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LIFE IN A SODHOUSE.

Not So Pleasant as It Might Be, Especially for the Housewife.

On a new farm in western Nebraska the house is a very inconspicuous object. The eye wanders over immense grain fields, perhaps a large timber claim of box elders and cottonwoods, a garden, a roomy stock yard, and the sod rooms of many sheds for poultry, stock, and machinery; but except for a wreath of smoke or the chance reflection of a window pane, the dwelling would be overlooked.

It is often of the half-dugout half-sod-house order of architecture, the back part hollowed out of the side of a low hill, and the front of the squares of sod, merely placed together and all upheld by a slight frame of wood, with a door and one or two window casings, and perhaps a few rafters overhead. It is very small and low and serves the simple purpose of shelter. There is a possibility even of its failure in this, and the trap door aslant at one side of the house proclaims the cyclone cave—ordinarily the receptacle for milk and butter.

Life in one of these prairie dwellings is certainly getting close to nature and the primitive; closer, perhaps, than the Arab tribes of the desert, who, on the whole, observe more laws, religious and secular, and have less solitude and social deprivation. To realize this, one has only to fancy a man and wife in a sod-house fifteen miles from the nearest village, in one of the sparsely settled districts of western Nebraska. For days, and in some seasons for weeks, they see no human beings outside of their own household. Even begging Indians and tramps are almost unknown in this country. Prairie dogs cast up their mounds and found towns in the unmoisted spots about the place; gophers and field mice burrow through the sod walls of the house; not infrequently snakes swing themselves down from the rafters inside, or crawl in at the door to get at any milk pails standing about. At night coyotes and some of the gray wolves come up through the canon and skulk about the poultry yard or howl close to the windows. Through the day, while the man is in the fields, the herding usually falls to the woman's lot. Probably each takes a noon lunch in a paper, to save coming back to the house until night.

The woman attends to her necessary household duties, throws a gunny sack over her bronco's back, jumps astride, rounds up the cattle, and drives them down the canon to graze on the steep sides, or in low strip beside a creek. Canons are not suitable places; one can scarcely have a conception of the primitive unless he has seen a kid through a canon. He thinks of a canyon of elevation, of the mass of extinct mammoths, and wonders if conditions may not merely retired into the area of savanahs. What the sodhouse woman thinks about all day long in solitude, it is hard to tell—the mortgage on the farm, diseases among the stock, the prospects of the crops, the time when they can put up their frame dwellings, the hard, unadorned facts in the treadmill of her life; she makes new plans for the work, work, which is her sole law of existence. Perhaps she has memories of another time, other surroundings, but they must seem vague and far away. Even the weather is monotonous; there is practically always the cloudless sky, the brilliant sun, the strong, dry wind, that curls the leaves of the young corn and turns the buffalo grass brown.

Women, and men, too, become withered and prematurely old. Hair and skin take on the general tint of things about them. Their teeth drop out without a thought of replacing them. And there comes a certain feverish look in their eyes—a look of intensified expectation, a straining into the future. They lose all thought of appearance; they mean vanity rather than self-respect to them. Such a life must have its inevitable mental and moral effect. All the sensitive, the aesthetic, sometimes the moral sense itself, becomes atrophied. The tragedies of a city are unearthed and brought to light, but the silent tragedies of these desolate lives are swallowed up and lost in the remoteness and immensity of the prairie wastes.

It is a motley assortment of humanity that takes the claims and homesteads on the opening up of the country like this. Ex-cowboys, who have come to admit the claims of a single wife and family, continued pioneers who move with the advance of railroads, people of refinement and reverses of fortune, many Russians and German immigrants, and a sprinkling of all the other nations of the earth. After the first rush a sifting process sets in which soon separates them into three classes: Those who stay through everything and make the prosperity of the country, the non-progressive, who never get beyond the original sodhouse, and the shifting transients who move at a sign of trouble and come back in a time of prosperity.

There is, however, no sifting social process during these first years. The sodhouse levels all ranks, and at the rare intervals when any of the people are brought together socially it is on terms of perfect equality, they simply take one another for granted, with no questions of antecedents, family history, or social advantages. They are people who are starting life anew and living on hopes of the future, with forgetfulness of the past and endurance of the present.

A woman's lot is harder; she misses more things in such a life than a man does. If she is strong enough, mentally and physically, to endure it until they come into better things, she lives out her allotted time unpraised and unrewarded of this world. If she has a mental bias toward the morbid or melancholy, she is in danger of adding one to the list of the women in the hospital for the insane at Lincoln.

The real pioneers, who survive everything, in the end have comfortable homes and have created some advantages for their children. They have lived in the sodhouse until the year of a good crop and few household necessities to be bought, and have had the small, bare, frame cottage built. The next season, if good fortune continue, a porch and an "L" are added, and in a few years it is enlarged and comfortably fitted up. Often the old sodhouse is left standing near the new one for some purpose, or sometimes as a matter of sentiment.—Chicago Times.

THE CURSE OF THE ROMANOFFS.

Baron von Humboldt's Prophecy Regarding Nicholas of Russia.

James Russell Lowell used to tell this story to intimate friends, says the Washington Post. It was told him by John Lothrop Motley.

"In 1863, just before the Crimean war commenced, the venerable Baron von Humboldt came to London on a very important confidential mission. He called upon Lord Palmerston and said: 'I know a war is imminent between England and her allies on the one hand and Russia. If you will temporize, make diplomatic delays, do anything to gain time for a year or two, there will not need to be a war.' Why? Palmerston asked. 'Because Nicholas of Russia will die within two years. The fatal curse of the Romanoffs is on him. Do you not know that a great seeress told Peter the Great that no male member of the Romanoffs would ever live to see his 65th year?' But Nicholas is not yet 50," Palmerston answered. 'I wish to save an immense flow of human blood,' said old Humboldt, solemnly. 'I know that the czar will die within two years.' Lord Palmerston was greatly impressed with Baron Humboldt's statements. But he could not hold his own head then. France, in view of Louis Napoleon's ready recognition by Palmerston, and all Europe followed his lead, was then ready to take the field. So the Crimean war had to go on. But Nicholas of Russia died within four months of the two years' limit given him by Von Humboldt."

Leaving the prophecy of the question, it is a fancy of history that the Russian czars have all died before 65. Alexander III's grandfather, the half insane Czar Paul and the four heads of the Romanoffs before Nicholas all died before 50, and of the same disease that has been so deadly to Alexander III, Alexander I, at one time Napoleon's great ally, then his enemy, who so aided in the downfall of the French empire, died when he was 48 of "monomania, bordering on insanity," says history. Metetrnich, the great Austrian premier of that date, bluntly declares he was insane. The Grand Duke Constantine, who was really entitled to the Russian throne, waived his right in favor of Alexander I. He had sense enough to be aware that he was not mentally fit to rule such an empire as Russia. He died in his 52d year of what would now be called cerebro-spinal meningitis. The Grand Duke Michael was killed in his 48th year by a fall from his horse while in a fit. He had shown signs of madness so often that it was a question whether it was safe for him to be at large. So goes the long but never-changing record of the Romanoffs for two centuries.

Alexander III was personally a most kindly man and remarkably free from the grosser vices. He drank a little red wine sometimes but no strong liquors and he abhorred drunkenness, as did his father before him.

BOOKKEEPING IN BANKS.

New York Cashier Says that a Perfect System Has Never Been Discovered.

The cashier of a prominent up-town bank said yesterday that such a thing as a perfect system of bookkeeping had never been devised, says the N. Y. Sun, and probably never would be. "When you think of it," he said, "bookkeeping is simply a question of mental ingenuity. What one brain can devise in the way of safeguards another brain can usually undo, speaking in a general way. The daily papers in condemning the banks because of the moderate salaries paid to bookkeepers overlook a very important fact. The banks pay the market rates to expert bookkeepers, which are anywhere from \$1,800 to \$2,200 a year. An almost unlimited number of men can be obtained at these figures, and paying more money would not make the banks a bit safer. For the simple reason that men of strong mental powers, great business capacity and unswerving integrity are not, as a rule, content to be mechanical bookkeepers in large institutions. I do not, of course, mean to disparage bookkeepers in any way. The point is that the men who make good bookkeepers are unimaginative, reliable and steady-going persons, who are not influenced by great ambition, and who do not aspire to lofty places.

It is not required of a bookkeeper that he shall have very high mental qualifications, as bookkeeping is now conducted in our big institutions. Each man has a stipulated amount of work of a stereotyped nature to do. He has, of course, enough ingenuity to swindle, if he chooses to do so. Anybody who believes that a perfect system of bookkeeping can be devised must also believe that it would be impossible to counterfeit money. The Bank of England has been held up as a marvel for many years, and yet it is no secret that that institution was swindled in the most complete manner for many years before it was found out. The most important and conservative commercial and financial institutions in this city and London have lost money through their employees, and the Credit Lyonnais, in France, where bookkeeping is said to have been carried to the very highest point of safety, was completely upset by a number of clerks two years ago, who had no difficulty whatever in hoodwinking the experts and pocketing the bank's money.

A Marking in Longfellow.

Twelve months ago tonight her wasted hand, Made steady by the impulse of her spirit, Marked this sweet song that I might understand. In after years, as fancy led me near it: "There is no flock, however watched and tended, But one dead lamb is there! There is no fortress, however defended, But has one vacant chair!" I rest the book against my brimming eyes, While memory with eagerest persistence Draws back the stary curtain of the skies, And leads an angel to me down the distance. "Let me be patient! these severe afflictions Not from the ground arise, But oftentimes celestial benedictions Assume this dark disguise." They told me she was dead. They did not know— For, every evening as the twilight closes, I hear her voice and see her bending form Beside the window, where I keep her room. "There is no death! what seems so is a transition: This life of mortal breath Is but a suburb of the life elysian, Whose portal we call death."—James Newton Matthews in Indianapolis Journal.

MYSTERIES!

The Nervous System the Seat of Life and Mind. Recent Wonderful Discoveries.



No mystery has ever compared with that of human life. It has been the leading subject of professional research and study in all ages. But notwithstanding this fact it is not generally known that the seat of life is located in the upper part of the spinal cord, and so sensitive is this nervous system that even the prick of a needle will cause instant death. Recent discoveries have demonstrated that all the organs of the body are under the control of the nerve centers located in or near the base of the brain, and that when these are deranged the organs which they supply with nerve fluid are also deranged. When it is remembered that a serious injury to the spinal members will cause paralysis of the body below and will cause paralysis of the body above, it will be understood how the derangement of the nerve centers will cause the derangement of the various organs which they supply with nerve force. Two-thirds of chronic diseases are due to the imperfect action of the nerve centers at the base of the brain, and that a derangement of the base of the brain, not from a disease itself, but from a derangement of the nerve centers, is the cause of the trouble. Dr. FRANKLIN MILLS, the celebrated specialist, has profoundly studied this subject for over 30 years, and has made many important discoveries in connection with it, chief among them being the facts contained in the following statement, and that the ordinary methods of treatment are wrong. All headache, neuralgia, dizziness, vertigo, nervousness, nervousness, melancholy, insanity, epilepsy, hysteria, mania, etc., are nervous diseases, and their cause is a derangement of the nerve centers at the base of the brain. The wonderful success of Dr. MILLS' RESTORATIVE NERVE TONIC is due to the fact that it is based on the foregoing principles, and that it is a positive guarantee, or send all druggists on a positive guarantee, or send bottles for \$5, express prepaid. It contains active opiates and dangerous drugs.

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Best Rio Coffee per lb	.28	Best Grade of Tomatoes and Corn per can	.10
Best Mocha & Java Coffee per lb	.35		

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