

THE CHILDREN ON THE PLAINS

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The Children on the Plains by Sarah S. Baker (Aunt Friendly)

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SARAH S. BAKER (AUNT FRIENDLY)

**THE CHILDREN
ON THE PLAINS**



RUTH AND THE INDIAN GIRL.

"Leaning over the sick girl, she looked tenderly into her face; then taking her hand, Ruth lifted her eyes to heaven and prayed aloud."—
Page 74.

THE
CHILDREN ON THE PLAINS.

BY
AUNT FRIENDLY,
AUTHOR OF "THE JEWISH TWINS," ETC.

"With whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness?"—2 SAM. xvii. 33.



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MDCCLXIII.

The circumstances wrought into the following story
are true incidents of a real journey in America across
the "Plains."



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THE
CHILDREN ON THE PLAINS.

I.

The Decision.

THE morning light was stealing gently over the "Great Plains," between the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountains.

In the midst of the wide prairie a company of emigrants had pitched their camp. Their white waggons had clustered there, like a flock of huge birds, the evening before, and now in the grey dawn the travellers were already astir. The smoke of their breakfast fires was slowly curling upward, and the only half-rested animals were being harnessed anew to the strong waggons. There was no spirit of cheerfulness and energy abroad in the camp. On all sides there were murmurings and bitter expressions of disappointment.

A few weeks before that same company

started from Ohio full of eagerness and hope. On a May morning they had commenced their overland journey to California, with hearts as bright as the pleasant sunshine around them. Their white waggons were new then, and their horses were strong with the strength that comes from good care and proper food. Now the waggons were brown with the dust of their long journey, the poor beasts were tired out, and the emigrants had lost all their hope and courage.

One after another among them had been stricken with cholera, and they had dotted the road along which they had passed with the fresh graves of their companions.

When fairly on the plains their difficulties had daily increased, and the fatal disease seemed gaining ground among them. That night they had come to a decision. It was but five days since they passed Fort Leavenworth; they would go no further into the wilderness. They would turn back to the States, and exchange their golden dreams of California for hard work once more and a home of tolerable comfort.

There was not a dissenting voice in the whole company when the return was proposed, yet all were dissatisfied,—all were disappointed.

Every face was scowling with discontent, and not a little harsh language rose on the still air of that early morning. We have said every