Ladie's day at the ranch

An account of one family's journey from New York to Kansas. Descriptions of sheep shearing, grasshopper swarms, tornadoes, and prairie fires, are described in the article.

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LADIES' DAY AT THE RANCH.

"To river pastures of his flocks and herds
Admetus rode, where sweet-breathed cattle grazed;
Heifers and goats and kids and foolish sheep
Dotted cool, spacious meadows with bent heads,
And necks' soft wool broken in yellow flakes,
Nibbling, sharp-toothed, the rich, thick-growing blades."

THERE was once a firm. It was in its way quite an ideal firm. Consisting as it did of a Millionaire blissfully indifferent to the manner in which his millions were being spent, a Man of Leisure with nothing to do but to travel, for the best interests of the "concern," between New York and Carneiro, and an Enthusiast who desired nothing but the privilege of doing all the work, I can not see that it lacked any element desirable in firms. For some time the Enthusiast was indulged in his passion for living and laboring at the ranch, for the Millionaire had a yacht, and the Man of Leisure had a family. The prairie was not supposed to be adapted to the yacht, and seemed equally unattractive to people who required schools, libraries, and the opera. But summer came, when school was not, and society palled.

Some of them were too young to be carried to Europe, and others were too old to start for California. Mount Desert was too crowded, and Montclair too lonely. They went to the Adirondacks last year, and were going to the Great Lakes next year. They know all about Newport and Nonquitt, and not enough about Tadousac. Where were they to go?

"Why not go out to the ranch?"

It was, of course, the young gentleman of the family who made the suggestion. He was gazed at.

Was he quite crazy? Did he remember that to live on a ranch meant to do without fish? Had he forgotten that they would be not only twelve miles from a lemon, but a thousand miles from a strawberry? Was he, perhaps, aware that it was hot in Kansas, and that there were undoubtedly mosquitoes? that the never any breeze, though always to wind? and that they would suff an utter dearth of trees and ice, it would not be a place where the wear embroidered white dresses, a the only things of which there w a sufficient supply would be rattle and cyclones? A—— was also su there were no sunflowers, though t erward proved to be a mistake. T which the young gentleman repli idly, "Well, what is the use of ha ranch if you are never going to se

The family reflected. After all, t thusiast had always said that life ranch was not only profitable but d ful. It was barely possible that h be telling the truth. He was pu his honor, and the following fac elicited:

There were no mosquitoes, and sionally it was cool. Sometimes th mometer stood at 100° in the sha would if there were any shade—bu rarer air they would not realize it. would live through the cyclones, an get all about the strawberries. Besi there were melons. They could buy s dle-horses for from thirty to sixty doll apiece, feed them all summer on the pra and sell them in the fall probably a profit. Some of them didn't care mountains, and so they would like it, the rest of them didn't care for the s and so *they* would like it. The sh ing was prime, and there were fifty of sunflowers. Moreover, th new ram, pure Atwood breed, did not consider a mere journ days and three nights worth un for the pleasure of seeing that r it was quite hopeless to think of ing any farther attraction, and th unworthy of possessing even a pe interest in a ranch.

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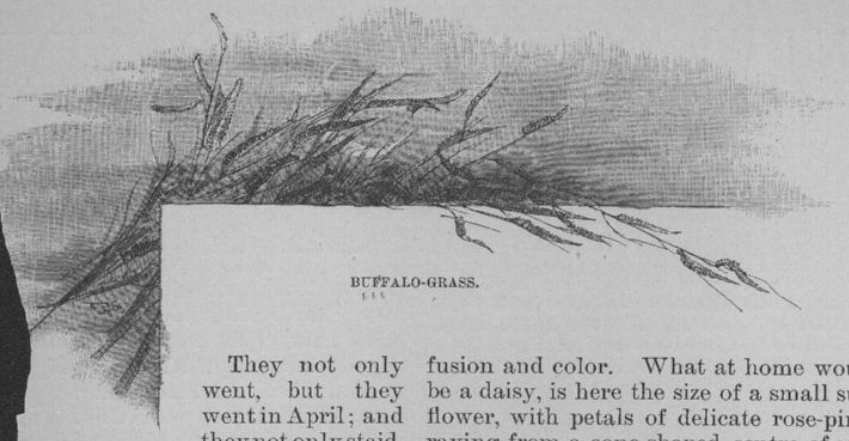

BUFFALO-GRASS.

They not only went, but they went in April; and they not only staid, but they staid till ...ber. If the proof of the pudding is ...eating, it is sufficiently evident that ...life was delightful.

...y as they had arrived, the flowers ...me before them, and the barbaric ...or of the scenes in *Aïda* and *L'Afri-* ...seemed repeated as the glorious ...ma of blossoming prairie unrolled ...ter day. Can you picture to your- ... acres of portulaca? or whole hill- ...urtained with what seems a superb ...of wistaria, except that it grows on ...k instead of hanging from a vine? ...u know how it feels not to be able ... without crushing a flower, so that ...tle prairie-dogs, sitting contentedly ...their intimate friends the owls on ...tle heaps of earth thrown up around ...r holes, have every appearance of hav- ... planted their own front yards with ...e choicest floral varieties? Think of ...iving into a great field of sunflowers, ... horses trampling down the tall stalks, ...t spring up again behind the carriage, so ...t one outside the field would never know ...t a carriage-load of people were any- ...ere in it; or riding through a "grove" ...them, the blossoms towering out of ...h as you sit on horseback, and a tall ...hem grown up as a barrier be- ... and your companion! Not a ...a buttercup, or a clover, or a ..., will you see all summer; but ...ers too exquisite for belief; the ...ite prickly poppies, and the sensi- ...e, with its leaves delicate as a ...-hair fern, and its blossom a count- ...ass of crimson stamens tipped with ...and faintly fragrant. Even famil- ...owers are unfamiliar in size and pro- fusion and color. What at home would be a daisy, is here the size of a small sunflower, with petals of delicate rose-pink, raying from a cone-shaped centre of rich maroon shot with gold. A—— had brought with her numerous packages of seeds and slips, nobly bent on having ribbon flower beds and mosaic *parterres* about the house; but she sat on the steps and threw them broadcast, never knowing, in the profusion of flowers that would have been there anyway, whether hers ever came up or not. And how beautiful were the grasses—the most useful one the most beautiful of all; the delicate little "buffalo-grass," for which the prairie is famous, waving its tiny curled sickle of feathery daintiness as if its beauty were its only excuse for being, yet bravely "curing" itself into dry hay as it stands, when the autumn winds begin to blow, that the happy flocks may "nibble, sharp-toothed, the rich, thick-growing blades" all through the winter, without their being gathered into barns.

They raised their vases too. Bric-à-brac does not flourish in rooms whose doors and windows are open all day long to a Kansas breeze; so, when something was necessary for holding flowers, they would wander out over the prairie with a hammer, pick up a round stone, perhaps the size of a thimble, perhaps as big as a large bowl, crack it open, pour out the fine sand within it, and find a cavity as perfect as if hollowed out with an instrument, and as smooth as if lined with porcelain.

"My mother says that sand is splendid for cleaning knives," observed a small herder one day, watching their operations. Not eliciting any decided enthusiasm, he continued:

"I'm going to Chicago next week! Chicago's an awful big city."

"But not so big as New York, where we live, you know."

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"Oh, I know all about York! it's down by the ocean. I've never seen an ocean, but I've heard one."

"Where?"

"In a shell."

"But we've been across the ocean! 'way over on the other side of it."

"Ho! that ain't nothin'. My mother was *born* over there. In Ireland."

Nor did they miss the flowers after dark; for then the prairie fires lit up the scene with rare magnificence of color. Not the deadly autumn fires, bringing with them, when the grass is dry, fear and desolation, but the fires set purposely in safe places in the spring, that the young grass may come up greener. There is nothing terrible in the sight; there are no falling buildings, and you hear no hissing, crackling flames. The low grass burns so quietly and steadily that the effect is simply that of great lighted cities in the distance.

"I suppose some of those fires must be in the next county," remarked A—— one evening.

"All our own fires on our own property, I can assure you," answered the proud Enthusiast.

It was long before they could accustom themselves to this magnificent scale of things; to realizing that they were living on ten thousand acres of their own; to the thought of caring for ten thousand sheep; to driving all the afternoon on their own "lawn," and making excursions for the day on their own property. Once, when they had ridden late and far, and had quite lost their way, they stopped at one of the adobe huts—wonderfully picturesque with flowers blossoming on the roof, and near by the "Kansas stable," with its one horse only sheltered as to its head—to ask their way. "And what property are we on now?" asked Admetus.

"The Monte Carneiro Ranch, sir."

"Thank you; good-day!" and Admetus rode on, to hide his smile at having to be told that he was on his own land. The sense of ownership was not slow to develop, however, and even the Baby became so imbued with the size of the ranch as to say sometimes, when they were driving fifteen or twenty miles from home, "Papa, I suppose you'll be cutting this grass pretty soon?"

In the middle of the summer came Colonel Higginson's article in the *Harper* on the Indian hieroglyphics, with illustrations to prove the similarity between the famous Dighton rock and many found at the West.

"They say that there are Indian hieroglyphics on our rocks at the Cave," remarked the Enthusiast, carelessly.

"Why *haven't* you told us before?"

"Because my enthusiasm is limited to sheep; but you can investigate, if you like."

Whereupon an imperative order was sent to the stable for "ponies for six, *immediately* after luncheon."

Many and many a time they had been to the Cave, which was quite the *pièce de résistance* of their excursions. It was no mere cavern in the side of a hill, but a cave so high that they could ride into it, with

KANSAS DAISIES.

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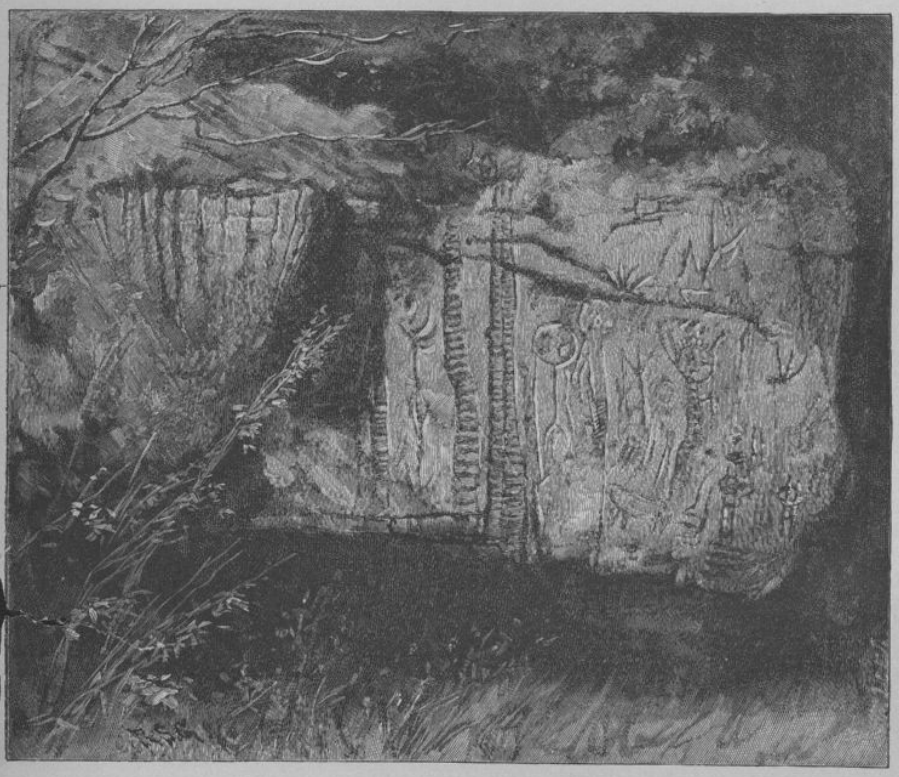
two entrances on different sides, and a charming little oriel-window shaded by trees. Curiously enough, they had never happened to dismount and explore the opposite exit, but it was on the outer wall just beyond this that the hieroglyphics were said to be.



INDIAN PICTURE WRITING OUTSIDE OF THE CAVE.

Truly it was a strange sensation, in that lonely spot, as they came out of the second entrance and crept carefully along the steep bluff overgrown with underbrush, to look up at the natural wall of rock towering above them, and see, clearly outlined on the space where it must have been singularly difficult to work at all, the crude and curious efforts of Indian drawing, and the full-length, life-size figure of a recumbent Indian chief.

There were many resources besides the never-failing ponies: hammocks and piazzas, lawn tennis, a piano, and a billiard-room. Of the ladies, one was musical, and gave them long evenings of delicious restfulness; one was artistic, and preserved for them in the amber of her brush the delicate hue and fragile texture of the flowers that else they could have carried away with them only in memory; and one was literary, and kept them in the latest books and freshest magazines from New York; while one was a "reserve fund," drawn upon in every emergency. Then, for culture, there was the Professor, the genial, absorbed Professor, filling even the least scientific with something of his own enthusiasm for the splendid fossils of the region, the superb impressions of leaves, and the fossil shells picked up two thousand miles from either ocean. Who of them will ever forget the day when the first and only nautilus was found, just as they had decided that there were only clam shells; or the finding of the shark's tooth?

For those who sought in nature "no

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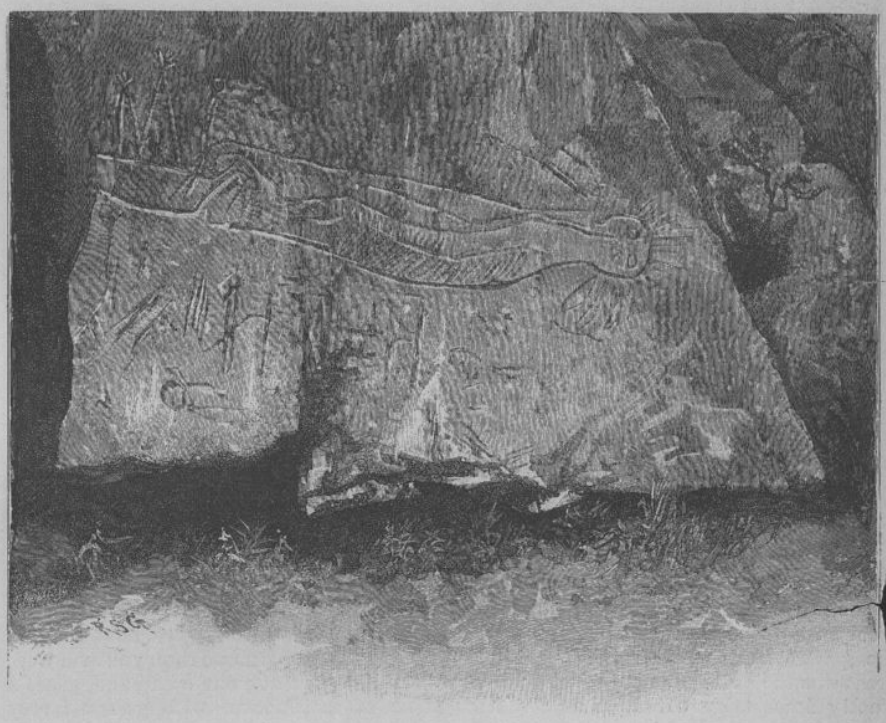
charm unborrowed from the eye," there was fun enough in collecting the "freaks," the queer shapes into which accident had moulded the soft rock—shoes, boots, stock-

To see the sheep go in and out, night and morning, was a never-failing amusement. Sometimes the ladies wandered down to the corrals at sunset to see the



INDIAN PICTURE WRITING OUTSIDE OF THE CAVE.

ings, match-safes, and trinkets. Once a perfect sheep's head, even to the eyes, was picked up, like a curious bass-relief, not twenty feet from the front door.

By this time I can conceive of the gentle reader's saying, "I thought it was a sheep ranch?" in the tone of voice employed by Miss Betsy Trotwood when she asked, "Why do you call it a *Rookery*? I don't see any rooks." Sheep there were, indeed; thousands of them, objects of unfailing concern to the gentlemen and delight to the ladies.

"What is that stone wall?" asked, one afternoon, a lady sitting on the piazza with her opera-glass.

"That stone wall, madam," answered a Harvard graduate, politely, "is the sheep coming in to the corral."

herds come in, and you would have supposed them to be waiting for a Fourth-of-July procession with banners, from the eagerness with which they exclaimed, "Oh, here they come! there they are!" as the first faint tinkling of the bells was heard in the distance. If two herds appeared at once from opposite directions, the one with lambs had the "right of way," and Sly, the sheep-dog—not the only commander who has controlled troops by sitting down in front of them—would hold the other herd in check till the lambs were safely housed. The lambs born on the prairie during the day frisked back at night to the corral beside their mothers, a lamb four hours old being able to walk a mile.

When shearing-time came, they went

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"COLUMBUS."

to the sheds expecting to see the thick wool fall in locks beneath the shears, like the golden curls of their own darlings: great was the amazement to see the whole woolly fleece taken off much as if it had been an overcoat, looking still, if it were rolled up in a ball, like a veritable sheep, and often quite as large as the shorn and diminished creature that had once been part of it. One very hot day they braved the heat themselves for the sake of going out on the prairie to see how sheep keep cool. Instead of scattering along the creek, seeking singly the shade of the bushes or the tall trees only to be found near the creek, they huddle together in the middle of the sunny field more closely than ever, hang their heads in the shadow of each other's bodies, and remain motionless for hours. Not a single head is to be seen as you approach the herd; only a broad level field of woolly backs, supported by a small forest of little legs.

"Like a banyan-tree," remarked Admetus.

A large part of the satisfaction of these simple pleasures was the charm of finding that they could be happy with such simple pleasures. To discover that you can not only live without the opera, but that you are really better amused than you ever were with the opera at your command, gives a sense of satisfaction with yourself very potent in the element of content. Yet they were not without their social excitements and their adventures. One Harvard graduate attracts another, and within a radius of thirty miles quite a colony of personal friends has formed itself, whose gatherings for little dinners or dances, tennis or whist, are most enjoyable. A hundred guests were entertained at Monte Carneiro alone "in the season"; ranch friends from all over the county, Eastern friends "stopping over" on their way to Colorado, or California, or Japan, and some who had learned even then that to "see the ranch" was really quite worth the trouble of two days and three nights in a Pullman car.

They thought little of driving or riding fifteen miles to a "neighbor's" for luncheon—always provided, however, that they knew the way. To find the way for yourself to a new ranch across the prairie, or to drive anywhere after dark, is a feat only attempted by the unwary. "Love will

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find out a way" through bolts and bars and parental interdiction; but Love itself would be baffled on the prairie, where the whole universe stretches in endless invitation, and where there is absolutely "nothing to hinder" from going in any direction that you please. "Foller a kind of a blind trail, one mile east and two mile south," is the kind of direction usually given in the vernacular; and so closely does one cultivate the powers of observation in a country where a bush may be a feature of the landscape, and a tall sunflower a landmark, that I am tempted to copy *verbatim* the written directions sent by a friend by which we were to find our way to her hospitable home:

"Cross the river at the Howards'; turn to the right, and follow a dim trail till you come to the ploughed ground, which you follow to the top of the hill. Follow the road on the west side of a corn field, and then a dim trail across the prairie to a wire fence. After you leave the wire fence, go up a little hill and down a little hill, then up another till you reach a road leading to the right, which angles across a section and leads into a road going south to Dr. Read's frame house with a wall of sod about it. Through his door-yard, and then through some corn. Leave the road after driving through the corn, and angle to the right to the corner of another corn field. Take the road to the west of this

ENTRANCE TO THE CAVE.

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A KANSAS HOUSE.

corn, and go south, up a hill, then turn to the right and follow a *plain* road west; afterward south, past Mr. Dever's homestead, a frame house on the right with a stone house unroofed. South, past a corn field and ploughed land on the right. The road turns to the right, toward the west, for a little way, then south, then a short distance east, and you reach the guide-post, which is near a thrifty-looking farm owned by Mr. Bryant; a frame house, corn field, wheat stacks, and melon patch. At the guide-post take the road going south, with corn field on the right, till you come to two roads. Follow the right-hand road (a dim trail at first) down the hill, past some hay-stacks, to the Osage-orange hedge. Follow that to the creek crossing, then through the grove of sunflowers to a sod house. Go through the corn directly west, following the creek to the crossing near our house."

The distance was sixteen miles, but we took the letter with us, and found the way without the slightest difficulty, though a little puzzled at first by finding that "at the Howards'" meant anywhere within three miles of the Howards'.

As for adventures, some of them were thrilling. First, there was the rattlesnake under the piazza, its presence announced by the innocent Baby, who complained of it as disturbing his play, and "*whistlin' wid its tail.*" Then Admetus lost his way upon the prairie after dark,

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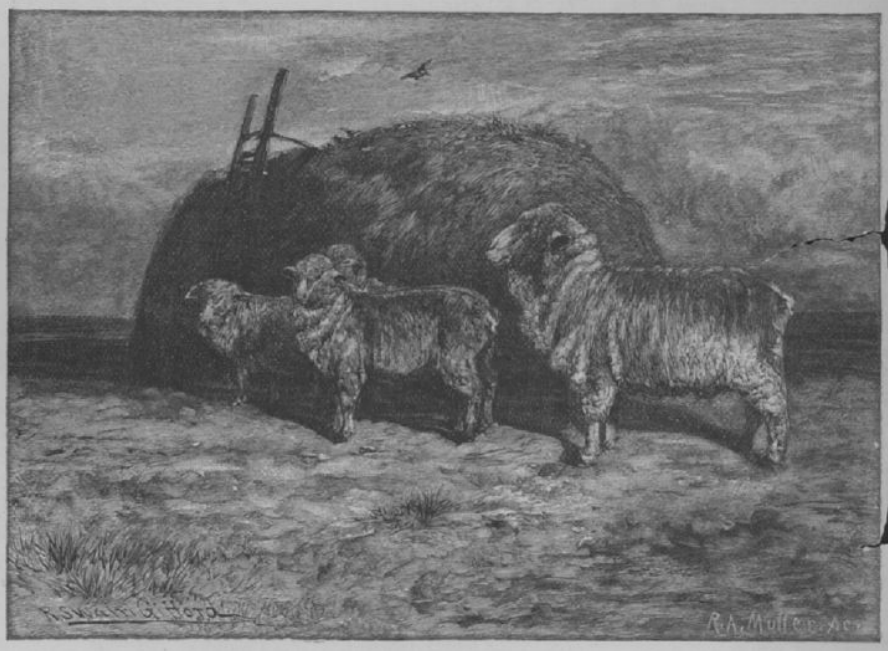
and after two or three hours of riding in a circle, found on hastening to a friendly lighted window for information that by accident he had ridden up to his own front door. The Enthusiast had once ridden seven miles with his wife to make an afternoon call, only to find on their return that the creek had risen mysteriously so that it would be impossible to cross. A herd of sheep with the herder and a friend were waiting quietly at the same spot, within five minutes' walk of the house, *if they could only cross.* "You stay with the sheep," said E——, to his friend, "and C—— and I will ride down to find a better crossing." *They rode five miles,* and of course by the time they had retraced the five on the other bank it was too dark for their friend to attempt the same course. There was nothing to do but camp out for the night, with the bright windows of home shining just across the creek. Ropes were thrown over, supper and blankets slung across to the sufferers, and in the morning the creek had fallen again.

Then there were the grasshoppers. If you are quite sure that they are not intending to "'light," a flight of grasshoppers is a beautiful thing to see. All day they floated over us; millions upon millions upon millions of airy little creatures, with their white gauzy wings spread to the light, mounting steadily toward the sun, as it seemed. It was like a snow-storm in sunshine, if you can picture such a thing, with the flakes rising instead of falling.

The most terrible experience came with the least warning. It had been a lovely day, and the ladies were dressing for a tea at Elk Horn Ranch, four miles away, when some one exclaimed, "What a curious cloud!"

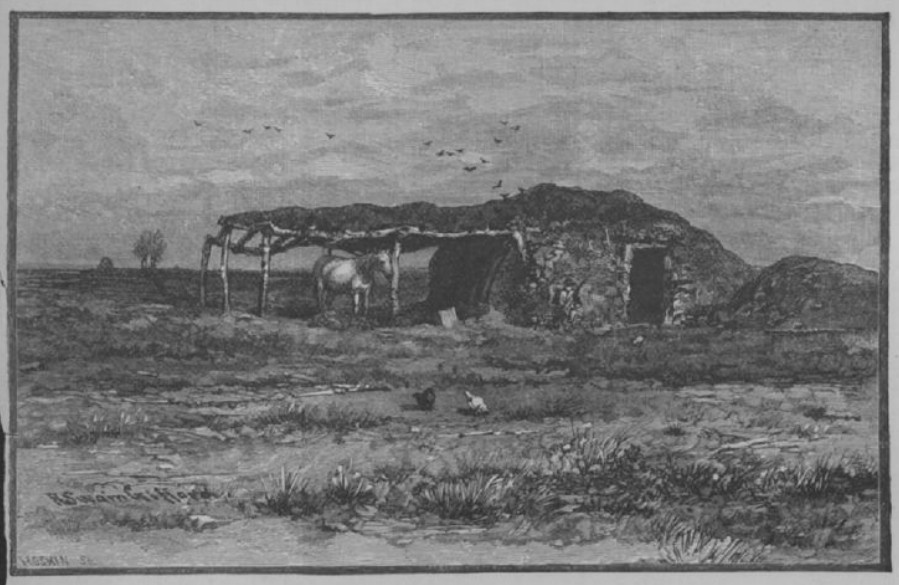
A perfectly cylindrical cloud, seemingly not more than two feet in diameter, reached perpendicularly from the sky to the earth. The ladies grew a little anxious, as it did not change its aspect, but the Enthusiast, who had lived through one cyclone, and knew the signs, said, carelessly, as he sauntered up the avenue:

"Oh, you need not fear anything in that



OLD EWE AND LAMBS.

Ladie's day at the ranch



A KANSAS BARN.

shape!—that is only a rain-cloud; no wind in that. A cyclone is spiral; very wide at the top, and tapering down to a mere point, as if it were boring into the earth. It's a horrid thing to see."

As he spoke, the cloud in question, as if mocking his depreciation of its power, began assuming the very shape described.

"It *is* a cyclone!" he said, quietly, but with whitening cheek. "You had better get your things. It is twenty-five miles away, but if the wind should change, it would be upon us in five minutes."

He shouted to the men at the corrals. Those who were busy in the wool-house came to the door, glanced at the sky, but went quietly back again. As one of them expressed it later, "If it was a-comin', I don't believe the spring-house would save us, and if it wasn't comin', we might as well finish the work."

The "things" which they were to secure received the usual foolish interpretations. A—— ran for a shawl to wrap Baby in, before she secured Baby himself; F—— ran to her chamber for a pocket-book with a precious fifty cents in it; some one wondered if she would not have time to change her boots, it was such a pity to wet her new ones running through the grass, for the rain was now falling heavily. The Enthusiast himself put on his best coat, laid out for the "tea," and insisted that his wife should add to her incomplete toilet the touches of lace and jewels. "Why, my dear, you may never see your things again," was his explanation; but whether he hoped to rescue the things that were put on, or whether he was anxious for the family to be found beautifully dressed in case they were buried beneath the ruins, was not at all clear.

It had been previously arranged that in case of cyclone they were to run to the spring-house. To the feminine mind the cellar presented greater attractions; but the very strength and size of the great stone house would make it a terrible mass of ruins if it were blown over, and if it came in the path of the cyclone, its walls would be but a shaving before it. The small spring-house was built into a hill, and it was confidently hoped that cyclones would blow over it, instead of blowing it over.

A marked precursor of a cyclone is the appearance of the sky. It is not darkly terrible; it may even be of a clear and perfect blue, and the clouds may be dazzlingly white; but they shape themselves into immense cobble-stones, till the heavens look like an inverted pavement; what adds to the strangeness of this appearance is the apparent weight of the distinct, oval,

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egg-shaped clouds; it is impossible to conceive of them as ever dissipating in gentle rain, or even hail; if they fall, you feel that each one will fall heavily, crushing with terrible cruelty everything beneath it.

For an hour they watched and waited. Then the water-spout began to fade, and the cobble-stones disappeared. The horses were ordered, and the ladies finished their toilets, while the Baby was heard to murmur, in a tone of disappointment, "Papa, you *said* you were going to take me to the spring-house."

And at last they saw a genuine prairie fire.

"What are your precautions against fire?" Admetus had asked a few days before.

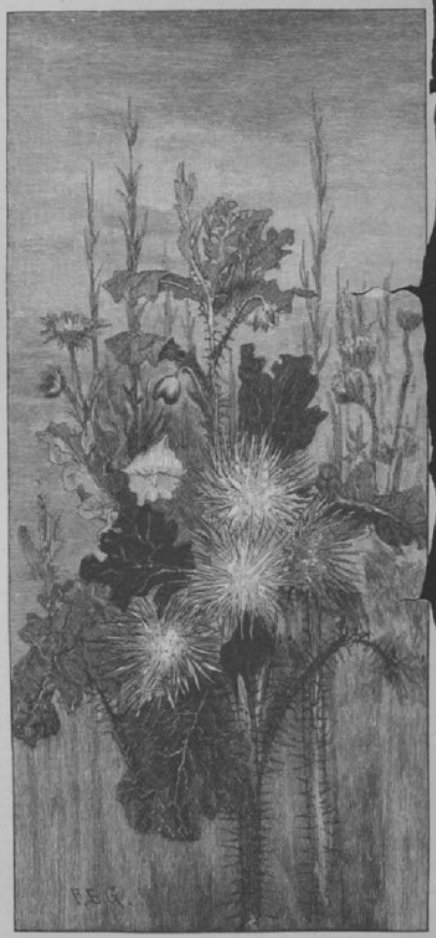
"Such as will delight your homœopathic soul," answered the Enthusiast. "A can of kerosene and a bundle of matches to set back fires with, though the fire-guards of ploughed ground that you have seen all round the ranch are the ounce of prevention, better than any cure. Then we always keep a hogshead full of water at the stable, ready for carting to the spot."

"A hogshead of water! What good can a hogshead of water do against a prairie fire?"

"Oh, we don't put it on with a hose, I assure you. My imagination gasps at the conception of managing a prairie fire with a hose. We dip old blankets and old clothes in it, or boughs of trees if we can get them, and beat the fire down with them."

The illustration followed soon. All day smoke had been drifting over Carneiro, and at night-fall the scouts reported that the whole force had better be put on. The "whole force" at the moment consisted of about twenty men who had just come in to supper, and who started at once in wagons and on horseback. Ponies were ordered after dinner for the entire household, even the ladies riding far enough to have a view of the exciting scene. There were no tumbling walls or blazing buildings, and there was no fear of lives being lost in upper stories; but there were miles upon miles, acres upon acres, of low grass burning like a sea of fire, while in the twilight shadows could be seen men galloping fiercely on swift ponies, while the slow wagons crept painfully, lest the precious water should be spilled, from every homestead, each with its one pitiful hogshead. It seemed incredible that such a mass of flame could ever be put out by such a handful of workers; and it was only, indeed, by each man's laboring steadily at his own arc of the great circle, trusting blindly that others were at work on the other side, as of course they always were, that the lurid scene darkened down at last.

As the season advanced, interest in the great crops almost overshadowed that in the "stock." The wild flowers had faded away, and no wonder, poor things! In their innocent joy at being admired—for none but sheep-men had ever visited the ranch before the ladies came, and what sheep-man ever stopped to look at a flower?—they had crowded close up to the



KANSAS THISTLE.

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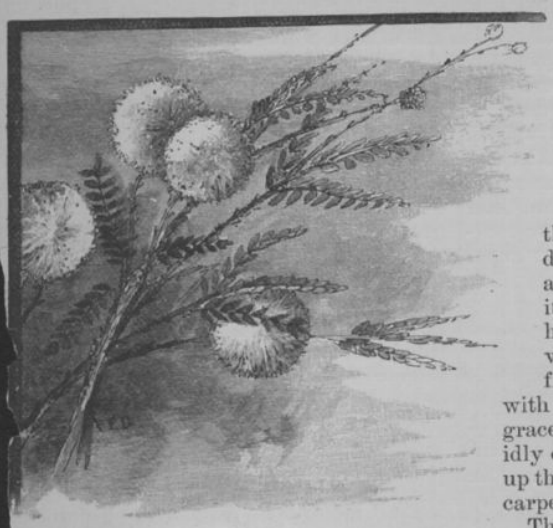

SENSITIVE ROSE.

front door, and sprung up under the very horses' feet, vying with each other for the honor of being worn at a lady's belt, or painted on a panel, or pressed in a herbarium to be sent to the cultured East, or chosen to adorn an æsthetic parlor. But they had had quite enough of it, and had grown shy and sensitive. We can not believe that they will ever bloom at Carneiro in just such profusion again. They have crept away to more deserted places, and mayhap the day will come when they will only bloom for us in stately greenhouses, at a cost that shall insure for their loveliness respect as well as admiration.

But we hardly missed them, as the great grain fields took their places, and covered the land with the green shimmering of corn, the pale yellow of the wheat, the golden russet of rye, the stately rows of sorghum, like glorified cat-o'-nine-tails, the great pearly clusters of the rice-corn bending with their weight of rich loveliness, and, most beautiful of all, the golden millet. You do not know what millet is? Ah, no! but then you do not know what Kansas is. You do not know what it is to own a winding creek that would be worth its weight in gold to the commissioners of Central Park if they could buy it. You do not know what it is to have your landscape gardening done for you without a gardener.

And as the harvests were gathered in, the great labor-saving machines were as good as a circus: the "header," leaving all the stubble standing in the field, cutting off only the heads of the grain, which then walked solemnly up an inclined plane only to throw themselves from the top in despair into the wagon that rolled alongside; the "thresher," with its circular treadmill for a dozen horses, with their master on a revolving platform in the centre, from which he controlled them with his long-lashed whip; and the graceful "go-devil" rake, travelling idly over the hay fields and gathering up the hay with all the ease of a lady's carpet-sweeper.

This was the true glory of the year. At the East, people were hurrying back from the sea-shore or mountains; for them the summer was over and the harvest ended; but for us it had just begun. Some of us took the wonderful trip to Colorado—for we were only twelve hours from Denver—and some of us took to shooting prairie-chicken; but all of us were out-of-doors every day and all day long. Now began the season of the famous little duck suppers, when six or eight of us would start for a friend's ranch to spend the night, taking the precaution to eat our duck that night for fear the gentlemen *wouldn't* shoot any the next morning, but returning the next day laden with the spoils of the victors, shot in the cool gray of the misty dawn. Now it was that the Enthusiast discovered a method of rousing his rebellious comrades to the early breakfast that he himself affected: stationing himself in the billiard-room, he had only to shout, "Gentlemen, nineteen duck in the pond!" and in five minutes every man of the household, from the geological professor and the elegant young man from Chicago down to the boy who was "going to have" a gun next year, could be seen rushing down the hill in habiliments that brought back to these graduates of Harvard reminiscences of an early call to prayers.

And then it was in October that the Griffin came.

"Why, he's nothing but a gentleman!" exclaimed the Baby, who had insisted on

Ladie's day at the ranch

going to the station, with many inquiries as to whether the expected arrival, which he took to be a flock of some rare kind of lambs, would be conveyed to the house "on legs or in wagons?"

I feel called upon to chronicle the noble zeal with which the Griffin immediately attacked his official duties. He did, indeed, wait a few moments to assuage the pangs of hunger with coffee and beefsteak; but almost immediately he remarked that it was a glorious day for sketching, and he must not lose such an opportunity. The ladies who put up the luncheon noticed that several gentlemen who had never been addicted to brush or pencil proposed to join this sketching expedition, and that the sketching materials seemed to consist largely of guns and cartridges; but the "studies" of prairie-chicken, duck, plover, and quail, "taken from life," which they brought back with them, made so valuable an addition to the next evening's dinner that no explanation was required, and no complaint made of a day of prolonged feminine solitude.

And the landscape only grew lovelier. The flowers had faded, and the great grain fields had been swept away; but the wild beautiful prairie, taking on the tawny coloring dear to the artist, with here and there a broad belt or mantle of the brilliant low red sumac, grew ever dearer. For the first time in my life I understood Emily Brontë's passion for her desolate brown moors. There is rare charm in a sense of isolation that you do not feel to be loneliness. And for the very reason that the undulating prairie offers so few salient points, the picture appeals to the eye and lingers in the mind more effectively than many a more impressive scene. The "values" count; every stroke "tells."

The identity of interests between master and men is a pleasant feature of ranch life. Occasionally, of course, there will be a disaffected laborer, who may even work up matters to a concentrated "strike"; but as a rule the men are happy and contented, proud of the ranch, and devoted to its success. They have their own cook at their own "quarters," from which, in the evening, come cheerful strains of Moody and Sankey or of native jollity, the chorus being not unfrequently,

"Oh, I'm a jolly herder,
I want you for to know!
I herd the sheep for Wellington—
For Wellington and Co."

When we asked a man who was putting "bunks" into a small house for some of the men to sleep in why he hadn't taken a larger one opposite, he replied, dryly:

"Oh, this one ain't near nice enough for the hens; so *we* took it. The hens are to have the other one."

There is something very enjoyable in the consciousness not only of controlling the movements of forty or fifty men, but of caring for all their interests, mental, physical, and moral. The men with families have separate houses, and to supply them with literature, see that their groceries are good, cure their sick children and in fact administer everything they need, from advice to flannel, is not only an intense moral satisfaction to the ladi of the household with a taste for bene lence, but a source of much entertain ment. Think, O *blasé* philanthropists, of getting up a Christmas tree for childre who never saw one! A—— regarded a one of her pleasantest experiences of th summer the opportunity afforded her t make converts to homœopathy.

"You are as proud of having cure that child," remarked the Enthusiast, on day, "as if your little sugar pills had re ally done it some good."

"Oh no," said the lady, "I'm not proud of having cured it; I'm thankful for not having killed it. What is it, James?" as a new applicant presented himself.

"If you please, marm, I'd like some more medicine; the baby's almost well."

The delighted homœopathist, on the alert for "symptoms," proposed to change the prescription.

"Oh no, marm; I wouldn't make no change if I was you. Them other little pills was just boss."

Some of us, how-

KANSAS MILLET.

responsible Kansas se car windo frame of mind bor on exaspe at the maddening slowness of a t f cars conscious of being a monopoly dragging its slow length along thr a country so horribly level that you f as if it would be some relief to spring our feet and recite "Excelsior." N you must leave the cars and the railr and the dismal little railroad towns, a ind your way to the big ranches where l and work are one long holiday. Should u choose Monte Carneiro, the Enthu st will show you his corrals, and drive u round his corn fields; you can shoot ur own quail for dinner, have a gam f tennis and a *siesta* in the hammoc after luncheon, and a game of billiar after dinner; then, as the little maid bri s in the tray of tea, you can saunter in a parlor with great broad windows, fu of rugs and *portières* and screens of K nsington embroidery, and the lady who p urs your tea will afterward sing for u Schubert's "Serenade," or "I know hat my Redeemer liveth." This is not the popular conception of ranch life; nor is it, I confess, the common mode of ranch life. Too many young ranchmen, eager to put all their capital into stock, think they can "manage" to live "any way" for a few years, and remain too long contented with ham and bacon in a "dugout"; but the little knot of friends who have gathered about Ellsworth believe that to make their homes not only comfortable but luxurious, to live not only de-

considers windows.

Then, as your host steps za to haul down the America only method of locking up for the you will catch a glimpse of the sh lights of a train on the Union Pa pleasantly suggestive of a post-office, two mails from the east and two from west every day, a railroad station telegraph office, within two miles. I moonlight you can see the stablemen fully housing for the night the choic sey and Swiss cattle; for our firm i too recently from New York to its faith in blood and pedigree has it been seriously affected by ern passion for numbers rathe quality, for so many "head" r so many "registered." Ten sheep and five hundred cattl have, of course; but the Enth upon "pure Atwoods," while aire and the Man of Leisure to belong to any firm that d ate "registered" Jerseys.

When at last you see lake bedroom, it will b intention of leaving for earliest morning train; that you may gather toget and Penates to return to as possible, that you too early settler before it is

AT END.

AT end of Love, at end of Life,
At end of Hope, at end of Strife,
At end of all we cling to so,
setting—must we go?

At dawn of Love,
At dawn of Peace t
At dawn of all we
The sun is rising—