: