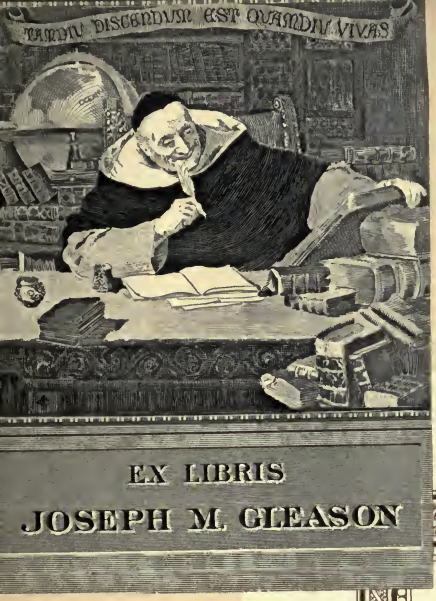
HOW THE COREYS WENT WEST

PERMELIA COREY THOMSON



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For dear Miss Scripps
in memory of Mother.
Estelle Thomson.
Adelle Thomson.

1917.

Thomson, Permelia Corey

How the Coreys Went West

Fifty Years in Crossing the Continent

1908
PRESS OF FRYE & SMITH
SAN DIEGO, CAL.

PREFACE

THIS LITTLE BOOK is my simple sum in addition. I have put together two and two to make four, and the result of my experience I give to friends who may be wanting to learn about the early days of the settlement of our country, and the privations and hardships of pioneer life.

PERMELIA COREY THOMSON.

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AN EVENING SPIN.

CHAPTER I.

In the early days several Corey Brothers emigrated from Connecticut to Pennsylvania and became proprietors in the Connecticut Purchase in the valley of Wyoming. They builded themselves homes of comfort and had growing crops with flattering prospects, when the Indians and Tories invaded their peaceful valley, killed their able-bodied men, burned their homes and destroyed their crops. Alvin, a lad of seventeen, after seeing his brothers scalped by the Indians flung himself into the river and floated down to Forty Fort, where were collected for safety the old men, women and children, and with them he took up a sad march back to Connecticut.

When peace and quiet were restored and the Colonies were finally declared an independent government, some of the children of these unfortunate Colonists came back, hoping to reclaim a portion of this Purchase as their lawful inheritance; but, being unsuccessful, Alvin drifted to the little town of Almond, Allegheny County, New York. Here he built a grist mill on the Canisteo River and depended on the toll of the grist for his family's bread. "Blessed is the man who has found his work," and blessed is the woman, too, who has it in her power to make a paradise out of such humble surroundings.

Mrs. Corey's home was a plain two-story house, walled on the East and on the West by mountains so high the

sun was never up from behind the Eastern hill in time for breakfast; and then it disappeared again by the middle of each afternoon behind the Western hill. She felt robbed of much of the sunshine of every day life by this choice of a location.

After her day's work was out of the way and the great wheel put back against the wall, she turned her back on the square room, so bare, to face a cheerful bright wood fire blazing on the broad, rough hearth, to take her evening spin. Placing a foot on the treadle of her little wheel and her fingers to flax on the distaff, she gracefully drew out thread which would clothe her household in linen.

The wheel was so used to the business of running that her hand and foot worked mechanically, so she freely let her thoughts wander off on what might have been her lot in life had justice been done her father, who was born heir to the throne of England; and she imagined she could almost see before her in those glowing coals visions of castles of splendor and a merry throng in sparkling jewels, and she felt like cursing that arbitrary marriage law of England which forbade marriage for love outside the Royal circle.

King George the Third, while Prince of Wales, with the throne before him, met at Waterloo Place, London, a beautiful young quakeress, Hannah Lightfoot, and falling desperately in love he determined to win her heart and hand and at once marry her, knowing the opposition that would naturally follow such a marriage with a plain quakeress. He gained his suit, and the marriage was said to have been duly solemnized according to the rites and cere-

monies of the Church of England, and was witnessed by William Pitt and Annie Taylor. Their first born son was denied recognition and the family name, and was christened by the name Parks, after the beautiful parks nearby. When older he was induced to renounce all claim to the throne and was sent to America for his home; and Prudence was his daughter.

Mrs. Corey was raising a small regiment of sturdy sons, who would soon be ready to go out from their mother's watchful care to take up work with axe and plow, and she breathed many a silent prayer that they all might become good and loyal citizens in their beloved country.

The royal blood in their veins might not be rich enough to be recognized in a business world—and no influential hand would be likely to be held out to them inviting them to enter important places, where they might grow in favor and finally be able to leave their mark side by side with other noted business men. She said, "Surely they cannot all be millers in this little town."

The struggle to satisfy the wants of such a large family was often taxing to the miller, but he was never tempted to take more toll than the lawful measure. He often pottered about his mill till an unusually late hour, waiting for the hopper to run empty so he could add the toll of the last grist to the bin, which would help out with the baking next day, and then he would look anxiously into the bin, wondering if the amount would be sufficient to fill the great brick oven. He knew full well how carefully Prudy would mix and mould into different ways the little she might have to do with so that nothing would be wasted. He had seen the

pot of yeast set aside for the baking, foaming and rising at such a rate that he imagined if it were emptied into the flour bin it would leaven the whole and fill the bin. He was thankful that his wife had such a complete control over her yeast pot. He remembered seeing the rye and Indian loaf when it was put into the bake-kettle, then only half full; but, when turned out in the morning piping hot from where it had steamed all night with coals of fire underneath and coals on the lid, the loaf had become full grown and filled the kettle to the brim; and it was so delicious with butter fresh from the churn. He said, "Prudence will do her part. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness."

LOST IN THE ARKPORT WOODS.*

CHAPTER II.

At one time news spread through the town like wildfire that Patty Jennings, a tavern girl, was lost in the big woods. The night was dark, and grave fears were entertained about the poor girl's safety.

Rufus Corey was familiar with these woods, so dense, so dark and dreary, having lived in them for months at a time, traveling over the rugged mountains and down the deepest ravines in search of the haunts of the bear and licks of the deer. He was familiar with the screeching of the panther and wildcat and the howling of the wolf, with the gobble of the wild turkey and the bleating of the fawn. They were music in his ear and enlivened his hours of solitude.

He hurried into his buckskin breeches, put on his hunting frock and fringed cape, knotted a piece of white linen about his head, and tied a hank of leather strings around his neck to be handy in case of emergency; and then with tinderbox and lantern he seemed thoroughly equipped for a chase, and looked like some Prince of the Wilderness.

He made for the woods as fast as possible, and very soon his search began in earnest.

* Now Hornellsville, N. Y.

He found trails leading off in every direction; but while trying to trace the track of a horse he found a low shoe stuck fast in the mire, which he felt quite sure must belong to the missing girl.

Patty had ridden over to Arkport to see the town and enjoy a holiday, and being belated in starting home night overtook her in the midst of the woods. When the sun went down behind the western mountain, like a curtain suddenly dropped, it nearly shut out the light of day and made the narrow path faint and difficult. Old Gray was determined to have his own way, but she dared not trust his judgment and give him a loose rein. She feared he might go astray. Leaves began to rustle overhead and strange sounds filled the air. Little birds fluttered by on their way home to the dense pines to roost, and night-hawks and screech-owls appeared on the scene to take their watch and make night gloomy with their music. She grew frightened at thoughts of her situation. Yet what could she do but bravely meet her danger? She would try to select a camping ground before the last ray of the setting sun should disappear and she be left in total darkness.

So getting off her horse, with bridle in hand, firmly grasped, she pulled with all her might and drew the horse aside. Just then she stepped into a swampy place, but she succeeded in drawing herself out with only the loss of a shoe; and finally she found her way around to a dry knoll where, placing the saddle on a fallen tree for a seat, she mounted it, drew her horse's head into her lap and, with the stirrups in her hand, was ready to clap them to-

gether and make fire fly should any wild beasts appear; for this, she had been told, would frighten the most bloodthirsty animals. Then she felt quite settled and comfortable, although several times she heard brush crackle and thought she saw in the dim distance balls of fire, which she decided must be the eyes of wildcats, coming toward her; at which she resolutely clapped the harder, until a shower of sparks flew.

As the hours wore on and she still succeeded in keeping harm away she sat in almost breathless silence, with her calash thrown back from over her ears that they might be free to catch the first hint of approaching danger. She was thinking how brave she had been and was looking for daylight to appear, when a sound rang through the woods. She sprang to her feet, loosing her grasp on the stirrups, and was losing control of her horse, who whinnied so loudly he would have betrayed their whereabouts had Indians been on their track. Again she listened, and again she heard her name called; then she recovered her wits, and realized with a thankful feeling that search was being made for her and that a friend was near. Soon the young hunter was there saddling her horse, when they mounted and rode out of the woods into daylight.

Patty had been plucky while danger lasted; but now that it was over she broke down completely.

As they rode farther from her camping ground she found herself telling this new friend of her lonely life and its troubles. Her mother had died on the Holland Purchase, leaving her, when only twelve years old, with the cares of the cabin and three young brothers. After a

time her father brought a new mother for her to love and to be mistress of the home, and at first she was greatly pleased. But Patty was soon turned out and put to service, where there was much hard work and little pay; and, worse than all, her father claimed her wages. She resolved to run away from bondage when eighteen, and gain her liberty. She had walked long distances and endured much privation, to find a home at last among friends in this tavern. Her heart was full of hoarded trouble, and she ended in a flood of tears.

Rufus had a face so kind that it seemed a face to trust under any circumstances, and Patty was sure she saw a teardrop roll down while he listened to her sad story. When he lifted her from the saddle at her own door he left a kiss of sympathy on her cheek, which was still wet; the first kiss, Patty decided, that she had had since her own mother died so many years ago.

PATTY'S HOME.

CHAPTER III.

Rufus still kept up an appearance of interest in the hunt, and worked away at powder horns, boiling the rough horns of the cow and scraping them with pieces of broken glass to make them clear and smooth. Then he twisted and curved them while hot, that they might fit his form closely when fastened to his belt in front, and be out of the way when he was rushing through thickets after game. He filled his bullet-bag with bullets, stuffing in a great wad of tow; and he made himself moccasins of deerskin, lining them with wool, because Kurler Bow, the old Indian medicine man, had told him that deerskin, being porous, would keep his feet damp and cold. Kurler Bow had often befriended him with much useful advice.

The young hunter seemed to be getting ready for a long chase: yet he seldom got further from home than about half-way up the mountain side, where he might be seen pacing off the ground and sticking stakes, apparently locating claim to the best part of the land. It all was very mysterious to his friends; and when he returned at night he would not have even so much as a squirrel to season a stew for the evening meal.

The truth was, when he was forced to admit it, Rufus was deeply in love with the homeless girl, and he was fast losing his interest in the hunting grounds and trying to

plan some way for a cabin where she could be her own mistress. He knew well enough, though, that his mother would scorn his choice. She would choose for him an up-town wife, instead of Patty Jennings. Patty had no royal blood in her veins, as his mother had; she was only a servant girl.

Mother Corey had rocked the cradle for her eight sons, and with tender care had guarded them through many troublesome years, trying to instill into their minds lessons of wisdom and justice. She had each year put her own hand to the wheel and worked up both fleece and flax to clothe these sons in comfort. Nothing that she could do seemed too great a sacrifice for her mother-love to make for her boys; but she saw now how easy a matter it would be for them to transfer their affections to some other woman.

When Kurler Bow came riding out into civilization he called to see what had become of the young hunter they had missed from their hunting-grounds. He was a fine rider, living almost wholly in the saddle, often eating his simple meal of nuts and acorns while on his horse. He told them that when he was loosened from the papoose-board he had been put into the saddle, which had been his home ever since, although he sometimes slept at night in the trunk of a hollow tree. He had brought a present of a quarter of fresh venison strapped across his horse; but they knew he wanted to trade it for johnny-cake, the white man's bread. Rufus was greatly pleased to see him, and while he treated him to some of the dainties he knew the Indian liked so well, he inquired after his tribe, and


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especially after Mary Jameson, the "White Squaw" who, stolen when young by them, had lived with her captors so many years that her interests had become one with theirs. Rufus always stopped to chat awhile with her when out in her country.

The family finally decided to give Rufus the hillside farm and his choice of a location where it would be most accessible to the town, including the spring of never-failing clear cold water, with several acres of tableland for a building place. This was scattered over with fine sugar maples, which might be useful in springtime by tapping them and making molasses, as the Indians had done before them. Stones covered the ground everywhere, but Rufus said these could easily be picked up at odd spells and thrown into a wall, which would be a much more durable line fence than rails between them and the pastures.

In the course of time a little cabin began to assume form, with tall mountain pines for a background, and in front the maple grove, which seemed to help keep the cabin from sliding off the hillside into the river below.

This was to be Patty's home.

She had no friends to object to her choice of a husband and no great preparations to make for her marriage. The knot was tied in Mother Corey's spare room, and the young couple took their wedding journey up the mountain by the old wood road, turning the notch when about half way up, to reach their destination.

The cabin had one large room for all purposes. In one end was an immense fireplace, with crane and trammels and plenty of pothooks, all ready to hang on the

kettle and make tea for their wedding supper. The attic, which was reached by a ladder at one side of the great chimney, would have to be their guest chamber. The doors were of loose boards, fastened at top and bottom to a cross-piece of plank, and they were hung on wooden hinges and secured with a wooden latch resembling a modern carving knife. To this was attached a stout leather string through a small aperture in the shutter; and the string was left to hang invitingly outside, indicating hospitality. When Patty wished her door fastened she could pull in the string, and feel as safe as a mouse in the milk. A lean-to at the back of the house made pantry and woodshed, which opened towards the hill; while the view from the front was fine, looking down upon the little town nestled between two mountains.

The young couple began housekeeping with only the bare necessities of life. They had a new milch cow in the stall and a pig in the pen, a few chickens on the roost, and ducks and geese went sailing on the little pond which Rufus had cleared out below the spring. They were to keep sheep on shares for half the wool and half the increase; and Patty was delighted to find among the flock one black sheep, for now she could mix the black fleece with the white and have ready-colored stocking yarn.

Rufus was not considered much of a carpenter, but he made a washbench, and put up shelves for the blue dishes and pewter platters, and felt sure he had done a very satisfactory job for the house. Then he stole away to the meadow and brought back Patty a huge boquet of lillies. She was puzzled to know what to do with them,

but she decided on putting them in the new vinegar jug, which was still empty. This would hold plenty of water for the long stems to drink, while the great branching tops so loaded with gorgeous flowers could have ample chance to droop and spread themselves on all sides, until the jug was lost to sight. This was her wedding present, and it made a fine show on the new shelf beside the blue dishes.

The happy pair were on the sunny side of the great hill, and it was spring-time, when all nature was awakening to fresh life. The maple leaves were bursting into form, the cowslips in the duck pond were ready for greens, wild flowers were blooming everywhere and wasting their fragrance on the mountain air. Birds were singing in the sugar trees; owls hooted in the tall pines farther back; frogs leaped and croaked about the edges of the pond—all seemed to unite in a grand serenade to the new-comers.

They soon cleared off a garden spot and put a five-rail fence around it, with bars to let down so that they might go in and out comfortably; and it was not long before sunflowers and hollyhocks shot above the five-rail fence, and Patty wondered if the town folks could not see their improvements.

GETTING READY FOR COLD WEATHER.

CHAPTER IV.

Patty took her knitting one day and skipped across the fields to Neighbor Whipple's, to ask Aunt Jemima how to make soap. Her education in this important part of household duties had been neglected. The minute she stepped inside the door she was sure Aunt Jemima must know all about it, and she tiptoed carefully to not leave her mark. There was a delightful smell of fresh scrubbing, the floor was as white as the table, and every wooden piece of furniture was scoured as bright as soap and sand could make it. The loom might be excepted, for Aunt Jemima was drawing in a web.

Mrs. Whipple clambered out from the great clumsy frame and invited Patty into the best room; but she caught up a remnant of gingham and her needle and thimble as she went, so that she might be busy. She could not afford to be idle a minute. She stopped, too, to look out at Tildy and Amy, who had the baby in his cradle under the shade trees. The little fellow was giggling and crowing in great glee at their pranks.

The remnant, Aunt Jemima explained, was to make one of the small girls an apron. She tore down slits for the arms and slanted off the shoulders, and hollowed out the front of the neck and the arm slits, and the apron was cut. By the time she had given the directions for making

soap it would be hemmed, and a drawstring of tape run in the neck, and then it would be ready for Tildy, or any half-grown girl. The fit all lay in the drawstring.

It seemed that Mary and Martha kept the house and did the scrubbing; and every Friday George Washington and Andrew Jackson pulverized the sand, the same measure full. That and soap, and plenty of elbow grease, did the work.

The first and most important thing in making soap, Aunt Jemima said, was to set up a leach barrel and have it filled with the best hardwood ashes, with sufficient water to leach through until the lye was strong enough to bear up an egg. Then a fire was made outside and a great kettle hung over, and all the grease that had been saved since killing-time was put into it, with the lye, to boil. As soon as every bit of rind and gristle and bone was eaten up, the whole mess would turn to beautiful thick soap, as sweet and clean as maple sugar. When cold there ought to be a barrelful, to use freely. With her family, she added, that, with a bar of castile to wash the babies, would last a year.

Patty thought these directions were very simple, and that she understood them perfectly. Not long afterward she tried Aunt Jemima's rule, but the best she could do her soap would come and go. It would drop from the big wooden paddle thick and ropy, but the next day it was thin and looked like lye and grease again.

By this time summer had passed and autumn had begun to touch as with a painter's brush the maple leaves, turning them golden. The squash and the cucumber vines, and the sunflowers and hollyhocks that had shot up so high

above the five-rail fence were looking sickly. They had done their duty and were dying with the season.

The geese had twice been stripped of their feathers, and Patty said she must have one more picking before cold weather. So one night she drove them into a pen that had been made for the purpose; and early the next morning she appeared, thoroughly equipped for a hard day's work. She caught the nearest goose readily, and without regard for the poor thing's squawking she thrust its head under her left arm, grasping both its feet firmly in her left hand; and then with a sudden jerk she began pulling its feathers, until soon the frightened fowl was stripped of all but its coarser quills in wings and tail. And even a few of these were pulled, to make pens for writing. But when it came the old gander's turn he was angry at the downright outrage on his flock, and set up a terrible fuss. He not only squawked and squirmed, but he bit Patty's arms until they were black and blue and felt sore. She was at her wit's end, until she ran to the house and brought out her nightcap, which she tied tightly over the angry fellow's head; and then she fell to work at him with nervous haste, and never left a ripe feather in his body. When Patty complained to her husband that evening of a hard day's work he laughed, and said he thought it must have been harder on the goose.

Tired as she was, Patty sat up that night and added those feathers to her bed. When they were all in and she had sewed together the opening, she beat them up until it seemed that every feather must stand on end, and then she spread the covering, thin, to be sure, over the straw bed

which the generous landlord of the little tavern had given her (all but the tick) as his contribution toward her setting-out. Rufus and Patty thought they realized a great difference in their bed after that; but several times during the first night they were awakened by the squawking of the geese, who missed their downy covering and suffered with the cold.

Rufus had now begun cutting his yearly supply of wood, to have it ready to haul in jags on the first snow. Then he would cut it in fire lengths at odd spells. The pine was to be split fine and stored in the shed for kindlings; but fire usually could be kept over, by covering hardwood coals with ashes. In case it should accidentally be lost it could be started again by the use of a tinderbox and a piece of punk from the rotten heart of a beech tree, peeled in velvety cushions; but to let the fire go out was considered a great calamity. When cold weather at last made an appearance the family felt almost independent of the market below, with their pork salted down, and a tub of butter set aside, and kraut and cider-apple-sauce and apple butter and pickles for a relish.

The winter seemed unusually long and severe, especially the latter part. For more than three months they had not seen bare ground. Sheep fared badly. The spring lambs came too early, and several times Rufus would find among the flock a half-frozen one, which had come in a storm during the night and which he must bring to the house for Patty to nurse it to life. As soon as possible she would get ready warm milk with a bit of red pepper in it; and prying open the lamb's jaws she would force the

milk down, then wrap the little creature in warm flannels and lay the bundle on the hearth to thaw out.

But at length, after long waiting, the bright sun shone on the snow and melted it suddenly, and it ran off in rills and emptied into the river below, helping to swell the stream to overflow its banks and make a spring freshet. Then these same lambs came out in a warm and shaggy fleece, to frisk and play in the sunlight; and they looked quite unlike the bony frames on stilts that, earlier, had been nursed back to life in the chimney corner.

THE UNEXPECTED HAPPENS.

CHAPTER V.

After the first year of getting started in housekeeping, and hard work in bringing their poor-farm under cultivation, the family felt quite settled for a happy life on the hillside. To be sure, their plans had not all been carried out, and the stone wall had not grown to make any great show; but they looked to the future with courage and the hope that in time they should be able to conquer all obstacles and make the farm profitable.

Patty was out one morning bright and early, busy with the chores and singing at the top of her voice, while all the birds in the branches of the maple trees stopped their songs and seemed listening. Even the fractious heifer recognized the milkmaid and appeared more gentle; and Rufus listened, too; it was cheerful.

But of a sudden the song ended, and Rufus rushed out fearing the heifer had upset the pail and spilled the milk. Everything was right side up, and Patty was only gazing off towards a stranger coming up the hill, and in the direction of the cabin. She wondered who he could be, and where he could be going, and what in the world he was after up there so early.

Rufus said he looked and walked like Jerry Ketchum. He must be coming there, of course—where else could he be going? But what he was after was more than he could

tell, unless he had lost his fire and was coming for coals to start another. Patty smiled, but still wondered.

It was Jerry, and when he came up he was very flattering about the improvements they had made on the hill in such a short time. Then he asked Rufus if he would not step outside and sit on the woodpile, and talk business. Patty was suspicious that some mischief was brewing. Jerry would not be up there so early in the morning if he had not some axe to grind; and she kept an eye on the men sitting there talking and chewing and spitting together, whittling every small stick within reach into kindlings.

Finally Patty saw that her husband was beginning to be uneasy. It was getting towards noon, and she wondered if Jerry was going to stay to dinner. She felt as though she should fly all to pieces if the rascal did not leave soon.

Suddenly little Hilda, the new baby in the cradle, began to try the strength of her lungs by crying. At this unexpected sound Jerry seemed surprised and stopped talking, and then he evidently forgot where he had left off. Plainly he had not heard the latest news from the hill.

Soon, as it appeared that everything had been said that Jerry could think of to gain some object, the two men rose from the woodpile and adjourned to the house. When they came in Rufus commenced to search for the pen he had made a few weeks before, from one of the quills Patty had pulled out when she picked the old gander. It was poor, owing to the dull blade of his jack-knife, but he had made it do to record little Hilda's birth in the family bible; and then he must have thrown it away, thinking he should never need it again.

Patty knew all the time where it was, but she saw that Jerry was trying to pull the wool over her eyes, as well as over her husband's; and he said all sorts of nice things about the new baby.

Rufus was dreadfully confused, and made bad work backing the paper to which Jerry had urged that he should put his name. He said that the pen was poor and the ink pale, and that his hand trembled; and he came near putting down Hilda's name instead of his own.

When Jerry had gone Rufus told Patty all that he had done; how he had been persuaded to sign a note and go security for five hundred dollars, to help start a flourishing business in the old brick-yard. There seemed a good opening; and if Jerry should be successful, he said, no doubt all would be right.

Patty sighed. What might be the consequences if Jerry did not prosper?

Five hundred dollars! She repeated it over and over again. It was a big sum of money for them to lose, just when they were getting started and had so little to help themselves. How could they ever raise it, if it came to the worst? The poor farm could not be expected to do it.

She took the news very much to heart. A dark cloud which threatened danger was gathering over their humble cabin.

Rufus could not set himself to work all that day. He was afraid Patty would never sing again. He looked in the cradle at Patty's baby, sleeping so sweetly and unconscious of any trouble. Jerry had said that the child looked for all the world like her mother. He did not see

how Jerry could tell; he never could tell one baby from another. They all looked alike to him. He wondered if Jerry could be believed when he told the truth; but a father must learn to know his own children. Just then Hilda began to stretch and squirm and crowd her little fist into her mouth, and seemed nearly starved. Rufus wondered if it could be that Patty was so overcome with grief that she had forgotten to feed her baby; and then he went out quickly and began picking up stones and throwing them into the unfinished stone wall. King Solomon said, "He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it, and he that hateth suretyship is sure."

In less than one year from the date of that note Jerry had failed in business, and rumor said that he had left for parts unknown; and his surety would be holden for his debt. It was just what Patty had said would happen. She could not prove it, but what she knew she knew; and she was right.

Rufus went to the brickyard and offered to pay the debt by hard days' work. There were three hundred and sixty-five days in a year; and counting out Sundays, and elections, and general training, and Independence day, and some days that it might be too stormy to work, it would take, the best he could do, over one year to make the whole payment. And during that time the farm must be neglected and bring very little income for the family to live on.

The next Monday morning Patty put up a luncheon in a bright new dinner-pail, and her husband went down

the hill to begin work. Like the children of Israel, he was "in bondage in mortar and brick".

As Patty watched him out of sight, leaving her alone with the cares of the poor-farm, life grew dark and cheerless. Chills came creeping over her while she wiped the moisture from her face. Her world had changed. She grew dizzy and faint, and staggered to the door for a breath of air. Could she be dying, and not a soul near with whom to leave a message, or her last will about Hilda? It would be hard on Rufus to be left with the housework and a baby on his hands, and such an awful debt to pay by his day's work. He would be obliged to be looking around for his second wife, to keep the cabin and be a stepmother to her child.

Patty came out of her nervous fit of despondency, and saved her kind husband from any such unnecessary trouble; and then, going over to the little wooden churn on the hearth, waiting her motion with the dasher to make the butter fly, she hummed to herself:

"Contented I am, contented I'll be,
There are more that live worse
Than live better than me;
Come butter, come."

THE TWIN BABIES.

CHAPTER VI.

The Corey family were very thankful when the big debt was paid and they were free once more to give attention to the poor farm. Fortune seemed in their favor when the ewes brought twins to the pastures. It would increase their stock and add value to the farm. But when Mrs. Corey brought twin boy babies to the cabin it was quite a different matter. This meant everlasting trouble and a great responsibility to that mother. She did not want boys, and surely not two at a time. She would not have taken them as a gift, only that she must.

Children were looked upon as the poor man's blessing in those days; but when they accumulated so amazingly fast they did seem the poor woman's burden. At any rate, that was what Patty thought, when she found herself the mother of three helpless little ones.

If she had been rich she could have kept a servant for the house and a nurse for each child, which would lighten her task; but, like most pioneer women of her day, she was poor and must shoulder her burdens and make her way through life as best she could. When one baby cried all three would set in and cry, and sometimes Patty would cry, too.

Hilda was broken-hearted at sight of these boys nestling in her mother's arms, while she, who had been the

idol of the house, was turned off and neglected. She cried and grew thin and pale, and her mother was sure the child would die of grief. She consulted the doctor; but he seemed to think there was no immediate danger. He said she might be cutting her eye-teeth and would pull through all right; and he left soothing syrups and made frequent visits to see how she was getting along, while he tried a new medicine each time—but all did no good. The little girl still fretted and cried, and Patty believed she was growing worse, so they called in counsel.

The doctor said the boys were growing like weeds and ought to have names. Rufus offered to name one Welcome if Patty wanted to call the other Unwelcome.

She decided to try the experiment of getting all the babies to sleep at once, which would be a great convenience. She drew the armchair close beside the bed and took the lightest boy on her right arm, next the bed, and the heavy one on her left arm; and across her lap she laid the jealous little Hilda, holding a great rag doll with painted face and curly hair of the black sheep's wool. Then came the effort of singing and trotting and nursing and caressing, until they began dropping off to sleep; when she threw them one by one on the bed, the lightest first with her right arm, and with both arms she managed to toss on the heavy boy; while, with a few words of pity over the unconscious forms in her lap, she laid them gently down in their cradle bed, and fairly flew about her neglected work. The sun was swiftly creeping towards the noon-mark, and she must bring up the fire, and bake bread, and get churning done and dinner on the table for her hungry husband. She did

wish that for once every child would sleep till all was done.

A little bird of the air flew over with news, and Patty looked out and there came Kurler Bow riding up the hill as straight as a dart. A wild turkey was flapping from his saddle, intended, without doubt, as a present for the young hunter; but all the same, he would want its weight in good things to eat, and she could not think of a thing in the house to give him. Yet she dared not offend an Indian. Her heart fluttered and, as she said, "flew into her mouth." Fortunately the same little bird of the air must have carried news to her husband, for he came in ahead of time and ready to do justice to a hearty meal.

When Kurler Bow began to make his presentation speech the three babies began to cry, first one and then another.

Patty tried to hush them, for she remembered that Indian children never cry; and after looking at her and the little ones until his curiosity was satisfied, Kurler Bow told her what she had long been wishing to know—how the squaw mother prevents her pappoose from squalling whenever it takes the notion to squall. He said she clapped a hand tightly over the baby's mouth with the first cry it made, and at the same time held its nose till it nearly, but not quite, strangled. Then she bravely repeated this treatment until the pappoose showed no signs of making even a whimper which would betray their race. Rufus told his wife he did wish she would try the Indian cry-baby cure on those boys while they were young, and make them brave. It would save the family so much annoyance.

The medicine-man gave them some useful hints for Hilda's benefit. He said to throw away the dishes of herbs steeping about the hearth, to clothe her body in warm flannel garments, and when the sun was well up and the air heated to wrap her in woolen blankets and carry her down the hill to the river, there to dip her thoroughly for three successive mornings and then to skip three, continuing this for three months. Each time she was to be wrapped warmly and put to bed for sweet sleep.

Rufus longed for the healing influence of the pine woods, where he could take his child and lay her on a soft and easy bed of boughs, wrapped in bear skins, for sweet sleep. She would soon be well, he knew it; but her mother would scorn such a wild notion of his, and he dared not add another sorrow to her troubled life. So he tried the dipping, but it proved a hard task; and he was always glad when skipping times came around.

NEIGHBOR WHIPPLE'S HOUSE-RAISING.

CHAPTER VII.

Patty had finally settled down to her new relations at home and was trying to perform her motherly duties in a business-like manner, when Levi Whipple sent out invitations to his house-raising, and Aunt Jemima added a special invitation for Patty to come with the children and spend the evening.

This was a great surprise to Patty, and she could not understand why Aunt Jemima should invite her, with three babies to carry, a mile or more off across the fields and through the woods, to get back late at night. The idea seemed impossible.

Rufus was puzzled, and scratched his head and tried to conjure up some way to help out of the difficulty. All the conveyance he owned was the white steers and a bobsled, and his wife always seemed timid about riding behind the steers and ashamed of the bobsled. He could put the great red cradle on the handsled and set a boy in each end, and haul them over in grand style; or, if Patty preferred, he could take the cradle on his shoulder, and the motion either way would lull the babies to sleep just as quickly as her foot on the rocker, and then they would have their own bed when they got there. Jemima Whipple never had twins, and her cradle would hold only one at a time. His wife, however, objected to these plans, fearing the cradle

might upset coming home through the dark woods, so late at night. It was evident she had no babies to lose.

Patty went to bed with a heavy burden on her mind.

When she fell asleep she dreamed that she was going to the raising, and had begun to get ready. She found her cinnamon-brown merino, which had been hung away in the garret, and was trying it on; but as fast as she pulled it together the hooks would fly off and it would fly open. She tried to dress her feet, but every time the heel of her stocking would come on top, and the right shoe would be on the wrong foot. It seemed out of the question to get ready; and she awoke with her mind made up to stay at home in her chimney-corner until the babies should be grown.

When she fell asleep once more her boys were already half-grown youngsters, and were on handsleds going at lightning speed on snow and ice down the very steepest and most dangerous part of the mountain side. They went with such force that they were soon carried across the old wood road and along to the very brink of the awful precipice, and below lay the mill-dam. She was speechless and motionless, and almost breathless. She could not rescue them; but as soon as she could get control of her organs she gave a scream of terror which alarmed the quiet house—and she was glad to find herself awake, with a boy on each arm, and that it had been only a dream.

Rufus told her that if her boys were born to be hung they never would be drowned.

The next morning Patty cleaned up the tin lantern perforated with nail holes, and placed in the socket a fresh tallow candle. Then she took a few extra stitches in the

children's clothes, and let out the underarm seams of her wedding dress. She seemed to be getting ready. Her husband watched her sprinkle flour over a piece of cotton flannel and powder her complexion, then she searched in the garden for red beet leaves, which she bruised and tinted her cheeks with the juice, to bring back their natural color; and with a few extra crimps in her glossy, black hair she looked about as young and pretty as the day she was married. Finally, Rufus took Hilda, strapped on his back and fastened about like a papoose, and he carried the smaller boy in his arms, while Patty carried the heavy boy and the lantern; and so they started for the raising.

Aunt Jemima welcomed them and kissed the babies, and told Patty how glad she was that she had come, and that her burdens would seem lighter as she got used to them, which was very comforting.

In the evening they played games and told stories, and drank punch and egg-nogg, until Patty began to grow uneasy about getting home with so many precious bundles. They lighted the lantern and wakened the children, and started off with all three crying; but Patty told Aunt Jemima what a nice time she had had, and how she would not have missed it for the world.

Rufus rolled moderately over the logs and moved slowly down the steep bank of the gulf, and stepped carefully on the slippery stones in the sulphur stream; and they reached home about midnight. To Patty's surprise not one of her babies had met with the slightest harm.

After looking outside to see if the lambs were safe for the night, she crept into bed, where her husband was snor-

ing away, entirely insensible to every care, outside or in. She closed her eyes and tried to shut out thought. She knew she needed sleep; but a thousand new ideas came rushing into her mind, making sleep impossible. She was back at neighbor Whipple's admiring the simple ornaments for the white walls of the new house; the pressed autumn leaves, and downy thistle-balls, and the fans of partridge feathers all pressed and tied with ribbons. Then there were the barrels covered in buff chintz with modest sweet-briar roses. The sides were fulled around, but the head was plain and held little willow baskets and trinkets bought of Indian peddlers. Then Patty's thoughts flew away to the Holland Purchase, when her own mother kept the cabin, her childhood home, and according to her dim recollections she must have been very much like Aunt Jemima. The tears stole down her cheeks as she realized how much she had missed from life by losing a mother's tender love and proper training.

Her brain grew weary long before daylight appeared, and she decided that Aunt Jemima's tea must have been too strong.

When Rufus awoke he complained of a dull, bad feeling in his head, and he could hardly recollect how he got home; but he was thankful that no accident had happened to the children, and he gave all credit to Patty and the lantern.

GOING WEST TO LOOK.

CHAPTER VIII.

One cold, frosty morning in April, Rufus Corey was seen passing through the village with his pack on his back and gun on his shoulder, going West to look.

Secret influences had been working in his mind, drawing him from his mountain poor-farm, where he had tried hard to make a comfortable living. The hillside had been drenched with rain and snow for all time, carrying off down the stream all virtue from the soil, or depositing it on the river banks below; robbing him of any great profit from his labor, and making him dissatisfied with his situation. Off West was supposed to be a vast expanse of land with a fertile soil and unlimited resources, and mines of great wealth just out of sight. These hidden treasures were waiting only for the march of civilization to explore and bring them to light.

Newspapers did not circulate freely in those early days; but from best authority within reach young Corey believed the West, with such a rich inheritance and so near home, would be a desirable change; and nothing would set his mind at rest but to make a trip and look for himself. He made up his mind the morning he left home with his dinner pail and turned his back on that mountain, that he would sell out and look for a better location; and after a long time waiting, the merchant put him on his feet by

buying the poor-farm for stock. It was so tilted up against the mountain and so covered with stones that it was uphill business to try farming for any profit. In time something better might turn up to pay the merchant for this investment.

A new era began to dawn upon the minds of the people, making steam power and electricity among the wonders of the world. It seemed impossible to imagine to what extent these powers might be carried when better understood and controlled by human skill.

Mother Corey was bending with the weight of years and the many burdens of life, and she was slow to recognize a wise Providence influencing her son's family to leave the mountain-side, where they would have been obstacles in the way of a great improvement—a revolution which was to take place later on,—the coming of the locomotive, whistling and puffing in a frightful manner across this mountain and right through Patty's front yard, cutting in two the old wood-road where the white steers hauled their loads to town, and the zig-zag path down the hill, a nearer cut for the family. They even took Patty's little home, once so dear to her, where she had spent the honeymoon of her life and where her babies were born, for a way-station. It was rumored and believed that the merchant did get back his money, with interest for the same, for the right of way through his land; and in time this road became a great thoroughfare for the traveling public. But, fortunately, Patty and the children were out of the way of the locomotive some years before the track was visible.

In spite of Patty's determination to be brave and look on the bright side during her husband's absence, many gloomy thoughts would intrude, and she began borrowing trouble almost as soon as he was out of sight. There seemed so many ways in which he might meet with accident and lose his life, and she never learn his sad fate, which would be to her a living trouble. He might never see a familiar face the whole way; strangers might prove unkind. Then it occurred to her that possibly he might meet Jerry Ketchum, for they say, "rogues go West"; and that must be where Jerry had gone. What if he had amassed a fortune off there, in some of his speculations, and his conscience should smite him for the wrongs done a generous, kind-hearted friend, so that he would be inclined to pay back the five hundred dollars, with interest? That would help a powerful sight towards buying land. But if Rufus should meet him, as poor as Job's turkey, he would not hold any grudge. He never did against any man. Rufus was "such an honest soul!" Patty said to herself. She felt about sick. It seemed like a rush of blood to the head, and she believed she had better be bled. The doctor came up promptly when called, and tapped a vein in Patty's arm, and drew out nearly a pint of bad blood. He assured her that she had done a wise thing, which would tend to keep her system in running order until her husband should get home. Patty felt relieved. She had great confidence in the doctor. Rufus always said there was one bill he never questioned, and that was his doctor's bill.

A TRAVELER ON THE ROAD.

CHAPTER IX.

The young prospector had made rapid strides over the ground, with bright anticipations of some better country ahead; and when night overtook him he put up at a wayside inn or asked for lodging at some little shanty, always finding the pioneer settlers kindhearted and ready to share their last morsel with the stranger under their roof. After a cup of tea and crust of bread, a bowl of mush and milk, if that was more convenient, or some very simple fare, they chatted awhile about pioneer life and the prospects ahead; and then he crept into his bunk or stretched himself out in one corner on a few quilts, to dream of the West where he could listen once more to the cheerful music of the green old forests, hunt and enjoy the wild, free life he used to love so well in his early days. He often thought of Patty's careworn face and faded cheeks, and the many wants of his family. But when daylight appeared he was up fresh and rested for his journey, planning anew about the West and its possibilities in store for him.

When he had traveled one hundred miles he came to an old State road running through Crawford county, Pennsylvania. He took this road and traveled fifty miles on it, when he struck off by John Brown's tannery, to find a two-hundred acre tract of wild land, offered cheap.

The country was new, thinly settled and heavily timbered, and two hundred acres of such wild land seemed a

big farm for one man to tackle; but it proved a grand specimen of natural scenery, beautifully located on two of four corners, and well watered by living springs and purest streams. The soil was rich and fertile; in fact it seemed all that he could ask or expect to find. Game came prancing through the woods unmindful of any fear or danger, and thousands of voices greeted and charmed his ear, till he was spellbound. He said the woods always had an exhilarating effect on his spirits. He sat down under the shade of the trees, trying to count the cost and study up his means and ways. He decided if he should fall short in his payment, that when his York State friends should come flocking West for homes, he could divide up this tract, and make a settlement, with Yankee traits, about the Corners.

Squirrels were perched in the topmost branches of the hickories and butternuts, holding the hard-shelled nuts in their claws while they bored down into the oily meat for a most delicious morsel; then they dropped the shells at his feet and fearlessly hopped into the neighboring branches to finish a bountiful meal on chestnuts. Swarms of busy bees were at work about the decayed knot of a tree, clearing out a rotten mess to make a storehouse where they might bring home sweets gathered from fields of buckwheat or wild flowers, to work into honey. The air was pure and spicy, and he did wish physicians would say to their sick and weak and weary—Go to the woods, and breathe the life-giving emanations from the trees, and obey the simple laws of nature and grow strong and get well. He had always had these odd notions about the health-giving influence of the woods.

When he had secured proper title to this land, and all necessary business was done, he started home, proud to carry to his friends such a flattering report of his success and of the country "out West". He had his speech of glowing descriptions at his tongue's end, ready to deliver to his wife the minute he got inside his own door.

But when he reached home the latchstring was pulled in for the night. Patty knew his familiar step, however, and raised the latch and welcomed once more the hungry, weary traveler, who was almost out of breath with the long day's tramping and the extra effort to climb the mountain before bedtime. She raked open her bed of hardwood coals which had been carefully covered, and with a splint from the homemade broom succeeded in lighting a tallow candle; then, grabbing the tongs, she picked out a live coal and dropped it into a bowl of water, where it boiled and spluttered a minute, when she fished out the charred coal and settled the drink, and gave it as a medicine to refresh the weary man and clear his throat, so that he might tell her about the West while she made the tea.

THE FIRST MOVE.

CHAPTER X.

A horse team with an emigrant wagon stood at the door of the little home on the hillside, ready to load in the family and the things that would be needed on the journey West. An ox-team was slowly moving off with the household goods and tools for clearing land. Three cows were in the procession, designed for family use.

Patty took a large workbag on her arm, with a ball of yarn and a sock set-up ready for pick-up work on the way. She carried an overgrown babe, and several little children were clinging to her skirts and hanging back, crying because they were afraid of the big woods off West that were so full of bears. They could only carry with them the memory of childhood days, and of the playgrounds where the boys broke their wild horses and the girls baked mud-pies in their little stone ovens.

Aunt Jemima came over to say good-bye, and brought Patty one of her partridge tails, nicely pressed into a fan, and tied with a bright ribbon bow; a keepsake and an ornament for the new home. Rufus told her that in his wood partridges were as plenty as chickens in a poultry yard, but their tails were not tied with ribbons.

The emigrant procession was late in getting started, and as it moved through the village many familiar faces appeared at the doors and windows, to take a last look and

wish good luck. The Mormon excitement was at its height in neighboring towns, carrying off converts to the far West to form an independent settlement on Mormon principles; and it was rumored that many New England families were banding together and going to some of the Western States to form colonies. But this family was going off single-handed and alone, to battle with hardships. It seemed like a leap in the dark, to their friends. The small caravan traveled only ten miles the first day, and stayed that night at Angelica. The next morning a drizzling rain set in, and the entire week in May proved rainy, with scarcely a day of sunshine the one hundred and fifty miles. Roads were washed out and bridges broken; and it was not until towards night of the eighth day that they came in sight of the old log school-house which was to be their home.

This house stood on one of the four corners, with only enough clearing around it to let in the building and a huge woodpile. Patty's courage almost failed her. The woods looked dark and dreary and the house forsaken, with chinkings out between the logs, letting in wind and dust, the windows broken in, and glass and dirt covering the floor. She was not in condition to enjoy much of anything then but a good cup of tea and a fire to dry their damp clothing. She did wish some kind neighbor would invite them home to stay that first night; but she wished in vain. She could not even see smoke from a chimney in any direction, and Rufus had to go a full mile for coals to start a fire.

The fireplace was almost the only cheerful thing, and this was immense, made of unhewed stone and reaching nearly across one end of the house, taking in great backlogs which were rolled up on skids, with several smaller

logs in front. The fire was built without any sign of stint or stinginess. Wood was plenty, and burning seemed the easiest and surest way of getting rid of it. It was not long before the flames crackled and roared and the new fire heated up the room, drying their damp clothing and making the place more homelike, and sending a thrill of comfort to all hearts. They cleaned up the broken glass and rubbish, and Patty laid clean chips over the holes in the floor, so that snakes should not crawl through while they slept; and she set her table on a long painted chest for their first meal, using some of the nicest chips for plates. When she complained of not having anything to eat, Rufus suggested that she put off supper until breakfast time and have both meals together, promising plenty of game from the woods, which were alive with squirrels. Night drew a dark curtain over the outside view early; but the family sat up late to enjoy the cheerful fire, and build air-castles, and talk over much that they planned to do in the near future. Already it seemed more like home than they had dared to hope.

In the morning Patty looked out of the broken windows and directly into a neighbor's girdled clearing, across the road on the opposite corner. This settler, getting in a hurry to raise a crop to help support his family, had cut a girdle around each tree and left them all to bleed and bleach in the sun. When the sap had run out the bark peeled off, leaving the trees bare, white and ghostly, with their great limbs extended in every direction and liable to break and fall in wind storms. The tree soon lost its firm hold of the earth and became brittle, and was apt to turn up by the roots as soon as the ground was moistened by

rains. Planting could be done among the trees and a half crop raised, and the virtue of the soil was not lost by fire, as was the case in clearing the usual way. Patty said she rather liked the sight of these white woods.

Rufus longed to see the bright sun shining on his own woods, so that he could show their beauty to his wife. He was proud of those grand old oaks, with their green branches woven in and interlocked with the neighboring chestnuts; the beech and the maple growing side by side and so near to the hickory that squirrels were hopping from branch to branch.

He shouldered his gun and started off toward his north boundary to commence clearing land, and perhaps to shoot some squirrels for dinner, when he saw just before him in the road a great bear slowly plodding along. His first thought was to fire and kill the animal; but, turning to the door, he called to Patty to come out and see an old settler that was passing the house.

She rushed to the door with a baby in her arms, anxious to know what the natives were like; but when to her surprise she saw this wild animal passing, she clasped her baby tight and declared that she never should dare to let one of the children play out of doors again. Rufus explained that the bears had a runway on his land, a well-beaten path just above the house where, most likely, they had traveled for years without turning aside to do any harm, and where they would still do so unless they were molested.

After nearly two weeks of anxious watching and waiting the ox-team and cows were seen coming slowly over

Little Hill, and were welcomed by all the family. They were then turned out in the chopping to browse on the green twigs.

Everything available in housekeeping was now carried from the wagon to the house and arranged about the room to the best advantage possible. Two turned-post bedsteads were set up in the north end, with a high chest of drawers between, and a trundle bed was run under each of the beds, to be pulled out into the room at night for the children. Splint-bottom chairs and a painted table were among the useful things; and a tin reflector was placed before the fire to bake a shortcake. There was great rejoicing when the old clock was fastened to the wall and they heard the familiar tick-tick-tick which would be so much company in their new home.

That evening, after the house was lighted by a bright fire, Rufus brought in the wash-tub and turned upon it one of the splint bottom chairs, the back of the chair projecting over the tub. Over this he laid his large shovel, bottom side up, the edge projecting over all. Then a sheepskin tanned with the wool on was thrown over the middle, when he mounted astride, as he would his horse, and commenced shelling corn by drawing an ear up across the sharp edge of the shovel, the tub catching the corn and the floor the cobs. The next day a boy was sent with a grist to the nearest mill, with instructions that it be ground coarse so they could have samp and milk for their suppers.

Patty needed a broom, and it being nine miles to town Rufus said he could make her a nice, durable one. He hunted a birch sapling in the slashing, cut a deep ring

around the depth of the brush, and then peeled off the rough bark. Evenings he stripped fine splints, holding them turned back on the handle, occasionally tying them to relieve his hand. When all was peeled into fine brush he turned this down from the handle, broom-like, and tied a stout leather string around to hold the brush in place. He then worked the handle down to a small size and scraped it smooth with broken glass, after which the new broom was set away to season. When it was done it would have seemed a heavy, awkward article for a modern housekeeper to handle; but Patty thought it just the thing for such uneven floors as she had to sweep. Her back was apparently fitted for her burdens.

STRANGE CALLERS.

CHAPTER XI.

Cold weather began to be felt about the old log-house. There had been several hard frosts, and the wind was rattling out chestnuts at a great rate. The ground was nearly covered with them in many places in the woods, and at the stores in town one dollar per bushel in trade was being generously offered. Patty thought the children might be helping to earn their winter shoes; so she fixed them up with warm wraps and baskets and bags, and sent them out, charging them to be sure and keep within sight of the clearings or the road, so that they would be in no danger of getting lost or being eaten up by bears.

Her husband was "choring" about the house, patching and chinking the cracks between the logs with strips of lumber, and covering them, to hold them in place, with a mortar made of clay daubed on and then made smooth. He had dreaded it because it was such a nasty job. He was also banking up around the house with dirt from the chip yard, to keep out the cold and make it more comfortable in severe weather; all the while thinking about the first snow, and the deer-licks, and the hunts he hoped to have in his spare time through the winter. Patty was thinking, now that the children were well out of the way, that she would get little Nat to sleep, as well as the baby, and then gear up the wheel and go at her spinning, and try

to finish her last skein so that it might be ready for the weaving. Her husband was only "choring," and she could get a picked-up dinner and neglect her work for one day. Nobody would ever know the difference. Her plans seemed to be working well, and she was merry as a lark, singing,

"Contented I am, contented I'll be,
There are more that live worse
Than live better than me!"

and jogging the cradle every now and then to keep baby asleep until her skein was finished.

The skein was not more than half done, when in rushed the children pell-mell, half dead with fright and past speaking for several minutes.

Her first thought was that a dry limb from the girdling had fallen by the wind and killed one of them. But that could not be, for they were all there, and she counted them over again to be sure that every one was safe. Then she was sure a bear had chased them. By this time they all began talking at once. The boys said they saw Indians; but the girls thought them old stragglers, or wild folks, coming out of the woods. Their mother said it might be some of their neighbors coming to call on them. She went to the door and opened it far enough to peer out; and sure enough, there came the scarecrows, trudging along, looking as though the pair might have come from Noah's Ark; and they turned in toward the house.

Mrs. Corey's first thought was to close the door and pull in the latchstring, and fasten them out. The children had skulked away into one corner of the room. But the

next moment she felt ashamed of such a cowardly act, when her husband was within calling distance.

So when she heard a thumping knock on the loose board door she calmly bade the pair walk in. The old woman came first, and courtesied in a polite manner; and the old man introduced them, saying they were neighbors in the new country and making their yearly trip back to their former home near Jamestown, to visit friends. They had heard of the newcomers in the log schoolhouse, and had planned to stop and rest awhile and get acquainted. Patty called in her husband, and took their bundles, and apologized for the children being frightened at strangers. She said they had only seen, since coming here, now and then a tin-trunk peddler with Yankee notions from away down East.

Aunt Nelly Dibble wore a black naverino bonnet, lined with white silk and trimmed with a few bows of colored ribbon on top; a gay, plaid cloak, short and narrow, with a small round cape; a bombazine dress with one narrow ruffle on the skirt and drawn with a string to fit the waist; a white kerchief around her neck and crossed in front, and a heavy string of gold beads. She had on wooden shoes, turned out to fit her feet and lined with wool inside; and she carried a workbasket with clean caps, and things needed on her journey. She had also a large workpocket with knitting, snuff-box, spectacles and a few stalks of fennel. She walked with a cane, and seemed lame. Uncle Dibble's suit might have been one of Washington's cast-off ones, and worn by him for his best ever since Washington's day. He carried a cane; and a white umbrella with a large bundle

tied in his bandana handkerchief was strung on it and slung over his shoulder.

Rufus said they must stay and have dinner with them, it would be no trouble; but Patty began to make excuses about her neglected work, and the little she had to do with.

Aunt Nelly said that seemed to her the very time when somebody was sure to come; but they had learned to be satisfied with a crust of bread and a good cup of tea. They knew all about "hard times", for they came to the country when it was *new* and they were obliged to live on potatoes and salt for weeks at a time. Uncle Dibble told them a story about his neighbor, Pardee. After wearing out his Sunday hat and thinking he must buy a new one, he went to town to see a hatter and leave his measure. The price agreed upon was ten dollars, to be paid in oats as soon as harvested. They threshed the oats with a flail, and hauled them ten miles with an ox-team and sled. It took two days to haul them, and fifty bushels to pay for that new hat. The old man said many were the hardships and privations those early settlers had to endure, and but few could afford to buy a Sunday hat.

Mrs. Corey hung on the tea-kettle and put a shortcake before the fire to bake, and sent the children to hunt eggs for a custard. The men discussed the signs of the times, and the indications of some wonderful inventions about to be revealed, when steam power should come into common use in propelling boats and railroad carriages, and when tracks should spread like network over the country. Mr. Corey said they were already at work leveling hills and filling in valleys, and the object seemed to be to shorten

distance and save time, and to make travel easy. He pointed out the advantage that might be gained in their case; where it now required a week of time and travel, it would then need only a few hours to visit their friends, take tea and return home. Uncle Dibble could remember when sailing was at the mercy of the wind, and the Lord guided the wind and the waves.

Aunt Nelly had the third cup of tea, to give her strength for her journey; and after dinner the men went to look at the hogs, which were turned out wild during the summer and early fall to feed on nuts, and then were driven in to finish fattening on corn, which made sweet, choice pork. When Aunt Nelly looked up at the clock from her knitting, she was surprised to see how swiftly the time had passed, and they must get through to the State Road, four miles travel, before dark. So the old couple started off, feeling light-hearted over this friendly call and the privilege of another stopping place on their journeys.

Work was fairly under way again when a rush was heard around the house, and Rufus slipped in and without stopping to explain matters took down his loaded rifle from overhead, and was out again as quickly as possible. There was a moment's silence, then "bang" went the gun and down fell a beautiful, great deer, which only just before had been prancing through the woods, fearless of danger.

Patty scolded her husband for making himself a terror to these timid creatures, that would very soon disappear and take the back-woods for their home.

Rufus said it did seem too bad that the Dibbles did not wait one day longer, or that the deer had not come around one day sooner, so he could have treated them to fresh venison.

THE LOG-ROLLING BEE.

CHAPTER XII.

Rufus Corey was still in his prime, slender in figure but wiry and enduring in constitution.

He would step up to a forest tree and having looked at its size and standing and decided which way it must fall, begin to swing the axe with all his might, making the great chips fly. Occasionally he would stop to take breath and change his position, bracing himself anew; then he worked away until the tree creaked and leaned, when he would run quickly in the opposite direction to watch and wait for its downfall, which seemed like an earthquake. After the crash Patty always listened in breathless silence to hear the axe again, to know that all was well.

This clearing joined a neighbor's clearing on the north, and from Little Hill it descended towards The Corners and overlooked the country for miles around, making it the most sightly spot on the whole farm. But the new settler was causing great slaughter with the axe, and the natural scenery would soon be destroyed. All of the timber, little and big, must yield to the same stroke and fall in disorder in the slashing, like slain soldiers on a battlefield. It seemed a pity that no lover of nature cried out: "Woodman, spare the tree and save this five-acre field, the pride of The Corners and the beauty of your farm! Go further back for your slaughter! Spare those giant oaks, and the beech

and the maples, the hickory and the chestnuts; let them grow together another hundred years, until the scenery can be appreciated and such timber be of more value than all the pumpkins and corn, or buckwheat and turnips you can ever raise! Clear out the undergrowth of brush, and put up seats for the tired traveler to rest on; or dedicate it to humanity for a resort where the sick and the weary may come and pitch tents and recover strength, and get for yourself an honored name! Then, in after years, when it comes to be your turn to lay down your weapons of warfare, like Kurler Bow you can request that one of these giant trees be partially uprooted and your decaying body placed underneath, to moulder back to dust and fertilize the monarch of its race." * * * No such warning voice was heard; and this zealous man left not even a clump of maples for shade for his cattle or a few scattered ones along the roadside for ornament.

The market made no great demand on the forests for timber at this early date. A very small amount was used for building, for wooden bowls and rakes and axe-helves; and the tannery of John Brown on the old State road consumed a small quantity of bark for tanning hides. The pioneers were too far from Oil Creek to run lumber down the river to any of the large cities. The only way to get rid of it seemed to be to cut it down and burn it in heaps.

It proved hard work clearing land after the tree was cut down. The limbs had first to be trimmed off and the brush piled together, and then the body of the tree was sawed into suitable lengths for rolling into heaps. When all was ready, which was not until the second summer, an

invitation was sent to all the settlers to come with ox-teams, hand-spikes, logging chains and other necessary implements for a rolling bee. After all was over the great heaps were fired, and the country round about seemed ablaze, the angry flames leaping high in the air and tens of thousands of sparks soaring and darting toward the sky; while the fire, running over the ground, threatened everything within reach. Several times the old log house appeared in danger of being devoured by flames. It was only a heap of dry logs and of little value, save to shelter the family group, who were in the habit of gathering there for sleep and their meals. King Solomon says the sleep of the laboring man is sweet, whether he eats much or little.

When this fire had burned itself out and all was over, it left a gloomy aspect. Trees were injured, stumps charred and blackened, and the ground was covered with a pall as of mourning and desolation.

The squirrels soon learned the meaning of the sound of the woodman's axe, and dropped their nuts and disappeared. The deer no longer were seen bounding through the woods with the freedom and pride of former days, the bears made a new runway, and the partridge went further back in the woods to lay her eggs and hatch her brood.

This ground had been called rich soil. It had a yearly dressing of leaf mould and forest action, making it mellow and fertile. It seemed capable of raising bountiful crops to repay the husbandman for his hard labor. But the burning of such immense heaps of hard wood, and the fire running over the ground, heated the earth to such a depth that it burned up and destroyed all this deposit, leaving

only ashes (strong enough for Aunt Jemima's leach barrel) for a dressing; and this soon rendered the land almost barren and a great disappointment to the farmer.

As soon as ground was ready, corn was considered best for the first crop, and this was worked in among the roots and charred stumps with some expectation of realizing at least a half crop. With this the farmer must try and get along until the stumps could rot and then be jagged out with a team. Pumpkin seeds, also, were freely dropped in with the corn, and many flattering hopes were cherished about the pumpkin crop, which must answer for the poor man's fruit the coming year. All these bright hopes and expectations were blasted when it was discovered that the squirrels, the chipmunks and the 'possums had come back in force and destroyed every fair prospect. They may have felt a spirit of revenge because the fire had burned their nuts, stored in holes and in the roots of the trees; and when searching for them and finding the farmer's corn, they took it—which seemed a natural thing for a squirrel to do. More seed had now to be bought and more work done, and with far less courage about any great returns.

Farmer Corey wasted no unnecessary words with these little enemies; but he declared war against them and got up an indignation meeting. It was decided to take a week for hunting, and kill off all the pests that could be killed, so that at least a small crop might be raised to help the farmers through the coming hard times. Honest men were chosen judges on each side, and every able-bodied man and boy was ordered to shoulder a gun and scour woods and fields.

The game was to be counted by the tails, except mischievous birds—among which were red-headed wood-

peckers and crows, so destructive to corn—which would be counted by their heads.

It was not easy to rid the country of squirrels. When young Corey was clearing up his land he had saved out chestnut logs for fencing. These were split into rails, with beetle and wedge, the wedge being usually of iron and the beetle a hardwood knot with a long handle and very heavy, making it hard work to drive the wedge into the log with sufficient force to split it. A fence was usually laid up about nine rails high, in a zig-zag manner; and when the squirrels found that they were being pursued they seemed to realize their danger and took to this fence, so that it was difficult getting a shot at them.

This hunt thinned out the squirrels, so that the farmer raised enough pumpkins for a paring-bee in the fall, and corn enough for a husking-bee.

THE BASHFUL BLACKSMITH.

CHAPTER XIII.

Patty had to empty her rag-bag nearly every day to search for a suitable patch for some dreadful tear in one or another of the boys' clothes, made by playing in the slashing, climbing over logs or hiding in the brush. Little Nat had been in hiding a long time, while his mother searched the house for something suitable to mend with.

Rufus brought in his tanned woodchuck skins and asked why they would not do to cover the knees and seat, against wear and tear. Patty had to laugh at a man's idea of the fitness of things, and said the children already showed as many colors as the speckled hen. She told her husband she had a good mind to sell the old garments to the ragman for two cents a pound. They would weigh heavy.

The rag-bag was the housekeeper's savings bank. She put into it every scrap of waste cloth, bits of paper and ravelings. The contents were then gathered up about once a month by an old man going the rounds, carrying them on his back in summer and hauling them on a bark sled in winter, and blowing a tin trumpet to let people know he was coming.

Nat had hardly got into his breeches when his mother, happening to look out of the north window towards home (as she often "happened" to do), saw a stranger with a

pack on his back coming over the hill; and she imagined that he walked lame from traveling. She hustled things to rights in a great hurry. She was always looking for old friends, but few ever came in sight.

This man proved to be Gershon Holt, their village blacksmith from the East; and he was hunting business. They at once informed him how much he was needed at The Corners, to help build up the place. They had a rake factory, and a wooden-bowl factory, and a cooper; and a milliner who raised and cured her own straw, then braided, sewed, bleached, shaped and trimmed her own bonnets. With a good blacksmith they could be quite independent.

Gershon Holt said he could do anything in his line of business, from shoeing their cattle up to mending the broken eye of a cambric needle. Patty was much taken with the idea of having a good workman near who could mend her broken needles. Now, if she happened to be unfortunate and broke off the point from a good one, she had to whet out another point, and could make the needle do to sew on patches and buttons; but she had lost many a valuable needle by having a hole in her thimble. She wished he could make pins, too. She sometimes got out and had to use thorn-pins, and they seemed dangerous in the children's clothes.

They pulled every string to fasten this newcomer down to business. He was a bachelor and shy of company, especially of girls; but evenings they invited in young folks, hoping he might fall in love and settle down. They joked him about getting a wife, and to their surprise he declared his willingness to take one the first opportunity.

But he acknowledged being slow as well as bashful, and needing help. He said marriage seemed like a lottery anyway, and he supposed he might as well choose blindfolded. He offered to give all he possessed, which was his dog and gun and fifty cents in money left over from traveling expenses, to anyone who would find a suitable wife for him.

Rufus Corey kindly volunteered to assist in the matter, free of charge. He knew very well that if this young man was to settle down in the new country, away from friends, the first thing to do would be to get from among the industrious country girls a helpmeet. He felt sure that he knew exactly the one he should choose for him, as a companion; but as a matter of business he cast his eyes around the circle of those present.

Ethelinda Peacock must have been well on towards thirty; so, out of due respect to age, the question was put first to her whether she was willing on such short acquaintance to take Greshon Holt for her lawful husband.

Ethelinda said the question was so sudden that it nearly took her breath away; but every girl in the room knew well enough that she never would let the best chance (no doubt the only one) of her life pass round to anybody else. She looked anxiously at the young man, and by the dim light of the tallow candle she saw that he had a pleasing face. She had no time to inquire into his habits of life: and after short reflection she said "Yes". That settled the matter.

The sky was black with clouds which threatened storm,

but late as it was Rufus Corey tramped three full miles to bring the Squire to tie the matrimonial knot securely.

In the meantime, a delegation was chosen and had been sent to consult with the Peacock family to get their consent, so that everything be done properly.

Uncle Solomon and Aunt Charity had retired for the night, and were sound asleep; but they made no fuss about being disturbed and no objection to their daughter's getting married, although it did seem sudden and a great surprise.

Ethelinda gathered up a pan of fresh dough-nuts, and a huge piece of sage-cheese, and hurried back to be on time for the ceremony.

This match proved to be one of the number made in Heaven.

THE BACKWOODS SCHOOL.

CHAPTER XIV.

Mrs. Corey had always mourned for some of the privileges she was obliged to leave behind when she started West. Among others was the Village Infant School, where mothers could take their little ones and leave them through the day for proper care and training; then gather them home again at night safe and sound. But here the children of the backwoods district must be crowded together, little and big, in one small room, to try and get an education.

The schoolhouse was between the deacon's house and the country graveyard, and the deacon's wife kindly offered to signal the noon hour by hanging out a white cloth from her window towards the schoolhouse, then taking it in at one. She would hang it out again at four o'clock, the time to dismiss. This would seem a tax on the deacon's wife, but she wanted to show her interest in the rising generation.

It proved a busy time for Mrs. Corey, getting the children ready for school. The boys must have new shirts and jean overalls, and the girls must have new dresses and gingham aprons, all to be made by her own hands. She sent by her husband to town for pretty shades of buff and pink calico. He suggested that she make the girls' dresses with as little work for herself as possible. He said he did not care how rich the material might be, he liked to see

it made neatly but plain. His wife was sure he had inherited his Quaker blood from his great-grandmother, Hannah Lightfoot; but after all his kind advice she did scrimp the dresses a little to get out a narrow ruffle for the bottom, thinking a person might about as well be out of the world as out of the fashion. She thought of the small boy sitting all day on those slab benches, with no cushion but thin overalls; and she guessed that for once they would be glad when the time came for patches.

They engaged Miss Tryphena Feltebouser to teach the school for a term of three months, at one dollar per week, and board around.

When the children heard the knocking sound of Miss Tryphena's great hardwood ruler on the window-sash they knew that meant "school is called", and then they must be caged for all summer.

Nat and Towhead chose seats side by side. What one knew about the outside world the other must know. They had rambled through the woods shouldering sticks for guns, ready to fire at sight of the first bear that crossed their path. They were brave little heroes, but they knew very little about school. They listened to the teacher's rules, and saw the hickory wisps and birch sprouts stored away in the closet for future use; and they intended to be obedient scholars, and let somebody else take the whippings.

But one morning after school had called and all seemed quiet, a shocking circumstance occurred. Betty Briley came in dressed in indigo-blue, with short skirt and nankeen pantalettes.

She made a great contrast beside the back-woods girls in their long, scant skirts. The larger boys drew down their heads behind their slates and snickered; and Nat and Towhead put their heads close together and whispered, very low: but it broke the rules of school. The teacher's back was turned, too, but she heard all the same; and the way she jerked those little urchins off their seats into the middle of the room was a caution to the rest. She demanded an explanation of what they were saying; but they were so frightened that they could not have told if they would, and they would not if they could.

For punishment she thrust them down on a seat between some little girls—and one was Betty Briley. It seemed a terrible disgrace. A flogging with those hickory wisps would not have seemed half so bad. It proved to be one of those never-to-be-forgotten lessons learned in the first days of school.

The excitement soon died away, and it was not long before every girl in the country went into pantalettes. John Brown had many a puttering job dipping short lengths of unbleached cotton in his vats, after hides were taken out. Tan bark made durable nankeen color, and was thought to be cheaper.

The circuit preacher came around every four weeks to hold meetings in the new schoolhouse, instead of in the deacon's barn, which seemed more sanctimonious. For his dedication sermon he took for his text; "And a little child shall lead them," and Nat wondered if it could be that the preacher meant Betty Briley; but he noticed that he did not say anything about pantalettes.

Miss Tryphena found a welcome in every house in going her rounds and boarding. Great pains was taken in scrubbing and scouring, in baking and fixing up to make her week seem as pleasant as could possibly be; and now it had come the turn of the Corey family to open their door and show their hospitality. Their house was old and rough and dirty, and Mrs. Corey declared with tears in her eyes that she could not make the week pleasant or comfortable. Mr. Corey wanted to be hospitable and kind as others had been, although he knew very well what a heavy burden his wife was carrying. So he volunteered to cook the Sunday's dinner if she would try to pull through the rest of the week.

Patty smiled through her tears at what seemed to her a ludicrous idea. Then she remembered hearing him tell of some wonderful cooking he had done when off in the woods hunting, when he had no one but himself to please. She remembered some doughnuts which he had fried in bear's oil and brought home as a sample for her. She was willing he should try his skill at cooking; but she assured him he would find it harder than a day's logging. So the matter was arranged.

He slept soundly. The dinner question did not interfere with his sleep, but his wife never closed her eyes, thinking and planning the whole night through.

In the morning Rufus built an extra large fire, so he could have plenty of nice hardwood coals, and Patty put on a clean checked apron and sat down in her rocking chair, jogging the cradle partly from force of habit, wondering all the time what kind of a meal her husband could get

up for company. She expected every minute to be called on to help out. She was sure his good fire would be half the battle, and he still kept piling on wood and stirring it. He had the night before rolled up his clean shirt and tucked it under his arm and started off for the mill-pond to take a swim and wash up.

He now rolled up his shirt sleeves and began scrubbing his hands, meanwhile telling the family about a time when, out on a long hunt and away from his shanty, he became very hungry and feeling as though he could digest tenpenny nails, he stopped at a wigwam and asked the squaw to bake him a cake. He told her to first wash her hands, and to make it nice. She went to work at a great rate, and he felt satisfied that for once she must be clean; but to his horror she took the water in which she had scrubbed herself so thoroughly to mix his cake.

After washing some of the fairest of his potatoes he laid them on the hearth before the fire to dry; then he put them in one corner and covered them with ashes, and then with live coals and ashes again, and left them to roast. In the other corner some corn cobs were burning. The ashes of these he gathered up in a tea-cup, and poured water over them. When this settled he used it as a pearlash, or soda, to sweeten the sour milk and make light his shortcake, which he baked before the fire in the tin reflector. He knew that Patty was smiling to see his awkward way of rolling out his cake and scoring it across, and he did wish she would go out with the children and take the fresh air, and not watch everything he undertook. He shaved some thin slices of salt pork and placed them

before the fire to fry to a crisp. When done he lifted them out, sliced in potatoes which were not so fair, then added a pinch more of salt, a small bit of red pepper and a little hot water, to cook and make them juicy. The meat he served with his stew.

Patty saw that the table was not yet set, the tea-kettle was not over, and the sweat was standing in great drops on her husband's forehead. Several times he drew his clean sleeve across his face; and he acknowledged that there were too many irons in the fire for him. He looked anxiously out to see if the schoolma'am was coming on time.

When she did come she was very sweet and smiling, telling them about the meeting. She was hungry and enjoyed everything, especially the stew—which pleased the cook.

He said to his wife that he did not think Miss Tryphena at all stuck up.

HICKORY CORNERS.

CHAPTER XV.

A hickory pole was raised about the time of Harrison's nomination to the presidency, and a flag waved over the old log house bearing the name in bold letters, "Hickory Corners".

Mr. Corey had lost his cattle from storm and exposure until he considered a barn a necessity, or he would be in danger of losing his horse team, too. While clearing land he had saved out some fine logs and hauled them to the nearest mill to lie there until he could get them sawed.

Heavy timber was used in this wooden country, making framing a long and difficult job. The sills, sleepers, joists, posts and braces must all be in proper places to be handy and make raising easy. None but a skilled workman could safely be trusted with the raising of such a heavy building.

They had chosen a fine site, at proper distance from the house, so the barn would show off well and add beauty and enterprise to the Corners, "Hickory Corners."

It was a joyful day to the family and neighbors when they saw a suitable force of men gather on the ground, and with pike-poles raise the first bent and hold it in place until another could be raised, and fastened to it and then another in the same way, till all were up. Then some

courageous man climbed to the big beam and with mallet in hand drove the great wooden pins to hold the frame securely, when it was ready for rafters.

Every man had showed an iron constitution as well as a ready hand until the frame stood upright, a skeleton, but a credit to their labor, as well as to the boss of the job. The old brown jug was now passed around and treat given, after which, one man climbed to the big beam with jug in hand and named the building, calling it

"Rufus' industry and Patty's delight,
A long time framing but raised before night."

The men next drank the owner's health and happiness and gave three rousing cheers which made the woods ring, and the empty jug was then thrown to the ground and dashed to pieces, and the men were invited to the house for a hearty meal.

It was a long time before the new barn was finished, and when it was done it looked so cheerful and inviting, with its resinous smell of pine lumber fresh from the mill, that Patty decided she would like to move the cradle and spinning-wheel out there for a change. The logs in her house were rotting and had a musty, dirty smell, and she was tired of so much care and hard work. It was work from morning till late at night, to get enough to feed and clothe so many growing children decently.

If they were out of sight they were sure to be in mischief: what one could not think of another could. One boy was liable to chop off his brother's fingers learning to use the axe, and another rascal to get stung catching bumble-bees for their honey. Some little girl would be

found guilty of squeezing to death half a brood of soft, downy chickens, and baby would be sure to fall down in a bed of chestnut burrs. She must be within calling distance in case of an emergency; and she dared not give out, for who could fill her place? She often wished some kind body would step in and share the burdens of her careworn life. The only spare room she could offer would be the one made by draping sheets for curtains from a tester-frame about a high-post bedstead, with foot curtains frilled around to hide from view a trundle-bed which was run under the bed during the day, and pulled out into the room at night for the children. She was proud of that bed in the corner, made up high enough for a step-ladder, spread over with patchwork quilts and kept for company; where one could retire and, pulling together the drapery, shut out the family, think over the past and dream of the future.

"Hickory Corners" had become quite an important center.

When a doctor's services were needed one doctor answered the call for miles around, carrying in his saddle-bags plenty of calomel, his favorite medicine in most cases, a lance for bleeding his patients, and turnkeys for pulling teeth. The sight of this doctor coming toward the house has been known to completely cure the most severe attack of jumping toothache, so great was the dread of having to sit down on the floor, with the head placed securely between the doctor's knees and both hands stoutly held, to prevent their interfering with business. The doctor's process was to first slowly cut away the gum from the tooth, when he granted a moment's time to spit blood and

take breath. Then he braced himself for a desperate struggle with cold iron, turning and pulling with all his strength. Perhaps even then the instrument slipped off, leaving the tooth only half way out; when both doctor and patient must get ready for another pull.

When help from the doctor's wife was needed she mounted the horse behind her husband, seated on a tanned sheepskin with its wool-side up, and they trotted off. They always kept a horse that would carry double; and many a time her watchful care and good nursing in the sick room did more towards the patient's recovery than all the contents of the doctor's saddle-bags. Aunt Artemisia never stopped for frizzes or furbelows. By the time the old horse could be got ready she was ready.

One dark night when all were in bed and sound asleep the dogs set up a spirited barking, and a horse was heard coming at full speed towards the house. Aunt Artemisia jumped out of bed, hardly half awake, and began feeling for her bag of herbs so as to be ready for a start off to see some sick body; when a young voice called out that Mrs. Bulgrine's baby had a pain in his stomach and she wanted to borrow the doctor's camphor bottle.

"Is that all?" cried Aunt Artemisia.

It was towards morning before the family could quiet their nerves and go to sleep again.

GENERAL TRAINING.

CHAPTER XVI.

It was General Training, a big day in town, ten miles away.

People had to get an early start to be there in time for the full benefit of the parade.

Mrs. Corey had watched the great load of brave men, with their brass buttons shining in the sun and tall plumes waving in the breeze, till the wagon disappeared behind the trees, thinking how respectable they looked in their military outfit. She hoped the drill and sound of fife and drum once more would have a tendency to enliven their spirits and give them new courage for their hardships. She said it did seem a little lonesome outside, not to be able to hear the familiar sound of axe or hoe, and several times during the day she thought she heard martial music in the distance; but it proved to be only Uncle Solomon's bees, which took it in their heads to swarm as soon as he was gone, just as he said he knew they would do.

Aunt Charity and all the children rigged up and armed themselves with tin pans and drum sticks, trying to charm the bees with their music and induce them to light near home, instead of going off to the woods where they could have more freedom.

Towards evening, and about the time the military men would be starting for home, Mrs Corey discovered

black clouds gathering in the West. Her fears were aroused. She was always afraid of thunderstorms. When her children were little and she saw a storm coming up she gathered in her brood and put them in the middle of the feather bed, while she got down the dusty bible and took her seat beside them, searching for a promise of protection in the hour of need.

All the while the clouds were growing blacker off towards town. The storm must strike the men somewhere on the way home, and there was only now and then a small clearing the whole ten miles. Soon the wind began blowing a terrible gale and the lightning flashed and streaked the sky constantly. Mrs. Corey began to walk the floor and wring her hands in agony, declaring the men and team must be killed by the falling timber or struck by lightning. It did seem a sad thought to have to bury all the men of that little settlement who were able to do military duty, and leave their helpless families to suffer.

Nothing could be said or done to afford the slightest relief. The danger was becoming alarming to all.

Suddenly a gale struck the girdling and the great trees fell, while the limbs flew through the air like feathers, making a frightful scene outside. When it struck the house, off went a part of the old shake roof, letting in the pouring rain. The hailstones had already broken the windows. The children took to the trundle beds for safety.

In the midst of this greatest confusion up flew the wooden latch and in dodged one of the lost men with his tall hat and cocks plume and surtout with its many capes and brass buttons all drenched and dripping wet. They

had had a miraculous escape. They gave the horses a loose rein and the frightened animals ran over fallen timber, brush and everything in their way, spilling out their groceries, but every man was safe from accident.

A rousing fire was built to dry the room and cook something to eat. Patty hung on the tea-kettle and went out calling, "Co, boss! Co, boss!" The cow did not come. Patty was alarmed. "The cow would surely come when she heard my voice, if she could," she said.

She skimmed her last pan of milk to get cream for tea and milk for the children.

In the morning Mr. Corey crept from bed before it was light to look over the farm, and see what damages had been done to timber and fences, and to try and find poor Spot, the last of their York State cows. She had seen the storm coming and started for home with a bag full of rich milk for her mistress and the children, when a dry limb of an old tree was snapped off and fell on her leg, breaking it so she could go no further, but had to lie there through all the storm in agony and fright. When he found her she moaned to let him know she wanted help.

Brave as her master had always been with his gun he had to call on a neighbor to help him out of this terrible trouble.

HARD TIMES.

CHAPTER XVII.

Hard times began to be seriously felt throughout the new country. Men were pushed to the wall in money matters. There was not enough money circulating to pay taxes. Life seemed a great struggle, but nobody went crazy over it. Like one great family they tried to share each other's burdens in neighborly kindness and brotherly love.

A full-grown man worked hard in haying from daylight till dark for fifty cents per day. All was barter and trade.

The merchant bought the farmer's butter and eggs, and whatever else he raised to turn off, but had to pay him from behind his counter in dry goods and groceries.

Economy was an art much studied in every home.

Women made over their worn dresses, turning them upside down and back side in front, and these garments seemed fresh and new. If they were fortunate and could have really new, they made them by hand and only wore them on extra occasions; and then they would begin to unfasten them as soon as they reached the chip-yard, to be ready to step out of them and into a work dress the minute they got inside the house and behind the curtains.

A shoemaker came to the house with his kit of tools to shoe the family. He took the measure of little and big

by standing each heel against the wall with the weight thrown on said foot, when a point of a knife was stuck in the floor at the tip of the big toe. Then the foot was removed and the space measured. All shoes were made low with straps to lace across and commonly tied with leather strings. The larger girls had to have turned pumps made of soft leather to dance in. Rawhides were carried to the tannery of John Brown, on the Old State road, and tanned on shares.

The Corey family had been without milk for a long time. One day their neighbor, Mrs. Little, came around and offered to trade them a young heifer and take pay in spinning. She would sell the heifer for ten dollars and pay one dollar a week with board for a full week's work.

Hilda was on tiptoe to make herself tall enough to reach the spindle and try her luck at buying a cow for the family. So she tied up her little bundle and went over the hill to begin on her job. With the ease and grace of an expert she danced out and back to the spindle until all was ready to reel, the while counting to keep it in mind "Forty threads around the reel make one knot; ten knots make one skein and four skeins make one day's work." Then she twisted up her skein and hung it away on a peg driven in the log wall for that purpose. This was her first day's work. All other days must be the same for ten weeks: then she could drive home her cow. It seemed a long time to Hilda to wait to have her cow become useful to the family.

Spring did come finally and the grass began to start and look green in the pastures, when one morning the little folks were surprised to hear that a young calf had come

to the barn during the night, and that it looked for all the world like poor old Spot, their York State cow that died. All agreed that the calf must be raised and have half the milk until it could eat grass, the calf to be served first because it had the first right.

The little ones watched their mother when she took a little tin pail and stripped the richer half of the milk that remained after the calf was satisfied. Then she added to it as much spring-water, to make it go around. She had to do this so many times a day that they decided to call the cow "Little Stripper". Their plans seemed now to be working finely for their cow to raise the calf and the children, too.

But, to their surprise and horror, word came that "Little Stripper" had been driven by unruly cattle into the pond of water and was dying with chills, and still worse the constable had been there and levied on Mr. Corey's team for unpaid taxes. He could not raise any money, and his neighbors had none that he could borrow. Mr. Corey said he was sure none of his neighbors would be mean enough to bid on his team; but he did not know who the constable might find to do such an unkind act.

Rufus went to his cupboard shelf and took his glass of tansy bitters, and asked his wife to take a sip to help to keep her spirits up. Patty shook her head. She could not speak. She was heartsick and wished that they had kept the old emigrant wagon rigged up so they could leave the country and go West again.

Rufus told the children to get some dishes and go with him to the woods and he would tap maple trees and gather sap to make them some porridge for supper, in-

stead of milk. They watched the trees give down the sap drop after drop, and the sun heated the tins and evaporated it about as fast as it dropped. The bees came buzzing around for their share to carry off for honey, which made their prospects seem doubtful for supper, but they allowed mother could make it go around by adding spring water. Their father was sure there must be a bee tree nearby where the bees were carrying their sweets, and he would run to the house and get flour to sprinkle their backs to mark them, and then he could follow them straight home to their tree. He wanted to find out how his wife was feeling, too.

As he came near the house he was greatly relieved to hear her humming in a low voice, to the baby, and he caught these words:

"There are more that live worse than live better than me."

GOING WEST AGAIN

CHAPTER XVIII.

Ten years more of hard work, clearing land and struggling with all sorts of hardships, and Rufus Corey's Western fever returned, this time with a firmer grip than before. His farm had not come up to his expectations since he cut away those beautiful trees, and burned up the virgin soil. Buckwheat and turnips would do well, and weeds grew everywhere, but they were not very profitable or satisfactory. Stumps still stood in the ground, charred and blackened by the fire. The farm had a run down look of shiftlessness, which made him sick of home and he was decided to pull up stakes and go further on, to begin anew and try and keep pace with the growth of the country.

He had several times divided his large farm to lessen taxes and pay off debts, but it was impossible to get ahead. He tried lumbering on Oil Creek, but it proved uncertain business. He little dreamed of the hidden wealth of that God-forsaken place, buried out of sight, but so soon to be revealed to a poorer man than he; or of the future of the Seneca oil of which he carried a sample bottle in his pocket, a medicine for rheumatism and many other complaints, and a specimen of which the natives gathered by floating woolen blankets on the surface of the water and then wringing out this crude oil, resembling cheap molasses. If he had had any idea how great would have been the excitement in the near future, he most likely would

have stayed by this country and seen some of the wonderful experiments made in drilling down into the earth, and the spouting and flowing and overflowing, until his raft might have floated down stream on an oily surface. And then came the needful discoveries in refining and purifying, until this oil became a necessity in the world, supplying a great want in every home. This revelation, like most other discoveries, came too late for one poor man's benefit. The emigrant wagon had gone West again, carrying Patty and her large family of children away from such excitement and temptation.

Rufus Corey never made one dollar in sepculation. He earned his bread by the sweat of his brow. It seemed sometimes like a poor living and very hard work, but his mission was helping to pave the highway across the continent, and making life easy for coming generations.

When the family had fully decided on another trip towards the setting sun, they told the friends they had dealt with so many years to come and take from the house, or the farm, things to satisfy all claims they might have against them. If the deal seemed about equal, they jumped accounts and called all settled.

It was concluded to let the merchant have the farm for store debt. He could take it anyhow, if disposed to force payment. Mrs. Corey exchanged farewell visits and drank tea for the last time with all the old neighbors, wondering if she should ever have any more such dear friends in the new country. It was hard parting. They took a last lingering look over the farm, and drank once more from the cold water spring, and then gave up all their

interests for strangers to reap, in future years, the benefit of their labor; and with tears streaming from their eyes they crowded into the little white house on wheels for another move West, leaving a great vacancy about "The Corners."

Uncle Solomon Peacock could not set himself to work again for days, but could be seen hanging on both sides of the line fence, with his elbows resting on his knees and his head on his hands, having a dreadful fit of "the horrors." For ten years these men had worked together like brothers, changing with each other in killing times, and in haying and harvesting; in fact, all kinds of hard labor seemed to move along much easier when they joined hands.

The emigrant family soon became interested in that part of the world through which they were passing, and they would gladly have selected a farm by the way; but they were obliged to go further, where land would be cheap and terms easy. So they fell in the line of travel, often stopping to rekindle campfires which were still burning.

When they reached Illinois they halted and considered which would be best; to settle on prairie land which was all ready for the plow, or go further on and look for a timber claim. Patty was afraid that some stray spark from a straggler's pipe might set the wild grass on fire, and the angry flames burn up her whole family. She would choose a hut in a wilderness, which would seem much more homelike to all.

Mr. Corey left his family and went into Wisconsin, where he found a lightly wooded claim with a stipulation

house on it, which a former prospector had pre-empted and made some pretense toward improving. Then, for some reason, he had left, forfeiting his claim, which Rufus jumped. He at once sent for his family and crowded them into the little log house, the doors and windows of which had been carried away with the deserter. The first work was to hang quilts in the doorway for protection, and they slept on the floor. Their greatest scare was when they awoke one morning to find a full-sized Indian standing in the door, with tomahawk in hand, making a frightful picture as he demanded bread and whiskey. After his curiosity was satisfied and he was told they had no whiskey, he went off, to their great relief.

The country soon settled up, and some of their old York State neighbors were neighbors here. They never lost courage. Prosperity crowned every effort. They cut down timber and worked it into lumber, which commanded a high price. The older girls taught school; and Mrs. Corey, with her younger children, went out and dug roots and gathered herbs and prepared them for the drug market, and made it profitable. The family might have starved the first few months, but for the little patch of potatoes which the early settler had left behind, and the fine fish they caught in the river. The boys gave mother much credit for the delicious gravy she made for their potatoes, out of spring water and a little thickening of flour.

Few people can realize the privations and hardships of these pioneer settlers in the West, when they paved the way for a more comfortable life. Postage on letters sent over five hundred miles was twenty-five cents, so they heard but seldom from their friends.

As soon as postage was reduced and stamps were introduced a friend sent some of the new stamps to the family to prepay their correspondence. They wrote up their neglected letters, and then they placed the stamps on just like the sample; but when they saw that a black mark had been drawn through the used stamp to cancel it, they drew a similar mark through the new stamps, to give them the same look and insure their passing safely through the mail.

The first crop of wheat was cut with a sickle, and threshed by hand. A flail was made of hickory; one stick about six feet long with a crease cut deep around, and another about half the length of the first, with a hole bored through one end. This was tied with a stout string of eelskin through the hole, and around in the crease of the larger stick. The threshing was done by pounding out the wheat by this flying machine. The grain was then cleaned by taking it in a stiff breeze and pouring it from basket to basket.

Every year they raised larger crops, with less labor in harvest time; and they were soon able to have a nice comfortable home and some of the luxuries of life, which seemed the crowning glory of their old age.

One day a forlorn traveler bolted in without ceremony, just as the family had gathered about the table for their dinner. They often lacked chairs enough to go around and some of the smaller children had to stand, but the rocker was always kept in the room for manners. Mr. Corey told the stranger to help himself to a seat, meaning the rocker.

The man unloaded his pack from his shoulders and began to make himself at home; and then he asked the privilege of sitting by to "sop his dodger in the dip." The family thought he must be crazy. Rufus knew very well that they had little to spare from the table; but he told the man in a friendly way to haul up and sit by, and he would be welcome to share the meal, such as it was. The newcomer brought along his corn dodger, cold and dry and hard, and Patty shoved across the table her cup of tea; then Rufus put the platter of fried bacon where it would be handy, and talked as fast as he could in order that the stranger might have his part of the meat.

The man said his shoes had grown stiff by travel, and he would like something to oil them, too.

Mr. Corey got out his cup of bear's oil and put into it a pinch of lampblack, telling the visitor that he knew how to pity sore feet. Then while the shoes were being oiled and limbered he brought a sprig or two of green tansy, bruised it in the mortar with the pestle, and put it in a tumbler with whiskey. He took a good after-dinner dram himself, after which he treated his strange guest, who went on his way in good spirits.

THE BRIDE MEHITABLE GOES WEST.

CHAPTER XIX.

The hive was getting too full, and the children, like bees, began to swarm and go off to make new homes of their own. The boys were going farther West; and their letters were very flattering about Nebraska lands, which they claimed were cheaper and the soil richer, producing larger crops with less labor. The climate was mild, salubrious and healthful.

Berlin Dana came one day with his heart in a flutter, to ask consent to marry Mehitabel and take his bride off West for a home.

Rufus Corey hesitated. He knew the trials of getting started in frontier life. He knew it would be a great change for these children to leave a good home, with cheerful surroundings, the picnics in the sugar grove and the sleigh-rides by moonlight, the huskings and the quiltings and the weddings, and settle down to an isolated life of drudgery. The tears filled his eyes, but he brushed them away and tried to be brave. He realized that he was growing old, and his mind and his body must be getting weak.

Berlin and Hitty found the new country to contain plenty of land. At that early date there was little but land, land as far as the eye could reach in all directions. It was like a great ocean of land, with a luxurious growth of wild grass waving and swaying in the breeze in such a rollick-

ing manner that it made Hitty seasick and homesick. She wanted to turn back and find a five-acre patch of ground near some thriving town, where they might bring the soil up to a high state of cultivation and try to raise small fruits for the market, and get some enjoyment out of life while being within the bounds of civilization. But young Dana wished his bride to make up her mind to be brave, now that she had enlisted. He said that was what the soldiers had to do, and that was what the Western women had to do, and the only way she could do. He liked to see great fields of corn, and waving grain growing, and herds of cattle roaming over the plains as the buffalo used to do in the early days. He did not quite know what he would do with so much corn when he had raised it, so far from any market. It was considered good fuel. He could find a home market for some, for there was little else to burn. Corn would be very handy, especially in blizzard times. Then he decided he could get a herd of swine and feed his corn to his hogs, and fatten them and drive them to market, instead of hauling so much grain so far. This seemed easier, and would most likely bring better returns.

It proved a severe struggle the first few months for Hitty to live down her heartaches, and the desire and the feeling that she must go home and away from the dreary, monotonous solitude.

They selected their claim and built a little frame house, which might very properly have been named the "Prairie Shell;" then they moved in to hold down their land, and they got a cow and a herd of young swine to begin with. There were few birds to sing and nest in the trees, for there were no trees. The only music Hitty could

hear was the tinkle of the cowbell and the mournful lowing of the homesick cow tethered out on the great prairie. She wondered why the poor thing did not break loose and wander back to the herd for company. The pigs took to the dooryard, but she did not take to the pigs. She was not sure she could find a kitten west of Lincoln for a pet.

The young husband went with his wife down to the nearest settlement, some four miles away, where there were a few sod-houses huddled together, constituting a Western town; and on their way home they stopped at prairie dogtown, consisting of forty acres claimed by squatter sovereignty. The dogs came up out of their holes and sat on their mounds, made when excavating their dug-outs, and barked like young puppies and were very cunning; but the minute Hitty tried to pet them they disappeared underground.

They finally bought a hen sitter, warranted as faithful as an old clock. They put up a perch in the wood-shed for her to roost upon. Hitty did not object to making biddy one of the family; and they fixed shy places for nests. But the old hen had ideas of her own, so she stole away and made her nest in a little haystack. After laying her litter she came around with her feathers all ruffled up, clucking and letting her wants be known in a decided manner. They started for the town immediately for choice eggs; and Hitty put down in the almanac the precise time biddy began sitting. Fourteen days seemed such a long while to wait.

But the time allowed for hatching was now up, and all day long the faithful sitter had kept her nest through a drenching rain, without a morsel of food, for she knew

well enough that if she should let those precious eggs get chilled it would damage the whole lot. Hitty worried about the poor thing, and wanted to send her crumbs; but Berl said it would be unwise—it might make her uneasy. And he probably was right. Men most always are.

The rain continued, and it proved a regular downpour. The next day School Creek was so swollen that it overflowed its banks, and surrounded the little stack, cutting off all communication with the house. Hitty closely watched the stack. She saw it move—then it turned, and tipped a little. Then it slid from its foundation; and again she looked, and saw it rushing off down the roaring, angry stream, and away out of sight—with poor biddy still on her nest, a faithful sitter to the last. This taught Hitty not to count her chickens before they hatched.

After a long time a German family settled on land adjoining the Danas, and it was a welcome sight to see some signs of life across the fields. Hitty told her husband that as soon as the family seemed to have things fairly put to rights she should go over and get acquainted with her new neighbors.

One afternoon she dressed in her wedding outfit to make a fashionable call, and Berlin was proud of her good appearance and escorted her through the fields to where he was plowing. Before starting she took from the oven a fresh loaf of bread, and put in its place a tin can of baked beans, to gradually heat and be smoking hot on their return.

The German woman and she chatted in a friendly manner, scarcely understanding each other; but it seemed neighborly to meet and be on speaking terms. Berlin quit

work early, in order to see his wife home safely and get his supper of baked beans, and they walked across the fields together. But when they opened the kitchen they were horrified to find the oven door blown from its hinges, the stove covers off, the room full of smoke, and the air-tight can (in which she had failed to make a vent) burst open and beans shot about the room everywhere—on the ceiling, on the walls, and over the floor. Only two beans remained in the can for their evening meal.

When leaving the German family, Hitty had given her neighbor a cordial invitation to come and see her; and to her surprise, the next day after morning chores were done up the woman and her five children came over to spend the day. She informed Mehitabel that if she would blow the dinner horn at noon, her man would hear and come to dinner with the rest of the family.

These neighbors proved a great comfort to Hitty and her husband, who learned many valuable lessons from them about farming and gardening. The German family worked hard. He sowed grain, planted corn and made garden, and in time had a good start on his new place. His five acres of sweet corn was very promising. Nothing could compare with it in all the country round. When the ears were nearly ready for market he left work for a two days' trip to mill. On passing by this field he was more than ever before impressed with the prospects for a fine crop, and thought: "This field shall be entered at the county fair for premium." But on his return home no visible sign of corn was left, not even a green husk; only bare stalks like bean poles remained standing, and every green thing in his garden was eaten up by the grasshoppers.

They came in such immense swarms that they filled the air, and looked like a blizzard in the summer season. The German woman tried to scare them away, but all to no use. They would not leave until they had made a clean sweep of everything.

When Mehitabel saw them coming for her garden she, too, thought it a blizzard; and when they alighted she remembered her little peach tree, loaded with young peaches and wanted if possible to save it. She caught her double woolen shawl and wound it about the tree until they should pass on, and thought by this means to save the peaches from being devoured. When the grasshoppers had left and she went to look after the tree, nothing was there but the bare stones clinging to the limbs, and no sign of any shawl was to be found.

This proved a serious calamity to the new settlement, having all their crops destroyed. The German was discouraged and left the country, and his corn poles dried in the sun.

PATTY GOES HOME TO REST.

CHAPTER XX.

Twenty-five years of labor and enterprise had made wonderful changes in the Western country. Towns and cities had sprung into existence as by magic, and comfortable farm houses had taken the place of the little stipulation huts of the early settlers, indicating prosperity.

Rufus Corey's orchard, which he had raised from the bag of apple seeds he had carried with him and planted out as soon as possible, had come into bearing and promised to be a profitable investment. The family had watched with much interest for the first appearance of buds and blossoms; now the trees bore a bountiful supply of delicious fruit. Patty loved her home, and every adornment for this home was an added pleasure to her life.

Rag carpets became the rage; and she, who had never had a carpet, determined to make enough to cover every room. It would not only save scrubbing, but would look so stylish. Her ambition was aroused and she soon converted the new home into a workshop, where could be heard the merry bustle of busy industry. The workers stripped up all the old garments, and some not so old; they bought up at the nearby store orange, red and green calico, to shade in with dull and faded colors and make a fancy stripe as gay as the rainbow. One girl set the swifts whirling with three skeins of cotton yarn, doubling the three threads

into a single strong twine to make a durable warp; another took the ball of twine and, with the great wheel whizzing and buzzing at a furious rate, gave it a hard twist; and another was stripping the gay colors and sewing and winding them into balls ready for weaving. As soon as the stripes were planned these were wound on shingles, according to fancy, and displayed about the room.

Mrs. Corey now decided to add a hit-and-miss stripe, which would take in all the little bits and odds and ends, and make a great addition to the looks of her carpet. Then she found that they had run short of pieces; and as there were no more rolls and no more old clothes to spare, she stepped across to the store and asked permission to look over the store rags. She came home with a big bundle of pieces, and went to work cleansing and dipping them in fancy dyes. These would prove a great help, and this would be the finest stripe in the carpet.

But when all the home machinery was in such happy motion, and hands were busy and hopes were bright, the messenger of Death came, all unexpected, like a thief in the night, and called for Patty; and she was compelled to go. She must leave the busy workshop, and her floors uncarpeted. The hum of the wheels stopped suddenly, and silence reigned.

The doctor pronounced Patty's disease smallpox. It must have been brought by Indians, and taken by her in handling those store rags.

All along the troublesome years while Patty and Rufus had journeyed together, she had been looking ahead with courage and with some expectation of one day having a

settled home, where she could rest and enjoy the comforts of life. Here she had found her ideal, and the long hoped for rest from roving. Her husband closed her eyes in death, and helped to dress her in her best for burial; and strangers carried her out in the night to her last resting place and her new home, in the graveyard down back of the schoolhouse.

Rufus Corey's hair whitened and his appetite failed. His voice and hands trembled. Patty was gone from the family for the first time since they set up housekeeping in the little one-room house on the hill. The vines still climbed about the door, and the pinks grew large and fragrant as ever; but the sight of her idols made him sad. The family circle was broken, and he longed for the cheerful group of former days. He was almost persuaded to leave these old associations and the home with its comforts, the sugar camp, the orchard and its choice fruit, even Patty's grave, and go West again, and, if need be, live in a dug-out with his children, rejoicing with them in their prosperity and making himself useful by looking after the crops, salting the cattle, and tending the babies. He felt like a wilted leaf.

STILL MOVING ON.

CHAPTER XXI.

Rufus Corey finally sold his farm and household goods, and loaned out the money; and he and his daughter Roxy took passage, this time in the parlors of the steam cars, with plenty of good company, going West.

He had no care about teams, no whipping horses or oxen to hurry them up and make them go ahead. The iron horse rushed over the road, rain or shine, through the country and past towns and cities, so swiftly that his head grew dizzy. Wayside cottages looked hardly larger than chicken coops, and men appeared about the size of monkeys.

His mind wandered back to his early days, when Uncle Dibble and Aunt Nelly took a whole week to travel fifty miles. Now, with the speed of the locomotive, they could cross the continent in that time. Steam power and electricity were like infants sleeping in cradles when the first emigrant wagons began to travel West, carrying to the front the bone and muscle and pluck which would pave a highway and bridge the waters; and later came the iron horse with these easy carriages. Then, like the Indian and the buffalo, the pioneer was ready to move on.

He went back in thought to his life in the log cabin, which now seemed full of interest. "Then", he said, "the children were all at home, and when night came they were

gathered in for their mush and milk, and afterward tucked away in trundle beds for rest. When they were all safe and sound asleep Patty brought out her work; and by the dim light of a tallow candle and a great wood fire she mended the rents made through the day in the little clothes, while I dressed axe helves to trade in the market for tea and tobacco, and perhaps a little mull and floss for babies caps. Patty always said she did not care for strong tea, but she did want it three times a day made weak. When any of the neighbors happened in to chat awhile, she hung on the kettle and all took a cup or two more. Such unexpected calls seemed friendly. But Patty used to say she should be thankful if ever we got ahead enough to be able to keep some dainties in the house to treat company. It was so embarrassing to have to go to an empty cupboard."

Roxy was now an old maid. Some years before, when the hive swarmed and most of the children started west with the tide of emigration, her friend went too, to get him a home. But Roxy stayed behind, waiting for the country to develop, and the home to materialize. She had many years of waiting and some of doubt. While she waited she taught the village school; but now by a mysterious Providence she was free. So they had studied up the path which the children had helped to make, farther across the continent.

It was early in June when Mr. Corey and his daughter reached Nebraska. Nature was having a grand display. The landscape was beautifully decorated with a variety of shades, from pale green to the rich, dark hues of the cornfields. Hundreds of acres lay side by side, divided only by corner stones or imaginary lines invisible to the

eye of a stranger. Barley and millet waved and bowed in the gentle breeze and glistened in the morning dew; wild roses and sweet-peas and baby-faces and odorous sage all combined to make the scene charming. Occasionally an old orchard of scrub oaks appeared to be dying with age; and then they passed a dry stream, its high banks bordered with young sycamores and willows. But these had no beauty to compare with the forests of the East in the early days.

Twenty years of roughing it had changed young Robert Thorn to a man of middle age. He had a well-stocked farm and a model dug-out for a home, with his noble dog "Cap" for companion and business partner. He had settled down apparently contented and happy; but when he heard that Roxy Corey had come with her aged father to Nebraska, he felt inclined to be neighborly—a characteristic of Western people.

So he made it convenient to call and inquire after the old man's welfare, to tell him about the country and to renew friendship; and almost before the two most interested realized it, Roxy had found her long-lost lover. There was no need for delay. They were soon married, and Mr. Thorn opened wide his door and welcomed both Roxy and her father to his Hide-away home; and sure enough, Rufus Corey went at last to live in a dug-out.

The wedding trip was only about twenty miles, and the first view that Roxy had of her new home was when they stopped in a driveway in front of a fine display of doors and windows, which reached nearly from the ground to the low house roof. The building had much the style of

a modern playhouse, and Roxy declared that it was charming. Beds of gay flowers walled the front. From these down to the driveway the slope was terraced and sodded. The house was entirely hidden until they were directly before it. Its frame was boarded over on the outside, leaving the timbers to show inside; then the mound had been cut away to let the frame fit in, but projecting a little, to give chance for narrow windows on the sides. Its roof was planked and then sodded, and was level with the ground above. Vines from the garden on the mound were running across the roof, and trailing down in front, forming a picture both novel and pleasing to the interested party looking for a home. The whole inside framework was whitewashed, and looked as spotless as drifted snow.

For a number of years this prairie dug-out proved a comfortable home, being cool in summer and warm in winter, and always out of danger in severe storms.

A CHRISTMAS BLIZZARD.

CHAPTER XXII.

Prosperity seemed to crown every effort of the Thorns. Each year increased their wealth in cattle and hogs, and in harvest time their fields were rich with grain.

They had built a fine house and designed it for their lifelong home, studying every means for keeping out the driving dust and the drifting snow; yet when a three days' dust storm came it sifted in everywhere, even over the milk-pans with their yellow cream. This was enough sight worse than the dug-out. Nor could Nebraska climate any longer be called mild and salubrious. It must have changed, they thought, by the country settling up. There were tornadoes, and rain and hail, and thunder and lightning, and piercing winds and blizzards, with terrible results of suffering and sometimes cases of death by freezing. Then Robert Thorn would do a few extra jobs about the doors and windows, tacking on strips of listing to keep out draughts, and trying to pull the old man safely through another winter. After every crack had been looked after, and he had done his duty, the family would shut themselves indoors and draw their chairs near the red-hot stove, to enjoy their own company.

In 1883 there came a fearful blizzard, the like of which had not been known for years. The windows were so frosted that for five days it was impossible to see out;

but on the fifth day the sun shone on the outside of the pane, and the heat from the fire inside thawed a spot about the size of a teacup on the glass. Mr. Thorn had to bundle his head and ears with heavy wraps, and tying one end of a bed cord about his waist and the other end to the house, so that he could find his way back through blinding snow, he managed to push out a few rods to care for his cattle in the dug-out stable. This storm came on two days before Christmas, and the family had at that time killed and dressed forty young turkeys, to be taken the next morning to market, five miles away. The last feather had been plucked and the carcasses laid out in proper condition to freeze and be ready for an early start.

But the snow fell thick and fast, and Christmas came and went, and New Years came and went; and still the roads were impassable.

When at last teams could get through, the craze for turkey was over, and it was difficult giving them away.

During this storm, while shut indoors, interest in the possibilities of the great West again revived. The family ransacked garret and closets for bits of news and items of interest concerning the shore that lay beyond. Their thoughts centered at last on California climate; and the old man brightened with delight at the thought of finding a land of eternal sunshine, and he readily expressed a willingness to once more move on with his children.

A FAITHFUL DOG.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"Captain" was truly a faithful dog in the Thorn family, always ready to come and go at call.

His master would say, "Come, 'Cap;' bring the cows!" pointing in the direction; and off the dog would trot, rain or shine, and with no whining either. If he found a stray among the cattle he set to work to separate them and drive home his number. If one of the cows was missing he searched until he had found it. The hogs, too, were under his watchful eye. If a neighbor's pig broke through the fence he was on hand, and chased and barked and bit its ears until the frightened animal was glad enough of a place to squeeze through and run home. He knew his hogs, no matter how many he might have. When he went out to his morning chores he would often find a whole litter of new pigs, all tugging away for their meal. "Cap" was bright enough to know where they belonged. He never bit their ears, or chased them from the pen; and he never seemed quite so interested as when he lay sprawled on the ground with his head on his paws and a silly grin on his face, watching them get their fill. They grew up under his care. He remembered when the cows were young calves, born in the night. He saw them suckled and weaned; and, when older, turned out in the pasture to pick their living. "Cap" knew all the neighbors by name, and he often went on errands to save the family steps.

One day Mrs. Thorn was just ready to serve a good dinner of boiled vegetables, when she thought of Aunt Maria, near by, who was all alone. Aunt Maria was very fond of mustard greens. Roxy hinted to her husband the idea of inviting their neighbor up, hoping he might offer to run down over the bluff and ask her to enjoy the meal with them.

"Cap" lay sprawled out in the sunshine taking a nap. His master called him; and after the dog had shaken himself to make sure he was fairly awake he was told: " 'Cap,' go down and fetch Aunt Maria up to dinner! Do you understand?" The dog wagged his tail and started off, down behind the bluff, while the family watched and waited to see what might happen.

Aunt Maria had closed the door, and taken her knitting and seated herself in her rocker. She began knitting and rocking at a rapid rate. The house was so quiet and the rocker so easy that, before she knew it, she was sound asleep. "Cap" pushed open the door somehow, and marched in and straight up in front of her. He saw at a glance the condition she was in, and he knew that he must arouse her before he could make known his errand. So he thrust both paws with a sudden bound in her lap, and began barking in her face. She was startled and frightened; she screamed, and the knitting flew across the room while her heart beat like a drum. "Cap" waited a moment for her to collect her wits; then he caught her skirt in his teeth and began pulling and backing off, evidently trying to draw her out through the door. She felt sure that something dreadful had happened at her neighbor's, and that the dog had come to call her up there. She imagined all

sorts of scarecrow things. But she picked up her stitches and knit to the middle of her needle, then she grabbed her sunbonnet and she and "Cap" started off up the bluff together, to learn the terrible secret.

In the spring of 1884 the Thorn family had disposed of all their interests in Nebraska. The new house, designed for a lifelong home, and the farm well stocked to bring in a good profit, both were sold and the Thorns were getting ready for another move. "Cap" was growing old, and dogs were a trouble in traveling; so they decided to give him to some friend who would be kind to him; but how to get away from the poor fellow and out of the country, and not break his heart, was a serious question.

"Cap" began to be suspicious that something was wrong when he saw the cattle and the hogs driven away from the pastures by strangers, and the house in confusion, and the household goods carried off. He would go up back of his master's chair, and thrust his head through under his arm, and look him in the face imploringly and whine and cry, and ask as best he could what it all meant and what would become of him.

When the house had been emptied of everything but trunks and a few packing boxes, the team was made ready and "Cap" was taken twenty miles to a friend, and tied in the barn. As soon as the team started back and he found himself bound and a prisoner in this strange place, he fought furiously and yelped and cried until it was heart-rending to hear him.

The instant he was liberated he bounded in a bee-line for his dear home; and when he reached the house he went

in and looked around. All seemed strange. Then he went to the old man's room, and to his surprise Grandpa was gone. He trotted out and looked for the cattle, and the hogs—his hogs; all were gone. He lay down in his old place, and buried his head in his paws and moaned for three days. The strangers tried to make friends; they set before him bones to gnaw; but he could not swallow food.

At the close of the three days he mustered up courage to look once more through the house—a farewell look; when he seemed satisfied that he had been cruelly deserted for life. He trotted back and was never seen again at the old home.

Poor "Cap!" if only he could have known why he was deserted, and where the family had all gone, and where were the pigs and the cattle and the horses, so that he could at least see them, it might have been some comfort to him in his lonely hours.

One day an old neighbor was calling at "Captain's" new home. He was greeted in a very affectionate manner by a dog, who laid his head on the man's knee and began to lick and kiss his hand. The man thought him altogether too familiar, and sent him away roughly. The dog went off, looking sorrowful, and buried his face in his paws again.

His master said to the man: "That is 'Cap' Thorn, and he's pleased to see you."

The dog's black, shaggy coat had turned gray; and that is why his old neighbor did not know him.

BOUND FOR THE LAND OF SUNSHINE.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Rufus Corey had been over fifty years crossing the continent, following with the tide of emigration West, stopping along the way to build rude homes for his family and to try the soil and test the climate, then, after a time pulling up stakes and pushing on in hopes of finding something better; always on the move, battling with hardships, and enduring much pinching want—and like the rolling stone which gathers no moss, so he gathered little more than could be stowed away in the emigrant wagon. Now he had grown old and feeble and almost helpless, but he was ambitious for one more change to reach the Land of Sunshine, the Paradise of America!

The family started for the bay region of San Diego county in Southern California, and they settled on a ranch in one of the valleys, in an adobe house shaded by a great pepper tree.

Here the road ended abruptly and before them rose foothills some two hundred feet, making a high wall. Over these hills was Mexican soil, and to their right and almost within stone's throw stood the monument between the United States and Mexico, speaking plainer than words that they could go no further and be protected by the Stars and Stripes of their beloved country.

Here they found the climate delightful, with old ocean rolling forever onward, foaming and splashing, making

it always cool, but never cold. Here were no boisterous, chilling winds, and no storms of fearful thunder and lightning; no tornadoes or blizzards, and no fear of sunstroke. In fact there seemed to be very little to disturb a life of quiet rest under the shade of this pepper tree.

Rufus lived to see California booming and much of the land divided up into town lots to be sold at fabulous prices. His confidence grew strong in the future prosperity of the great West.

Then his spirit took another leap in the dark, and he was gone over the river to find Patty and his long-lost children.