

# WATCHMAN & OLD NORTH STATE.

NEW SERIES.]

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THEMES—CASES IN ADVANCE.

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[Find the "Round Table"]

MY AGREE.

BY JOHN WALTER COOK.

I had an acre fenced around—  
A little模子 piece of ground  
My father gave me, and I made  
Shift day by day, with plough and spade—  
Working while others danced and played—  
To cultivate my acre.

I sowed my seed—a little store;  
So little, but I had no more;  
"This is not harvested, but my own,"  
I said, "when the hours are flown,  
The harvest will be mine alone."  
The grain reaped on my acre."

Then came the snow, and Winter's cold;  
The stormy winds have caused much;  
For long years—and in that blast,  
That iron cold that hurtled past;  
The stunted trees had thick and fast  
Around my little acre.

But nothing harmed it. Spring time came:  
On every side like yellow flame,  
Bared blossoms; and early buds  
Made pictures in the laughing woods;  
Birds sang, I heard the noise of floods  
Around my smiling acre.

The rich rods by chariot fine,  
Going—why not?—to drink their wine,  
"What have?" I said, "in being gay,  
In laughing the bright hours away?"  
I like that purchase, some day,

When I have reaped my acre!"  
The grain reaped on my acre!"

A blushing girl and boy passed by;  
Two pictures made my smile and sigh!  
I have not time to love," I said.  
But some day I may find a maid;  
Who knows? Perhaps I too may wed,  
And her here on my acre!"

They came good friends with covert smile,  
They leaned upon my fence the while,  
And laughed: "Your land is worthless,  
Friend;  
Long since exhausted! To no end  
Above this barren soil you stand;  
The poor soil of this acre!"

I smiled, and hoped on as before,  
My good friends waited, and said no more;  
Looking upon me with disdain,  
But soon my little field of grain  
Laughed in the flushing summer rain—  
Falling upon my acre.

I reaped—and now my grain is bread;  
I and my household all are fed!  
I have enough; and those who eat  
My bread, degrade it light and sweet—  
My modest bread made of the wheat,  
Cut from my little acre.

Is not ambitious. Few indeed  
Know where to find that costly seed,  
Shakespeare and Dante know—but I?  
Ah well! the year's fit by,  
I cannot find it, and I sigh—  
Telling upon my acre.

I sigh then smile. Why should I pine  
Because my grain is not divine?  
I pass. Who but the higher powers  
Hearns their names to all the hours?  
They speak—the earth is bright with flowers!

I fill with pain, my acre.  
Alas! I am so little! Yet  
Above me, too, the rainbow set  
In Heaven bends. The winds sing clear,  
Clouds float, birds twitter through the year!  
For me, no less, the Spring is here  
Laughing above my acre.

And evermore the sun and rain  
Bring me my little crop of grain.  
Or more or less, as Heaven sends;  
I owe no man—have faithful friends;  
More—none to whom my whole life tends;  
Queen of my royal acre!

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