

## The Most Successful Year on Record.

The following synopsis of the GREAT-WEST LIFE Annual Report for 1905 is the best possible indication of the progress and strength of "the Westerners' Company":—

Policies placed during the year	\$ 6,052,333.00
TOTAL BUSINESS IN FORCE	24,216,882.00
TOTAL ANNUAL INCOME	962,506.60
Paid to Policy holders in profits, death claims, etc.	132,684.94
Total interest earnings during the year—an average of over 7%	186,222.32
RESERVE	2,467,842.16
SURPLUS TO POLICY HOLDERS	612,213.45
Gain in Surplus for the year	71,521.01

THE GREAT-WEST LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY, - - - WINNIPEG

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## OUR MAIL ORDER SYSTEM

The Only Exclusive Mail Order Tailoring Establishment in Winnipeg.

### SUIT OR OVERCOAT MADE TO ORDER

No More **\$15** Less

**Out-of-town Men**—We make your clothes no matter where you live, at the same price and just as satisfactory as we do the work of Winnipeg's best dressers. A postal or letter brings samples and information.

When writing us state about the shade of cloth you prefer. Our cutters are well trained in the Mail Order System and we always ensure satisfaction. Write to-day for Spring Samples, and mention Western Home Monthly. We have clothed Millions.

## Scotland Woolen Mills Co.

WORLD'S BEST TAILORS

Winnipeg Store—Corner Main and Portage Avenue

P. S. Wanted:—A good reliable, responsible man in every town and village, to take our agency, a live hustler can make big money. Write us for particulars.

WHEN WRITING ADVERTISERS PLEASE MENTION THE WESTERN HOME MONTHLY.

love as she came through the door. He had never seen this strange look in Birdella's face before.

When her eyes, in turn, fell upon Creed, a wild, startled expression was in them. She checked an instant, tossed her head, and hastened forward, muttering to those with her, "This is him—this is Creed"; and to him, "Creed, this—w'y, this is Miz Culp. She—they—w'y, her and Mr. Gittleston—I mean we've fixed it up fer me to go on to Asheville and be—an' be—"

Her tongue faltered before the words; her glowing, excited eyes fell upon Creed's full, mild gaze; but Gittleston, shouldering in between them, explained with a volubility half conciliatory, half insolent:

"Me an' the young lady has fixed it up—we've fixed it up, as she says. It—it's sorter rough on you; but—er—but I reckon you don't want no young lady that wants some other feller. I wouldn't!"

As the man talked into Creed's stunned ears, Creed's eyes looked to where the Culp woman had drawn Birdella apart, and, with an arm about her, was talking rapidly to the girl. Culp also had come up and was standing near his wife, a deprecating, half disgusted look upon his face. Both men were fairly drunk with whisky—that is what "an excursion" meant to them. Poor Bird, who had never been on a train before, nor ten miles away from the silence and isolation of her mountain cabin, who had never been of any consequence to any human creature, save Creed Carrier—poor Bird was drunk, if not stark mad, with excitement and triumph, like a little child beside itself with over-attention. Creed looked at her, and comprehended this instinctively; but how to help her from such a position as that into which she had put him?

He drew near her, Gittleston, with his dark red face and curious, pale gray eyes, with his protuberant jaw, bandy legs, flashy clothes, and profusion of cheap jewelry—Gittleston hanging at his elbow with:

"It's better not to have no fuss." "Bird," began Carrier, in his soft mountain drawl, "Bird"—he would have added "honey," but for the harsh, vulgar faces about them—"I jest want you to tell me what 'tis you want to do, yo'self. Ef you say—"

Bird's crimson face had been growing pale with every word that Creed spoke; her great, dark, excited eyes were dilating upon him, like one suddenly aroused from a vision. She put her hand to her throat.

"I—", she began, tremblingly; when Gittleston, watching her face, once more thrust himself between the two, with:

"I'd git out, ef I's you, an' not—"

In a flash the gentleness which had misled Gittleston was gone. With a face as white as paper and eyes that were deadly, Creed turned upon the fellow, a still fury in his look that was frightful to see. He reached forth his powerful hands; but quick as he was, Gittleston was quicker to dodge beyond the reach of that clutch. The Culp woman backed away, panting:

"He's got a gun! My law, he's got a gun! An' he'll—"

"No, ma'am—no, no, lady; I ain't got no gun. I wouldn't need no gun fer sech a feller as that"; and the contempt in Carrier's soft tones cut like a knife.

Again he turned to Birdella, with that tenderness which he had shown the poor child from the first. She was standing back, all the excitement, the sauciness, the intoxication fallen from her; looking slight, and childish, and pitiful; drawing her breath in long, sobbing sighs; her somber gaze fixed upon Creed. Her fingers fumbling at the wretched trinkets with which Gittleston had bedecked her.

He turned to the girl with a world of longing in his eyes; but when he looked at the others, and saw her clinging to the Culp woman, he drew back.

"Far'well," he said, using the sad, impressive word of mountain adieu: "far'well, Bird," when, had he known it, he needed but to say "Come!"

The pity of the thing was that this farewell of poor Creed's was tinged with the sternness which these others evoked. Poor Birdella felt this sternness, felt ably that she had deserved it, and dare not come to him—

Creed turned blindly from them, and moved toward where old Sally and the lily were hitched. He felt a touch upon his arm, and looking around saw Culp.

"She," began the man abruptly, and with a sort of reluctant, apologetic air, "she don't rightly know—nor she don't reely keer—nothin' 'bout Heck Gittleston."

Him an' Jinny's jest got at her an' talked her blind; an' Heck he's give her 'bout half the jewelry he had in his pack—Heck an' me, we're partners in a peddlin' business. They're fools—that's what they air! Go an' git your woman—I would. She'll cut up fer a spell; but she'll come to it all right in time."

Carrier looked silently, though not unkindly, at the man who offered him this advice, and this sort of bride; then turned his face to where Birdella stood sobbing violently; and for an instant he faltered. But, as fate would have it, the next moment both Gittleston and the Culp woman approached the girl and laid effusive hands upon her, ostentatiously leading her away, each with an arm under hers.

"That settles hit," uttered Creed's quiet voice, and his gaze came back to the little lily whose bridle he held. "That settles hit. Only one thing—I hope—I hope he'll be good to her!"

### III.

The climbing of that trail was a thing which Creed could never afterward remember. The sun set ere he was half-way up; and when he finally reached the little cabin, dismounted, unsaddled, and fed the tired horses, it was black night. At his own door he paused a moment, and his head dropped forward on his breast. Then with a shivering sigh he lifted it, and went quickly in.

He moved cautiously forward, in the darkness, and struck suddenly against the little chair, which came rocking playfully back and patted his hand. He clinched, swerved, catching his breath as at a blow, and stood rigid for an instant, whispering under his breath:

"Oh, my God!"

Then he went resolutely forward and touched the little thing, speaking in the dense darkness and silence of the room, a sob in his voice.

"Hold on—hold on thar, little feller! Thar, thar; I ain't gwine to harm ye. I reckon I got to live with my sorrier; an' I mought better make friends with hit."

Another man with a heart so torn with anguish as was this man's might have burned the chair and its comrades, or broken and destroyed them; he might have closed the cabin door and left them to decay without him. Creed Carrier after the first shrinking, went about quietly, even lovingly, among his slighted household goods, making ready for bed; but after the little rocker touched him, he made no light. He lay long, silent and moveless as the inanimate things about him, save for an occasional choking sigh. She had left them, and him, desolate and alone; but it was her future, not his, into which Creed lay looking with sad, daunted eyes.

Though these two had seemed to be long to each other from the hour of their meeting, yet the union had grown closer and more perfect with every visit Creed had made to the Blacklock cabin. They were truly all the world to each other; to the neglected, passionate, impulsive girl Creed Carrier was father and mother, friends and lover, all in one; all she knew, or had ever known, of tenderness—in short, the only response life had ever made to his warm, craving nature. To Creed, the girl was sweetheart, child, pet, and plaything; the brightness, tenderness, and beauty of his life. His strength, his quiet wisdom, dearly bought, were hers to cheer and guide and console. She ran to meet him always, like a little child, clung to him and leaned upon him, looking forward to each other as the cure, the solution, of all present ills and difficulties. This load of love and faith so dreadfully thrust back upon him lay heavy on the man's heart; so that he could not sleep.

At last, when the long night had worn itself almost away, and weariness was bringing a certain quietude—at last, in that still, strange hour before the dawn, when a late, waning moon struggled through multitudes of ragged