

P S
3525
A1388
P42
1915
MAIN

UC-NRLF



B 3 325 483

THE
PEACE
of the
SOLOMON
VALLEY

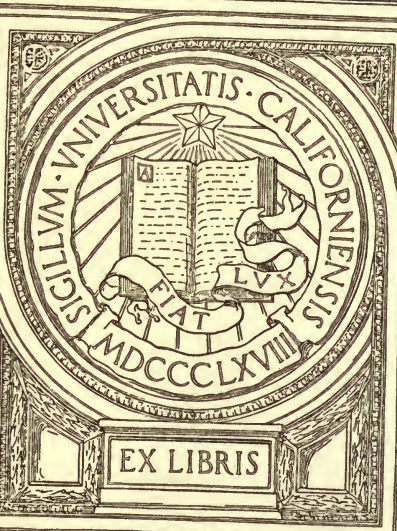
MARGARET
HILL
MCCARTER











EX LIBRIS

955
M128
P

THE PEACE
OF
THE
SOLOMON
VALLEY





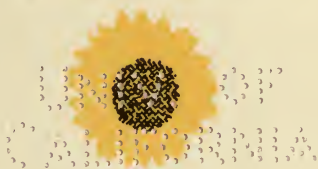
1 5 3 2
2 6 4 1
3 7 5 2
4 8 6 3
5 9 7 4
6 10 8 5
7 11 9 6
8 12 10 7
9 13 11 8
10 14 12 9
11 15 13 10
12 16 14 11
13 17 15 12
14 18 16 13
15 19 17 14
16 20 18 15
17 21 19 16
18 22 20 17
19 23 21 18
20 24 22 19
21 25 23 20
22 26 24 21
23 27 25 22
24 28 26 23
25 29 27 24
26 30 28 25
27 31 29 26
28 32 30 27
29 33 31 28
30 34 32 29
31 35 33 30
32 36 34 31
33 37 35 32
34 38 36 33
35 39 37 34
36 40 38 35
37 41 39 36
38 42 40 37
39 43 41 38
40 44 42 39
41 45 43 40
42 46 44 41
43 47 45 42
44 48 46 43
45 49 47 44
46 50 48 45
47 51 49 46
48 52 50 47
49 53 51 48
50 54 52 49
51 55 53 50
52 56 54 51
53 57 55 52
54 58 56 53
55 59 57 54
56 60 58 55
57 61 59 56
58 62 60 57
59 63 61 58
60 64 62 59
61 65 63 60
62 66 64 61
63 67 65 62
64 68 66 63
65 69 67 64
66 70 68 65
67 71 69 66
68 72 70 67
69 73 71 68
70 74 72 69
71 75 73 70
72 76 74 71
73 77 75 72
74 78 76 73
75 79 77 74
76 80 78 75
77 81 79 76
78 82 80 77
79 83 81 78
80 84 82 79
81 85 83 80
82 86 84 81
83 87 85 82
84 88 86 83
85 89 87 84
86 90 88 85
87 91 89 86
88 92 90 87
89 93 91 88
90 94 92 89
91 95 93 90
92 96 94 91
93 97 95 92
94 98 96 93
95 99 97 94
96 100 98 95
97 101 99 96
98 102 100 97
99 103 101 98
100 104 102 99
101 105 103 100
102 106 104 101
103 107 105 102
104 108 106 103
105 109 107 104
106 110 108 105
107 111 109 106
108 112 110 107
109 113 111 108
110 114 112 109
111 115 113 110
112 116 114 111
113 117 115 112
114 118 116 113
115 119 117 114
116 120 118 115
117 121 119 116
118 122 120 117
119 123 121 118
120 124 122 119
121 125 123 120
122 126 124 121
123 127 125 122
124 128 126 123
125 129 127 124
126 130 128 125
127 131 129 126
128 132 130 127
129 133 131 128
130 134 132 129
131 135 133 130
132 136 134 131
133 137 135 132
134 138 136 133
135 139 137 134
136 140 138 135
137 141 139 136
138 142 140 137
139 143 141 138
140 144 142 139
141 145 143 140
142 146 144 141
143 147 145 142
144 148 146 143
145 149 147 144
146 150 148 145
147 151 149 146
148 152 150 147
149 153 151 148
150 154 152 149
151 155 153 150
152 156 154 151
153 157 155 152
154 158 156 153
155 159 157 154
156 160 158 155
157 161 159 156
158 162 160 157
159 163 161 158
160 164 162 159
161 165 163 160
162 166 164 161
163 167 165 162
164 168 166 163
165 169 167 164
166 170 168 165
167 171 169 166
168 172 170 167
169 173 171 168
170 174 172 169
171 175 173 170
172 176 174 171
173 177 175 172
174 178 176 173
175 179 177 174
176 180 178 175
177 181 179 176
178 182 180 177
179 183 181 178
180 184 182 179
181 185 183 180
182 186 184 181
183 187 185 182
184 188 186 183
185 189 187 184
186 190 188 185
187 191 189 186
188 192 190 187
189 193 191 188
190 194 192 189
191 195 193 190
192 196 194 191
193 197 195 192
194 198 196 193
195 199 197 194
196 200 198 195
197 201 199 196
198 202 200 197
199 203 201 198
200 204 202 199
201 205 203 200
202 206 204 201
203 207 205 202
204 208 206 203
205 209 207 204
206 210 208 205
207 211 209 206
208 212 210 207
209 213 211 208
210 214 212 209
211 215 213 210
212 216 214 211
213 217 215 212
214 218 216 213
215 219 217 214
216 220 218 215
217 221 219 216
218 222 220 217
219 223 221 218
220 224 222 219
221 225 223 220
222 226 224 221
223 227 225 222
224 228 226 223
225 229 227 224
226 230 228 225
227 231 229 226
228 232 230 227
229 233 231 228
230 234 232 229
231 235 233 230
232 236 234 231
233 237 235 232
234 238 236 233
235 239 237 234
236 240 238 235
237 241 239 236
238 242 240 237
239 243 241 238
240 244 242 239
241 245 243 240
242 246 244 241
243 247 245 242
244 248 246 243
245 249 247 244
246 250 248 245
247 251 249 246
248 252 250 247
249 253 251 248
250 254 252 249
251 255 253 250
252 256 254 251
253 257 255 252
254 258 256 253
255 259 257 254
256 260 258 255
257 261 259 256
258 262 260 257
259 263 261 258
260 264 262 259
261 265 263 260
262 266 264 261
263 267 265 262
264 268 266 263
265 269 267 264
266 270 268 265
267 271 269 266
268 272 270 267
269 273 271 268
270 274 272 269
271 275 273 270
272 276 274 271
273 277 275 272
274 278 276 273
275 279 277 274
276 280 278 275
277 281 279 276
278 282 280 277
279 283 281 278
280 284 282 279
281 285 283 280
282 286 284 281
283 287 285 282
284 288 286 283
285 289 287 284
286 290 288 285
287 291 289 286
288 292 290 287
289 293 291 288
290 294 292 289
291 295 293 290
292 296 294 291
293 297 295 292
294 298 296 293
295 299 297 294
296 300 298 295
297 301 299 296
298 302 300 297
299 303 301 298
300 304 302 299
301 305 303 300
302 306 304 301
303 307 305 302
304 308 306 303
305 309 307 304
306 310 308 305
307 311 309 306
308 312 310 307
309 313 311 308
310 314 312 309
311 315 313 310
312 316 314 311
313 317 315 312
314 318 316 313
315 319 317 314
316 320 318 315
317 321 319 316
318 322 320 317
319 323 321 318
320 324 322 319
321 325 323 320
322 326 324 321
323 327 325 322
324 328 326 323
325 329 327 324
326 330 328 325
327 331 329 326
328 332 330 327
329 333 331 328
330 334 332 329
331 335 333 330
332 336 334 331
333 337 335 332
334 338 336 333
335 339 337 334
336 340 338 335
337 341 339 336
338 342 340 337
339 343 341 338
340 344 342 339
341 345 343 340
342 346 344 341
343 347 345 342
344 348 346 343
345 349 347 344
346 350 348 345
347 351 349 346
348 352 350 347
349 353 351 348
350 354 352 349
351 355 353 350
352 356 354 351
353 357 355 352
354 358 356 353
355 359 357 354
356 360 358 355
357 361 359 356
358 362 360 357
359 363 361 358
360 364 362 359
361 365 363 360
362 366 364 361
363 367 365 362
364 368 366 363
365 369 367 364
366 370 368 365
367 371 369 366
368 372 370 367
369 373 371 368
370 374 372 369
371 375 373 370
372 376 374 371
373 377 375 372
374 378 376 373
375 379 377 374
376 380 378 375
377 381 379 376
378 382 380 377
379 383 381 378
380 384 382 379
381 385 383 380
382 386 384 381
383 387 385 382
384 388 386 383
385 389 387 384
386 390 388 385
387 391 389 386
388 392 390 387
389 393 391 388
390 394 392 389
391 395 393 390
392 396 394 391
393 397 395 392
394 398 396 393
395 399 397 394
396 400 398 395
397 401 399 396
398 402 400 397
399 403 401 398
400 404 402 399
401 405 403 400
402 406 404 401
403 407 405 402
404 408 406 403
405 409 407 404
406 410 408 405
407 411 409 406
408 412 410 407
409 413 411 408
410 414 412 409
411 415 413 410
412 416 414 411
413 417 415 412
414 418 416 413
415 419 417 414
416 420 418 415
417 421 419 416
418 422 420 417
419 423 421 418
420 424 422 419
421 425 423 420
422 426 424 421
423 427 425 422
424 428 426 423
425 429 427 424
426 430 428 425
427 431 429 426
428 432 430 427
429 433 431 428
430 434 432 429
431 435 433 430
432 436 434 431
433 437 435 432
434 438 436 433
435 439 437 434
436 440 438 435
437 441 439 436
438 442 440 437
439 443 441 438
440 444 442 439
441 445 443 440
442 446 444 441
443 447 445 442
444 448 446 443
445 449 447 444
446 450 448 445
447 451 449 446
448 452 450 447
449 453 451 448
450 454 452 449
451 455 453 450
452 456 454 451
453 457 455 452
454 458 456 453
455 459 457 454
456 460 458 455
457 461 459 456
458 462 460 457
459 463 461 458
460 464 462 459
461 465 463 460
462 466 464 461
463 467 465 462
464 468 466 463
465 469 467 464
466 470 468 465
467 471 469 466
468 472 470 467
469 473 471 468
470 474 472 469
471 475 473 470
472 476 474 471
473 477 475 472
474 478 476 473
475 479 477 474
476 480 478 475
477 481 479 476
478 482 480 477
479 483 481 478
480 484 482 479
481 485 483 480
482 486 484 481
483 487 485 482
484 488 486 483
485 489 487 484
486 490 488 485
487 491 489 486
488 492 490 487
489 493 491 488
490 494 492 489
491 495 493 490
492 496 494 491
493 497 495 492
494 498 496 493
495 499 497 494
496 500 498 495
497 501 499 496
498 502 500 497
499 503 501 498
500 504 502 499
501 505 503 500
502 506 504 501
503 507 505 502
504 508 506 503
505 509 507 504
506 510 508 505
507 511 509 506
508 512 510 507
509 513 511 508
510 514 512 509
511 515 513 510
512 516 514 511
513 517 515 512
514 518 516 513
515 519 517 514
516 520 518 515
517 521 519 516
518 522 520 517
519 523 521 518
520 524 522 519
521 525 523 520
522 526 524 521
523 527 525 522
524 528 526 523
525 529 527 524
526 530 528 525
527 531 529 526
528 532 530 527
529 533 531 528
530 534 532 529
531 535 533 530
532 536 534 531
533 537 535 532
534 538 536 533
535 539 537 534
536 540 538 535
537 541 539 536
538 542 540 537
539 543 541 538
540 544 542 539
541 545 543 540
542 546 544 541
543 547 545 542
544 548 546 543
545 549 547 544
546 550 548 545
547 551 549 546
548 552 550 547
549 553 551 548
550 554 552 549
551 555 553 550
552 556 554 551
553 557 555 552
554 558 556 553
555 559 557 554
556 560 558 555
557 561 559 556
558 562 560 557
559 563 561 558
560 564 562 559
561 565 563 560
562 566 564 561
563 567 565 562
564 568 566 563
565 569 567 564
566 570 568 565
567 571 569 566
568 572 570 567
569 573 571 568
570 574 572 569
571 575 573 570
572 576 574 571
573 577 575 572
574 578 576 573
575 579 577 574
576 580 578 575
577 581 579 576
578 582 580 577
579 583 581 578
580 584 582 579
581 585 583 580
582 586 584 581
583 587 585 582
584 588 586 583
585 589 587 584
586 590 588 585
587 591 589 586
588 592 590 587
589 593 591 588
590 594 592 589
591 595 593 590
592 596 594 591
593 597 595 592
594 598 596 593
595 599 597 594
596 600 598 595
597 601 599 596
598 602 600 597
599 603 601 598
600 604 602 599
601 605 603 600
602 606 604 601
603 607 605 602
604 608 606 603
605 609 607 604
606 610 608 605
607 611 609 606
608 612 610 607
609 613 611 608
610 614 612 609
611 615 613 610
612 616 614 611
613 617 615 612
614 618 616 613
615 619 617 614
616 620 618 615
617 621 619 616
618 622 620 617
619 623 621 618
620 624 622 619
621 625 623 620
622 626 624 621
623 627 625 622
624 628 626 623
625 629 627 624
626 630 628 625
627 631 629 626
628 632 630 627
629 633 631 628
630 634 632 629
631 635 633 630
632 636 634 631
633 637 635 632
634 638 636 633
635 639 637 634
636 640 638 635
637 641 639 636
638 642 640 637
639 643 641 638
640 644 642 639
641 645 643 640
642 646 644 641
643 647 645 642
644 648 646 643
645 649 647 644
646 650 648 645
647 651 649 646
648 652 650 647
649 653 651 648
650 654 652 649
651 655 653 650
652 656 654 651
653 657 655 652
654 658 656 653
655 659 657 654
656 660 658 655
657 661 659 656
658 662 660 657
659 663 661 658
660 664 662 659
661 665 663 660
662 666 664 661
663 667 665 662
664 668 666 663
665 669 667 664
666 670 668 665
667 671 669 666
668 672 670 667
669 673 671 668
670 674 672 669
671 675 673 670
672 676 674 671
673 677 675 672
674 678 676 673
675 679 677 674
676 680 678 675
677 681 679 676
678 682 680 677
679 683 681 678
680 684 682 679
681 685 683 680
682 686 684 681
683 687 685 682
684 688 686 683
685 689 687 684
686 690 688 685
687 691 689 686
688 692 690 687
689 693 691 688
690 694 692 689
691 695 693 690
692 696 694 691
693 697 695 692
694 698 696 693
695 699 697 694
696 700 698 695
697 701 699 696
698 702 700 697
699 703 701 698
700 704 702 699
701 705 703 700
702 706 704 701
703 707 705 702
704 708 706 703
705 709 707 704
706 710 708 705
707 711 709 706
708 712 710 707
709 713 711 708
710 714 712 709
711 715 713 710
712 716 714 711
713 717 715 712
714 718 716 713
715 719 717 714
716 720 718 715
717 721 719 716
718 722 720 717
719 723 721 718
720 724 722 719
721 725 723 720
722 726 724 721
723 727 725 722
724 728 726 723
725 729 727 724
726 730 728 725
727 731 729 726
728 732 730 727
729 733 731 728
730 734 732 729
731 735 733 730
732 736 734 731
733 737 735 732
734 738 736 733
735 739 737 734
736 740 738 735
737 741 739 736
738 742 740 737
739 743 741 738
740 744 742 739
741 745 743 740
742 746 744 741
743 747 745 742
744 748 746 743
745 749 747 744
746 750 748 745
747 751 749 746
748 752 750 747
749 753 751 748
750 754 752 749
751 755 753 750
752 756



CLARA POWERS WILSON

“The Peace of the Solomon Valley mingled
with the peace of our own hearts.”

THE PEACE
 OF 
THE
SOLOMON
VALLEY



MARGARET HILL M^cCARTER

Author of
"The Price of the Prairie,"
"In Old Quivira,"
"Cuddy's Baby," Etc.



CHICAGO
A.C.M^cCLURG & CO.

1915

Copyright 1911

A. C. McCLURG & CO.

Published September, 1911

Entered at Stationers' Hall, London, England

Twenty-third Edition
1915

TO THE
ASSOCIATION

PS

3525

A1388

P42

1915

MAN

*To the Good People
Of a Good Land
Even the Folks Who Dwell
In this Valley
With Deep Appreciation
Of Their Kind Words and Deeds
To Me-ward*

M35639

*“If you’re world-weary, and longing
for rest,*

*Just come to the Plains and submit to
be blessed.”*

LILLA DAY MONROE

THE PEACE OF THE SOLOMON VALLEY

MARCH

Letter from JOHN ELLERTON,
New York City, to DANIEL
BRONSON, Talton, Kansas.

NEW YORK CITY, *March.*

DEAR DAN:

The newspaper you sent last week was almost like a letter from you, because it was just like you to send the paper instead of writing the message it contained. You know how I welcome every bit of information concerning you and yours, but, of course, you'd never tell me how prosperous you are now. Left it for the *Talton Herald* to set forth how "Daniel Bronson, one of the well-to-do farmers up on the Solomon, shipped out"—how many carloads of cattle was it? And what is alfalfa coined out of anyhow, that it can bring in such a wad of money to a "well-to-do" farmer? Well-to-do! I should say so, with checks like the one the printer set up coming in with the shipment of stock and sale of that long-legged clover you call alfalfa. Did my heart good to read about it, though, just because your name went with it. I'll confess here that I was afraid at first to look through that newspaper for the blue pencil marks, for fear—oh, well, never mind.

We are not young any more. I suppose we must expect now that sometime one will be taken and the other left. I can't realize that we are both getting close to sixty, with children grown up. At least my boy thinks he is a man. And yet, Dan, it seems such a short time since we went out of Yale together, neck and neck for honors. You remember our planning to go West together? What care-free days those were! That was a glorious jaunt we took across the Plains back in the '70's. You stayed in Kansas because you wanted to and I came back to New York because I had to. But say, old man, you need n't fill your letters as you did your last one with what you say I did for you in your day of trouble out there. I only loaned you a few thousand dollars to tide you over the day of wrath when the drouth and grasshopper and mortgage fell on you as well as on the unjust. And you have paid me back every cent. You seem to forget that. I wonder where I would have been in that near-panic of 1907 if I had n't had some good Kansas coin (coin you had minted out of your cattle and alfalfa) to invest when all the springs were running dry for us smaller fellows in the East.

But I'm writing now, Dan, to ask a favor of you. You remember how that rheumatism had me hobbled down when I went to Kansas thirty years or more

ago? You ought to, because you had to carry me half the time. And you remember what six months in the Solomon Valley did for me? I came home sound as a dollar and never had a twinge of rheumatism since that summer. Now my boy, Leroy, who finished Yale a year ago, has been ailing with the same accursed affliction for nearly two years. It knocked him out of his athletics the last year of his college course. It nearly broke his heart, or what is worse, his spirit. He wants me to send him off to Europe. Dan, I can't afford it right now, and I don't want to anyhow. He's got the wrong notion about himself and the world. Rheumatism will do that for a fellow. He thinks he is going to be a confirmed invalid, a gentleman invalid, not able to earn, but fully able to spend. And that's not all. He doesn't look at things plumb. New York is all right as a place to make money, but, like all big cities, it is a poor place to make character in children. Why, this city'd go to smash if all the New England, Indiana, and Kansas country-bred boys were suddenly pulled out of its business circles. But Roy's got the idea—you know his kind, Dan,—that the Lord made the world as far west as the Adirondacks, maybe, and left the rest to chance. He's fixed in the foolery that this city is the centre of God's eternal universe.

I want to send him to you for six months, first, to lose that rheumatism and confirmed-invalid notion somewhere out there on the prairies, and second, to learn what the West and country life are worth. Can you stand him for that time? You can let him learn his lesson alone. He'll come to you with some high and mighty notions about the East and himself. If he does n't come home next Fall a new man it will be the disappointment of my life.

If our children could always lean on us it would be easy sailing down the years, but I'm up against the fact that we must shape them up to live their own lives, and that those lives may be in marble halls or wayside hovels, with Fate playing the strongest hand of circumstance against us.

Don't misunderstand Roy. He is a gentleman clear to the bone. He confides in me as much almost as in his mother, who, by the way, agrees with me only partially in this plan. I'm proud of him, of course, but he must learn that he's only a temporary invalid and he must get a bigger perspective on the country over which Old Glory swings and on the folks that live under the shadow of it. You know, Bronson, how much I'll appreciate what you can do for me.

I'm so concerned about Roy, I almost forgot to say that Mrs. Ellerton

has been called up to East Machias, Maine, to stay indefinitely with a great aunt of hers who is almost helpless. The old lady won't come down to New York and stay with us. She's rooted fast to that little Maine village. She took care of my wife's mother when she was a girl and made such a home for her as few orphan children have. Leroy's grandmother was left alone early in life. She had Mary (Mrs. Ellerton) promise never to neglect any wish of Aunt Prudence's, and it is the old lady's wish that Mary should take care of her in her last days. She seems to be one of those little Yankee women whose last days do last. I am glad that Mary can be with her, although it would simplify matters mightily if Aunt Prudence would only let us take care of her here. However, she is as averse to coming to the city as Leroy is to leaving it, so you can see my family dilemma has a couple of horns to be dealt with.

I have n't told Roy who you are. I am just letting him go to strangers in a way, so he will learn something, if it's in him to learn, and not be prejudiced by any obligations to our feelings. I believe it's in him, too. With best wishes to you and the children, I am

Yours as always,

JOHN ELLERTON

*Letter from DANIEL BRONSON
to JOHN ELLERTON*

TALTON, KANSAS, *March.*

DEAR JOHN:

Yours received. You know I'm glad to be able to return a small part of the obligation I owe to you. Send Leroy on at once. We can care for him nicely. I'm afraid he will find us dull company, but if he likes music, Eunice can play and sing some.

But business aside, Jack, it did me a world of good to see your hand-writing again and I jumped at the thought of having your boy with us. Took me back to the days when you and I came here together, you to get back your health, and I to make my fortune. We both succeeded, although you came through in one season, and I put in years at the job. I can see you now, white and delicate and brave in your suffering.

This land was desolate enough then. Only Hope filtered the atmosphere with a golden glamour. I've seen that glamour fade and the light turn to gloom more than once since the day I preëmpted my first hundred and sixty, and cut sod for my little dugout homestead. You know I built up on the swell above the river with not a claimholder near me then. I can see three

villages from the front porch now, and the Solomon Valley is like the Garden of Eden. And yet sometimes I am sentimental enough to wish for the old-time picture back again, the plain little house, the prairies rippling away in the distance, and the common loneliness, the common need for companionship. We were poor in those days, as property goes, but we were rich in the spirit of neighborly kindness. When our baby boy died, John Ellerton Bronson we called him, we could n't have endured it but for the loving sympathy of those homesteaders, poor as ourselves, but generous, and sympathetic in the sorrows of others.

I might have come into my own a little sooner in New York, but I've always been glad I came West; glad that it was my privilege to see this valley change from a stretch of blossomy springtime prairie to a sweep of alfalfa bloom, from a seared waste of burned mid-summer grasses to the green acres of corn. It is worth the best years of one's life to have watched the transformation.

But I won't keep this up. Send Leroy out and we'll fix that rheumatism.

My Seth is a perfect giant now. He finishes college next year. Carries football and track-meet honors enough to break down an ordinary constitution.

He has about made up his mind to go West when he gets through school. With us there is no real West, you know, till we get to the Rockies and beyond. Of course, I'd rather keep Seth here, and I need him. The ranch is getting to be more of a proposition to manage every year. We used to think we were busy, John, in the little corn patches and mowing lots up between the Vermont hills, before we went down to Yale. But when a bumper wheat crop comes our way out here, with four or five cuttings a season on the quarter section I have set to alfalfa, I can assure you that Satan must look to something else beside idle hands to get in his work in a Kansas summer. So I could give Seth a fine start in life, if he only took to the soil. But he doesn't. Since he was a little boy he has been crazy over mines and metals. He's an expert even now in those lines and can hardly wait to finish school, he is so eager for the West and the mountains and mining.

As I said, Eunice can play and sing some. She has finished with her teachers here and wants to go East in the Fall. I may ask your protection for her then. It was her mother's wish that she should have the opportunity for a musical career. Poor Ellen never really felt at home in Kansas. You know she was young when she died. It

was only the hard work of a pioneer farmer's wife that fell to her lot, and when times grew better and we began to know some of the luxuries of the country, she was taken from us. I feel that that is the reason she was so eager to have our daughter given a musical education. She thought Eunice's life in Kansas would be as hers had been. John, I can't blame her. It was the women who bore the heaviest burdens here in the first years.

I shall miss my little girl dreadfully if she does go away. But we must not stand in the way of our children doing the best with their talents. And as you say, we can't keep them with us always. They must fly their own gait.

Again, I assure you we'll welcome your boy and do our best for his comfort.

With kind regards to Mrs. Ellerton, I am,

Faithfully yours,

DAN'L BRONSON

*APRIL**Letter from LEROY ELLERTON
to HIS FATHER*

TALTON, KANSAS, *April.*

DEAR FATHER:

At last I am at the end of my journey, aching in every joint I ever had and some new ones I've just discovered. But here I am in this God-forsaken Kansas region called the Solomon Valley. It may be a degree better than Death's Valley, which is still farther West somewhere, I am told. But since I am here, like Hamlet's ghostly father, "doomed for a certain time to walk this particular piece of earth," here for the first time, and I hope to Jiminy, the last as well, I'll try to make the best of it if it kills me. But it does seem to me that I might have gone to Europe, like a gentleman, if you had n't come down on me with the ukase—"Go to the Solomon Valley for six months and come back cured forever."

Six months! I'll be cured long before that, for I'll be dead. I know, of course, that Indians and buffaloes, and maybe, cowboys are not to be found here now, but it is a cursed crude place to thrust an Eastern chap into. And

I don't mind saying, Father mine, that I stand up for the prayers of the congregation.

A drummer whom I met on the train going out of Kansas City promised me if I stayed here six months, there'd be no pulling me out of Kansas again. Do I look like that, I wonder. I can't see where the valley comes in here. It is as flat as a pancake for ten thousand miles in every direction. I'm sure the drainage is bad. Fine place to cure rheumatism, though! Why my father should think I'd ever get well in such a miserable place, I can't comprehend. It's the very bottom of the universe. It's the under-side of the world.

When the Kansas City drummer left the train at some little town, he said: "You are new to the West. There is a lot more for a rustic New Yorker to learn out here than for a woolly Westerner to learn in the East. Some of your folks learn quickly. Some are slow, but when they do get their lesson, they are the best fellows on earth. My friend, I hope you may not only lose your rheumatism out on the prairies, I hope that you may also lose the notion that this part of the Lord's earth, people and all, just happened, and wasn't set down in the divine plan."

I hope he knows. But, to be honest, there is something—I don't know what—that seems restful after that

long car-ride. And it was long. I claim I'm not a provincial, but I didn't know that the world was quite so big both ways. There is a tone in the air and a little haze of pink on the orchards and a thousand shades of green on the landscape—all of which was pleasant when I stepped off the Pullman at Talton.

Your friend, Bronson, met me at the station. He is a tall man, broad-chested, erect, with grizzled dark hair and bright dark eyes. He is a farmer, of course, tanned face and hands, home laundered shirt, plain clothes, and freshly blacked boots—everything showing the country-man in his "other clothes."

"Is this Leroy Ellerton?" he asked. And I must say it was a good voice to hear. Something in its intonation was in keeping with his strong face and stalwart form. His handshake, too, is worth while. There is a kind of life in his touch that thrills my nerves to the shoulder. He had my suitcases and me all stowed into a low, easy phaeton before I knew it. I think that, for a Westerner, he knows how to handle a fellow with rheumatism. I hoped he wouldn't try to talk to me nor make me talk, and he didn't. If he'll always anticipate my wishes, I can stand him, I believe. In fact, it was I who made him talk to me, like this:

“You knew my father, Mr. Bronson?” I asked him.

“Oh, yes; we came West together.”

“You did? Why, I didn’t know you had ever been East.”

“I have n’t, for a long time.”

“You met my father in the East?” I asked. You see, Papa, I was getting interested in spite of myself.

“Yes,” he said, “We were boys together.”

“Father was just out of Yale University when he came West,” I said, a little boastfully. Thought he might as well know whose son he had the honor of having for his guest. “He wrote you I was coming?”

The old fellow smiled a little. Then he said, “Yes, I had a letter from him and I came up to meet you.”

And here I am settled in my room. The Bronsons have a better house than I had expected, and my den here is spotlessly clean. I’ve a big easy rocker that is very comfortable, and a mirror and a writing table. The view from my window is really wonderful. I’d no idea one could see so far except on the ocean. There is a stretch of the Solomon River in sight, and just now when the sun went down there was a kaleidoscope of blending colors in the sky.

I caught sight of a piano as I passed by the parlor door on my way to sup-

per. I had supposed a parlor organ would be a luxury here. I reckon I'm doomed to listen to the daughter of the house play "Silver Threads among the Gold," and "Lambs of the Upper Fold"—oh, Father, what made you do it? But no matter. There isn't any Mrs. Bronson now, it seems, and this daughter is the housekeeper. She isn't unattractive, and she has a voice, magnetic and resonant like her father's, but soft and clear. She is a good cook. Her supper was a dream. And would you believe it, they had blue china and real silver. For the first, I suppose. To-morrow it will be a red table cloth and iron-stone china and soda biscuit, like we found up in York State farm houses last Summer. Oh, dear! Will this six months ever, ever end? Good-night, Father, I'm going to bed. If only I could sleep six months! I'll write to mother in the morning. And you may send this on to her as soon as you have read it. It will save my fingers some work. I'm glad she doesn't have to bring Aunt Prudence out here.

* * * Seems to me the architect who built this Solomon Valley wasn't an expert in his line. The joke is on Solomon.

Yours with the back-ache,

Roy

*Letter from LEROY ELLERTON
to HIS MOTHER*

TALTON, KANSAS, *April.*

*In the south upper veranda,
with sunshine and no wind.*

DEAR MUMMY MINE:

My love and respects to Aunt Prudence—now that's my whole duty. She boxed my ears too often when I was a boy for me to do more than that for her. Not that the boxing wasn't good for me. I respect her for it now. But please consider that this sentence stands at the head of every letter that I write to you. Or I could have it embossed and framed to hang over her bed. Yes, yes, I'll keep still; I know her story. She was a mother to my grandmother, and a dear good *great*-mother (is that the way to put it?) to you, and you are awfully thankful that you can be with her. Seems to me the Ellertons have a lot to thank Providence for. You for being anchored in the dizzy social whirl of East Machias and your son and heir nesting out in the flat green Sahara thing called the Solomon Valley. For it's a very desert in length and loneliness and eternal sameness, but it is green as the greenest sheltered meadow of Maine

in mid-summer. And you say Aunt Prudence hasn't the rheumatism. Of course not. I've got all of it that's coming to this family. And anyhow, she'd not be over eighty and "all her faculties bright" down in East Machias if she had this plague of plagues. She'd be under a "sacred to the memory" sign in the same form as John Brown's body (Kansas John, you know), long enough before eighty.

But I didn't mean to send this kind of a letter. Father will forward to you what I write to him. That will tell the important things. I write with you in mind, or I'd never tell him some things. Dear old Dad, I'd like to disinherit him right now. But I said I'd quit. Well, I am Here. That is to say—No-where. Got here as per schedule. See Papa's letter. Do you know this Bronson outfit? That last is a Wild West novel word. There is a Father—not bad to look at for a farmer, but all farmer. And there is a Son—I am told. He is to appear in a later act of this Wild West Show. And there is a Daughter. All very interesting, no doubt, if I was n't compelled to see them daily. But they are not bad looking. Eunice, that's the girl, is not like a farmer's daughter exactly, although I tried at supper and breakfast to let her go at that. She let me go, all right. When I was n't thinking of this pain in

my shoulder, I couldn't help noticing her a little.

What does she look like, you will ask, because you are a woman. Frankly, I don't know. Just like any other green Kansas girl, I reckon. A little while ago, she came into my room and told me where to find this place at the south end of the upper hall. It is the coziest spot for a rheum—I mean, fellow. Cushions and a big easy chair and a willow couch. It's all screened in from mosquitoes and flies, and a perfect surge of sunshine rolls into it. There is a little table by the couch and a rug on the floor. I wonder if they didn't borrow a lot of these things from all the neighbors in town. Sets some folks up to have a New Yorker with them, you know.

However, the Bronsons don't act set up. They take me as a matter of course. When Eunice brought me out here, she said:

“This is to be your corner as long as you care for it. The sharp air is shut away by the gable and the south breeze is pleasant here in the hot weather. I hope it will be comfortable for you.”

She was arranging the cushions, and as she shook up the pillows, I noticed her hands were smooth and her bare elbows actually had dimples. I was going to say some flattering nothings such as country girls feed on, but when

I looked into her face—I decided not to do it. Still, I am afraid I'll be expected to do the gallant thing by this Eunice. Mother, rheumatism and gallantry don't go together, and I don't know why I must spend energy on this daughter. I was sent here and I'm serving out a six months' sentence, that's all.

Though for your comfort, Mummy, I will tell you that the Bronsons don't seem to expect much of me yet. How it will be on a longer acquaintance, I can't say, nor what I'll do when they begin to flock to New York to pay back this visit. Good-bye now. This and Dad's letter will tell all I know. It's a warm, drowsy cove up in this corner of my cell—all Kansas is a cell to me. And I'm going to sleep as many hours as I can. Don't let Aunt Prudence wear you all away.

Affectionately,

Roy

MAY

*Letter from LEROY ELLERTON
to HIS FATHER*TALTON, KANSAS, *May.*

MY DEAR FATHER:

I meant to write you several days ago, but we've been so busy, I put it off. You'll wonder what I could find to make me busy—I who have been leaning on cushions for so long. Well, everybody out here is that way. And since I've been idle for a year, it seems good to be at work again. I've been here six weeks. I didn't think I could get rid of so much pain in so short a time. This is a wonderful air. Why, I sleep all night now, and I could eat anything from a cucumber pickle to a Kansas politician. The Bronsons are really well-bred people, even if they do live in Kansas, and they keep the neatest home and set up the best table—or is it I who am getting my old Yale appetite back?

We have had an abundance of rain this season, and it is the greenest world out here a poor city fellow with memories of brick walls and dust ever looked upon. If the fresh air fiends could only send their slum children this way they would get some of the real thing. You'd be surprised to know how many Eastern magazines find their way out

here. I was amazed when I saw the number of books and the kind of books in the bookcases. Why, Father, they are just like New York in that, now really they are. More so than in even some swell homes. I know young ladies in the East who read less, I do believe, than Eunice does.

But I can't read all the time. So I make myself useful about the house. They have wads of flowers in bloom and I keep the bouquets fresh in the vases. Big business for a young man of twenty-three! Also I play the piano for Eunice. She sings very well, considering. And she plays for my solos in better time than you'd think. You see, Pappy dear, I want you to know that these folks out here are n't such heathen as you, living in New York and never coming out of your shell, would think.

I believe I have n't mentioned the son, Seth Bronson. He is a physical giant, fair though, like Eunice. Did I tell you that Eunice has a pretty fine skin for Kansas? But this Seth,—well, he does n't like me, I'm sure. Although he is a quiet fellow, I suspect he's not half the fool he might be taken for in New York. He's quiet like his father. I was afraid he'd bore me to death, but instead he lets me alone pretty severely.

He has just come home for his vacation from some place called Manhattan. (How homesick even the writing of

that name makes me!) For a college man it is surprising how he can drop in among the hired men and work just like one of them. "How can a fellow be a farm-hand and a college student?" I asked him the other day. He stared at me a minute and said, "If you went down to Manhattan, you'd think a fellow wouldn't want to be a farm-hand unless he *was* a college student,—not if he wanted to win out anyhow."

One rainy afternoon he asked me up to his room for the first time. Why, Father, it was a regular college den, with pennants and baseball and football trophies. Seth is a champion at these things, it seems, and a dozen pictures and tokens in his room show it. And you ought to see the way he can handle a horse! Isn't any more excited over the most fractious one than I'd be over a cat. I was out in the pasture—a township big—when he caught one last evening. The whole drove came at us like army cavalry. You know I got my first Yale "Y" in a pole vault. I'd have vaulted over a nine-foot hedge fence just then, if I'd only had the pole. You can't do that on a last year's sunflower stalk, and that was the longest timber in sight. Seth never stopped whistling, and only looked sideways after the colt he wanted. Had it, too, before I knew what to do next. That horse catch awakened a sleeping

force in me. I forgot my rheumatism altogether and stood straighter than I have in a year. I do believe that somewhere back in a previous incarnation I was something of a centaur myself, that I somehow belonged to the soil and planted and harvested and was at home on horseback. I feel it in some new pulse-beat of my blood. Anyhow, rheumatism or no rheumatism, I'm going to be riding and driving and catching loose horses too, before Fall. I know I can do it as well as that six-footer with his two hundred pounds gross on the scales. The lubber!

Eunice is a musical graduate from some college out here they call Washburn. They talk a lot about it and she and Seth are forever guying each other about the merits of their two schools. That's one good trait of this family. They have some sense of humor and can see a joke clear across the Solomon to the far prairie. Her room is opposite mine, and the door is always open in the daytime. That room is all one symphony of Yale blue; only its white "W" for Washburn marks the difference between it and the blue of my own Yale den at home. I spoke to Eunice about it one day and she said something about the founder, Ichabod Washburn, being a product of Yale. But it didn't seem clear to me.

Of course, I told them all about your

wonderful career at Yale and how only one other member of your class ever out-ranked you—I've forgotten that fellow's name long ago—how it was always neck and neck between you two. Father Bronson's eyes glistened with real tears as I told the old stories you used to tell me of your college days and of this old chum of yours. Poor old Bronson! I suppose he never had a chance at a thing like that in his younger years. But no matter, Father, it is really surprising how much of a gentleman even a farmer like Bronson can be. He is one of the most sincere and well-meaning men I have ever known. He is even beginning to dignify farming in my eyes. And Eunice is just like him. But Seth—well, there was a kind of odd smile on his face when I talked of you. Jealousy, I suppose, on account of his father. These poor Kansas fellows can't help it.

I must quit now and write to mother. Her last letter says Aunt Prudence is getting stronger every day, but she adds that the old lady is more than ever determined not to let her out of sight, which means a summer of it for Madam Ellerton, I suppose. She says she gets the letters I send to you the next mail after you read them. Good Papa! Good-bye, I'm doing fine.

LEROY

*Letter from LEROY ELLERTON
to HIS MOTHER*

TALTON, KANSAS, *May.*

DEAR MOTHER MINE:

This is your dutiful "loved and only" who is writing to you this exquisite May morning. While you are shivering before a wood fire down at the beginning of things in East Machias where Maine starts in to grow a United States, out here in the heart of nowhere, watered by the Solomon River, there is a boundless vasty world of sunshine running loose. And while you are still clinging to your long-sleeved flannels and keeping screened away from draughts, I am sitting on the broad northeast veranda, letting the wind, soft but full of tone, pour over me like the surf at Coney Island, and I'm only a little more decently clad than a surf bather, too, for I have all my summer regimentals on now. It is early Summer here,—if only my pen could make you feel its balmy breath! Quite a poet I'm getting to be. Did n't know it was in me before. But they say Kansas will develop whatever tendency to crankism is in one's constitution. Mine seems to be a sickish sentimentalism. But it is only to you, Mother, that

I mean to let it reveal itself, although Dad is such a good fellow, I do turn loose to him now and then. But you were always my safety valve, Mother, and I should have blown up long ago without you.

You don't know how glad I am to hear from you, for you can understand me better than Dad can. Blessed old Hard Shell writes the funniest letters to me. Seems to think I'll die of homesickness. I may yet, but *he* can't hit my homesick streak. I'm not quite the martyr he takes me for. I'm *beginning* to get settled. Why, Mummy dear, Kansas is on the map, and trains run *to* New York as well as away from it. John Ellerton did n't kick me clear off the universe when he shoved me over the Alleghany ridge. I'll tell him so sometime when my rheumatism is better.

But back to your letter. I'm glad you are so contented on that stern and rock-bound upheaval above sea level. You say that after all you are never unhappy up in Maine because you love the villages and country ways and byways. Maybe I have inherited some streak of that thing myself, for I am getting wonderfully acclimated out here—getting accustomed to the openness of this valley. It is *open*, too. No use to get behind a ladder to change your neck-tie, as we used to say, for there are too many

folks on the other side of the ladder. Yet all sides of the ladder interest me and keep on doing it.

I must tell you about Eunice. She is not like any other farmer's girl I ever saw. There's a cute little curve at the corners of her mouth that saves it from being too set. She's got a mind of her own; says she'd vote if she lived in a big city in Kansas where women can do that. But she says it so matter-of-fact like and all, that I believe she would do it gracefully and not be undignified if she wanted to. She does everything else that way, even if she does live in this Wild West. But she is wrapped up in her music, is just crazy about it, and wants to go on studying it somewhere. All the Bronsons seem set enough in their notions.

Kansas seems to put purpose into everybody. I confess, Mother, it makes me ashamed of myself sometimes. I don't seem ever to have had a motive for living. New York just supplied my outside life. Inside of me, I've not begun to live yet.

Seth, the big son of the home, is bound to go West and make a mining expert of himself; seems to know the layers of earth clear down to where they spell places with dashes instead of letters. (Awful Leroy! he won't say that any more.)

But why can't he stay here, where

he's needed? I'd stay with my father — if he'd only let me. He's thrust me out into a cold, cold world. But it's a sunshiny world this time, and Solomon in all his glory was never arrayed as this Solomon Valley is in the grandeur of this May morning. Not that this is any finer than New England or York State. There's just such an eternal lot more of it to be seen all at once, it makes a fellow catch his breath—and dimly from somewhere comes up that old saying, "eye hath not seen," etc. Not many such places for the eye to see, I'm sure of that. * * *

Those stars stand for the auto honks. Think of it! I just saved myself from total ruin the week after I came here. I had started in one evening to enlarge on the delights of motoring. It had been raining for an endless time and I was a dark dead blue. So I had to brag about myself or swear. The sunset had just rebuilt the world, made a new heaven and a new earth all out of old gray rags of clouds and a mud-sodden land, and a free sweep of warm wind was cleaning house for all out-of-doors. Well, I'd just begun to brag about some motoring I'd done in my ancient Eastern life, when Father Bronson said:

"Eunice, you and Seth might take Mr. Ellerton out to the hills with the machine, this evening, if it is not too damp."

I supposed he meant the sewing machine or mowing machine or the sulky plough. I'd not been as far as the barn then. But I had the grace to let up on motoring,—won't say about swearing, but that was under my breath,—while I resigned myself to my accursed fate. And in three minutes, if Seth did n't run out the spankingest big automobile—Well, I nearly fell off the front steps. And I've never said "motor" since.
* * * There goes my call again.

Eunice is down by the front veranda, waiting to take me and this letter over to Talton. The R. F. Deliverer passed an hour ago. They really do have R. F. D.'s out here and mail *daily*. Good as East Machias about that. I can just see Eunice's hair and the back of her neck behind the vines as she sits in the auto. That dark blue linen suit and square sailor collar and the pile of silky hair above it look good to me. So good-bye, dearest of Mummies.

Lovingly,

LEROY

JUNE

*Letter from LEROY ELLERTON
to HIS FATHER*TALTON, KANSAS, *June.*

DEAR FATHER:

Here it is mid-June almost before we can think. I am *so much better* I take no note of time. The hours always drag when one is suffering, and they seem to fly when we forget ourselves. That's what I've been doing. I think I shouldn't have thought about the time at all if your last letter hadn't had so much of condolence about my being *shut up* out here. That's a good term for it, so we'll let it go at that.

I'm finding something new to do every day, and every day I am getting a new power of resistance. This must be the best of all seasons on these prairies. It quit raining back in May and there is a clear blue dome ten trillion miles across, sloping down to a level green earth that has no bound at all, but raveling out into a blur of pale lavender or deep purple where dome meets plain. Talk about Kansas cyclones! I've forgotten the sound of thunder.

*“Who knows whither the clouds have
fled?*

*In the unseared heavens they leave
no wake,*

*And eyes forget the tears they have
shed,” —*

And I have nearly forgotten my rheumatism.

The June days are warm here, but the nights are glorious, with always a ripple of soft air sweeping up from the south when the sun goes down. And such sunsets! Why, Poppy, they are gorgeous. Bronson's place is located with special regard for them, I guess. Eunice and I watched the show last night. If I were an artist I'd put this Solomon Valley on canvas a mile across. Up and down lie acre on acre of heavy green corn land, with golden wheat fields between, and sweeps of alfalfa with its shimmering purple bloom—the most beautiful herbage that ever grew. And through it all winds the Solomon River, with its fringe of greenery. Beyond lie pastures with herds of cattle and hay fields brown and yellow with the mid-summer heat.

Across this spread of land the level rays of sunset fling their splendor, while far up the sky a radiant glory of color no artist can ever paint—well, that's the Solomon Valley. And stretching away to the very bound of the world, fold on fold, is a wavy richness of greens and browns and gold, with purple shadows into which it all melts at last, and the pink tinting overhead slowly softening into silvery cloud mist. It is worth a journey to see. You may not care for all this landscape. You would if you saw it as I do.

The Bronsons aren't half bad, Father. Eunice is a fine girl, really. She can sing very well—for Kansas, and she rides still better. I could n't get very lonely with such a wide-awake girl to keep me company. She is the joy of her father's heart, although he is proud of Seth. Seth is going on West to Oregon, or somewhere else, as soon as he gets through school. The young fellow is silly about mining and can't see that he ought to stay right here, that nothing could be better for him. But that's just the way with some fellows—never do know what is good for them. Why, the longer I stay here, the more I see what the ranch should mean to one born to it. Of course, it isn't like the office and all that buying and selling and loaning and foreclosing business you have ready for me when I quit "doing time" out here. Harvesting a thousand or so bushels of wheat is n't done behind glass partitions with onyx-panelled walls and roller-top desks and glittering fixtures and with a brick-and-mortar wall frowning before every window. That's to be my setting when I do business, while Seth here has a range such as the wild cattle of the plains once held, and the eternal swell and slide of all the winds of heaven. Why should he want to leave all this and go "*experting*" down the black, blinding alleys of coal or copper deposits under the crust of this beautiful earth? Even I know better than that.

This farm life appeals to me more and more.

But that's enough about Seth. It is Eunice who interests me. She does sing beautifully, and her one foolish notion—just like Seth's going West—is to go to New York and have her voice trained and then to go abroad maybe, for more training, and then to sing to crowded houses. A career! What does a woman—especially a Kansas woman and a farmer's daughter at that—need with one anyhow? And Eunice is a Jayhawker, all right. I like to tease her about the West, she is so loyal to her State. I've ridiculed everything here just to see how she'll fight for Kansas. She is so handsome when she is a little bit excited. Then her brown eyes are full of fire and there is a pink flush on her cheeks. She is fair, I told you, with curly golden brown hair and the softest big brown eyes.

Tuesday, Eunice said, "If you will go with me to-morrow afternoon, I'll show you something you'd never find duplicated in your York State nor any other little Atlantic seaboard reservation."

"What is that?" I asked.

"A forgotten bit of the sea," Eunice answered.

Late the next afternoon, we were off for a long spin to a little town miles away, where she had an errand of some

sort. We had an early supper at the hotel and then we took in the town with its average number of uninteresting things and one or two odd features such as every little town possesses for its own.

On our way home Eunice turned from the main road to show me that forgotten bit of the sea she had promised. It was a beautiful evening, with such a sunset as I have described. And Eunice — but no matter.

What we went out for to see was a wonderful welling up of salt water just like the clear green waves off Long Island. A huge mound of earth thirty feet high and a hundred across forms the cup which the water fills to the brim. The depth of this pool is only guessed at. So here it lies, by long secret underground ways reaching out to the sea or some salt spot a thousand miles away maybe. *Æons* and *æons* ago the sea waves swept over Kansas, I am told by my geology. And then came its upheavals and down-settlings, its stand-patting and boss-busting and machine-ruling, and all the whole grand mix-up. In which mix the sea went off and forgot this little bit of it. Forgot the combination on the cut-off. Or maybe the plumbing of this old earth was as defective then as a New York flat is to-day. Anyhow, this precious, clear, green pool of salty water was forgot-

ten; and year on year, century on century, rising and falling like the tides of the ocean, it dimpled under the summer winds and smiled back at the skies above it. Like the pioneers of this Solomon Valley it defied the drouth to burn it out, or the winter blizzard to lock it up with ice. And the Indians came and called it Waconda—Spirit Water—and worshipped ever what they could not understand.

Eunice and I sat down beside this spring and saw the full moon swing up the eastern sky and flood the land with its chastened radiance. All the Solomon Valley lay like a dream of peace under its spell. If I live a thousand years, I'll never see another moonrise like that nor another such valley of rest and sweet dreamy quiet beauty, until the gates of Paradise swing out for me.

And, Father, nothing in that scene fitted so well as that Kansas girl, Eunice Bronson, in her pretty white dress, with the wild rose bloom on her cheek. Somehow the fever of the world slips off out here sometimes and we get down to the real worth of things, without so much of sham and show. But this letter is already miles too long, so good-night.

Aff. yours,

Roy

AUGUST

*Letter from LEROY ELLERTON
to HIS FATHER*TALTON, KANSAS, *August.*

DEAR FATHER:

I have neglected you too long, but you know when I *don't* write, I'm *all* right. I am getting better all the time, although I'm not quite well enough to go home yet. You see, Father dear, this is a whole lot better country than you know anything about back in New York. Of course, you were out here once. I don't wonder you lost your rheumatism. There is no place for it here. Why, right now New York must be like a bake oven. Oh, but I know how hot it is! Of course, it is hot here too, but it bakes out the rheumatism.

Your little note this morning brought good news. To think of Aunt Pru getting her grip on things again, forgetting her aches and pains, and bundling mother off to Europe for the rest of the season as a reward for caring for her! I guess the old lady is better-hearted, after all, than we give her credit for being. Glorious for Mummy, isn't it? And she deserves it ten times over. But to come back to things earthy—that's myself—you are wrong this

time. It didn't make me a bit unhappy that it wasn't I who was sailing toward Europe. We can't do all we want to do, of course. It's much ado with some of us to do what we ought. There's Seth Bronson with his nose underground smelling out rock formations, when the call of the soil ought to be music to him. I can picture every day what a fellow could do with Seth's opportunity here. I think sometimes he half envies me what's coming to me soon—the city pavement and skyscraper structures, and the jostling human herd roaring down those gloomy cracks that cities call streets. There are no scrapers out here. The sky is too everlasting far up. And only the great hand of God Almighty can fling the little cirri cloud flakes in groups that slope toward the zenith, or pile the black stupendous thunder folds against the western horizon and illumine them through and through with electric splendor, the token of His own glory. I never saw much of that from your office windows at home. The great lack with city-reared children, I've figured out, is that we never see anything but the work of men's hands. The grandest structures we may watch go up from a hole in the ground. All the shipping and ship-building is swung by machinery and some man is at the

crane's end guiding the pulleys. And every pretty park and bit of natural beauty has the water-works back of it and some sooty fellow in the engine room controlling it all. He can give and take away, can make a world of blue grass and blossoms, or—turn off the power—and leave only burr-grown sand. It takes the great forests or a stretch of prairie land, something only the Big Architect can build, to put a little reality into a fellow's mind, and anchor him to something permanent. Maybe, Daddy, you have said some of this to me before, but it didn't stick till I worked it out myself here. This is n't a Robinson Crusoe island. I don't go any on the hermit stunt. Neither is it "the madding crowd's ignoble strife" and strut. It is the peace half way between the two, and Seth Bronson is an idiot, that's all. He can't hear the message of every growing stalk of wheat, and the music of mowing machines, and know the freedom from the crazy crowd forever at his heels. One's work counts on the farm with Nature for a perpetual partner, putting up the big share of the capital, and with time now and then to stop and live, while the eternal wrangle of men and man-made things goes scrambling and screaming on in the congested centres of human population. Green as I am, I know this

much, and I say again that Seth is an idiot—fifty-seven varieties of an idiot, and I begrudge the ink it takes to dot the *i* when I write his title. He may go to * * * the stars. That isn't profanity. And I'll write about better subjects.

I must tell you, Daddy, what a glorious jaunt we had this week. I've teased Eunice about the little shrubs they call trees out here. I've told her over and over about the real forests up in York State, while she has been saying all Summer,

“Wait till August, and we will go to see some real trees, grand old oaks.”

I asked her if they were of this Spring's planting, and would be ripe in August.

But she would only say—“Wait and see.”

We are having long and clear days. The sky is all fine gold and the earth is a shading from yellow green to the deepest brown. This thin air just suits me and the nights have that dry soft breath that cools but never chills. Let me see, was it Leroy Ellerton who used to dread the damp night air on account of the rheumatism?

But about the trees. Eunice and I had gone miles and miles up the Solomon Valley for a long picnic day. And, Father, we did see such a grove of beau-

tiful oaks as you 'd never think a flat old prairie could grow. They were tucked away in a little valley, where a muddy creek comes winding down to the Solomon River. You could hardly guess, unless you followed the stream, what was hidden in that deep valley. The dip and swell of the prairie showed us only a line of green leafiness, until suddenly we were at the gateway of a grove sheltering a summer assembly campground.

Nestling under the shadows of the oaks were tents and tents, the out-door homes of the folk all round about this region, who come here every August-time. They were good to look at, too, these inhabitants of the Plains, for, to be square with you, Father, these folks are so much more worth while than I ever thought could be out here that I'm going to be honest enough to say so. Of course, there are none of them quite like Eunice, but that's another story. The earth is the Lord's here, all right, but the fulness thereof is piling up in the banks in little towns like Talton. Friends of the Bronsons that I met at this Chautauqua affair do very much like real Easterners; they send their children to college, and they don't seem to think much about it if some member of the family goes to Europe for a summer vacation. I've not done that yet, you

may recall. Say, Dad, if you know of any young city chap who wants to go where he can patronize the benighted community by his presence, don't send him this way, please. When Eunice's friends spoke in that commonplace fashion about going abroad, all I could say was that, "Mother is travelling in Switzerland now," or, "My father's business takes him over often." Reflected glory beats no glory at all, and I just couldn't meet all those friends of the Bronsons as a provincial, even a New York provincial.

There were many interesting things that day for me, but what struck me most forcibly was the law-abiding spirit of the crowd in that assembly park. It was no beer-garden set. Why, I can't bear the thought of some of our resorts, now that I suppose I'll be seeing them soon. * * *

All this before I get to the trees. Ages ago, dense forests must have covered this region, which some force later reduced to a grass land, and the prairie fires kept it thus. Only this winding creek had crept lovingly about these great oak trees — encircling them peninsular fashion, shielding them from the flames. Through long sunny days and soft dark nights in years that rolled up centuries, the beautiful trees grew and spread their branches. Deep through

the black earth they struck strong roots that held firm in the day of the cyclone's wrath. They must be very old; they were growing here, I'm sure, when the Pilgrims set foot on Plymouth Rock. And earlier, too, when Coronado and his Spanish knights wandered up to the Smoky Hill River country in search of Quivira and its fabled gold-paved cities. They are fine and venerable looking enough to have been lifting their young green boughs to the rains and bending against the hot winds when Columbus sighted land that October morning four hundred years ago.

You may think I'm getting poetical. It is in the air out here. I tell you, Father, there's nothing new and crude about this Solomon Valley. It is old and time-seasoned.

'That was a glorious day we spent under the oaks, with their grand green heads and their hundred-foot spread of shade. I've heard you talk about your boyhood up in Vermont enough to know how you would feel in such a place for one long, lazy August day. On the way back to Bronsons, we talked about the old oak trees and the different things they mean to different minds. One of the Yale men used to tell us, in his classes, how we made the world each for himself, and how we must each read out and then act out his own destiny. It

all came back to me in that homeward ride, as many another long-forgotten lesson will come sometimes.

We didn't do any record-breaking speeding that evening. It was too good to live slowly. The Solomon Valley is in its late summer grandeur, and with the purple mist of evening hanging over it, the whole thing slipped from a wide landscape through a soft blur of heliotrope twilight into a black velvety night. Eunice is artistic enough to see all this. She is not like Seth. While he is peering underground, her head is among the stars. She has her dream of a musical career cut and basted and fitted on. I've found that out, all right. Coming home we turned aside again to visit that spring, the one the Indians called Wacconda. Whatever it may have meant to them, it had a message for me. The hour was that dim, shadowy time

*“When all the jarring notes of life
Seem blending in a psalm,
And all the angles of the strife
Slow rounding into calm.”*

The sharp edges of the day are softened and the world is made of curves and harmonious tones of color, pink and gray and amethyst. Looking out toward the Solomon River winding by black shadowed corn fields and gray-green meadows, I pictured the day when the red man ruled here and this pool of

salt sea water was his shrine. His dead lay buried in the bottom lands by the slow-moving Solomon and he stood on this huge mound and sung his weird death-songs, and made offerings of beads and arrows and trophies to the waters, that the Spirit of the Waters would be kind to his departed ones. Did he lift his face in hope to the wide heavens above him and did he hear in the wandering winds, that ebb and swell across the plains, a voice that spoke of peace and the Great Chieftain's promise of a future life?

And then I thought farther back to the day when the sea had left this bit of itself, one lonely gem of emerald waters, upon the desert plains. And I thought how down the years, through a hundred hundred generations of men it had kept its place, with all the sea's traditions, color, taste, and motion, rising and falling regularly like the ocean tides, here in the heart of the great green plains, a thousand miles from any ocean waters. And I told myself a reason for it all. The mystery of Waconda and its world-old, world-wide lesson came to me like a revelation. I wondered what it meant to Eunice. We had read the same story in the old oak trees. When I spoke to her of the red man, and the origin of the spring, she said:

“We have another notion of the In-

dians out here, but I, too, love this place which they must have loved. Waconda has a story for me, a mystery I have never yet fathomed. I wonder why it is here so far from the great sea, to which it belongs, and if it does not yearn, after the manner of inanimate things, for the great heaving ocean of which it could be a part.

“I can understand it better, maybe, because I, too, am held here in this valley by ties hard to break, when all the time I am yearning to get out into the world, to study and work, and then, as a singer, to give delight to lovers of song.”

I wanted to tell her the message the waters were bringing to me. But it wasn't the time then. She is so set on this notion of a musical career.

“We can never see with other people's eyes in this world,” she said when we stood up for a last look at the valley, all tenderly gray, deepening into purple. “Waconda tells you one story and me another, and they may be very different. If you should ask Seth, he would give you a mineral analysis, slick and comprehensive. To Father, it is a tragedy. He was too near to the time when this soil was red with the martyr blood of the first white settlers. I am glad we are a generation away from all that, and can look beyond it to the mys-

tery of old Waconda of the long, long ago."

All the way home, Eunice sang sweet ballads, Indian love songs, and snatches from an Arapahoe melody:

*“Waconda, hear us, hear us!
Waconda, Oh, behold us!
Like the embers dying, O Waconda!
Like the pale mist flying, O Wa-
conda!
Wood and prairie fade before us,
Hills and streams our Fathers gave
us,
Home, and friends of home, O Wa-
conda!
And thy children roam, O Waconda!
Like the weary winds, homeless cry-
ing.”*

Her voice is beautiful, but it seems to fit these open spaces more than it would the crowded, hemmed-in opera houses. That's her business, though, not mine.

Good-night. There's a lot of doings planned ahead and I must get my beauty sleep.

Affectionately,

ROY

THE PEACE OF THE
SEPTEMBER

*Letter from JOHN ELLERTON to
DANIEL BRONSON*

NEW YORK CITY, *September.*

MY DEAR OLD DAN:

Roy's case is very hopeful. Why, he's a credit to me; learns faster than I thought he could; writes like he had to instruct his green old father concerning the merits of your family. You must be a splendid teacher. The joke is on the cub, of course. He's got as bad a case of Kansas fever as he had of New York rheumatism. Now, watch him squirm when I write to him to come home.

You have carried him over the slough as you used to carry me when I was helpless with rheumatism, you blessed old son of a horse thief. Just as you carried me over the rough places at Yale.

Yours,

JOHN ELLERTON

P. S. Mrs. Ellerton is in Europe now. Will spend the Winter on the Continent.

*Letter from JOHN ELLERTON to
HIS SON LEROY*

NEW YORK, *September.*

DEAR ROY:

Your six months is nearly up, — only two weeks more. On your own confession your rheumatism left you in August, but I wanted you to be sure of it. You must be very tired of the Bronson outfit by this time, so I write to tell you to come home at once. I sail for Liverpool the sixteenth. Come as soon as you get this, and we can go together. You might spend the Fall in Italy with your mother. That would just suit you. You need n't answer. Come.

Your loving father,

JOHN ELLERTON

*Letter from LEROY ELLERTON
to HIS FATHER*

TALTON, KANSAS, *September.*

DEAR DADDY:

What's the blooming matter with you, anyhow? And why did you ever think I'd want to spend a glorious Autumn in such a Dago land as Italy? I have n't asked for a reprieve, have I? I'm willing to serve out my sentence here. You have gone galumphing off to Liverpool a dozen times without me; and mother has been in Maine in the Summers or in Florida in the Winters, leaving me an orphan, since I was sixteen. Kansas is just in its glory now. They say the Octobers are splendid here. I can believe it, and I'm writing to ask for an extension of my sentence of six months, on account of bad behavior.

You know I came West under protest. Now, why do you insist on cutting off two weeks of the time just when this old earth is at its finest? You can't know in smoky, noisy, rushing New York, where the sun, moon, and stars, the changing seasons, and everything beautiful is lost in the crazy, reeling masses of people and mountains of brick walls,—you can't know what this time of the year is like out here.

*“All the rich and gorgeous glintings
Merging into matchless tintings,
As the summer blossoms dwindle,
And the autumn landscapes kindle,
Setting vale and upland flaming
In a glory past all naming.”*

That's the Solomon Valley in October, and a myriad changing hues make the landscape radiant with beauty. Everything is arranged for three or four weeks ahead. When you see mother, tell her I'm the best I've been in three years. I've got the recuperative power of Aunt Pru.

When I read your letter to Eunice she looked a little disappointed, I thought, but when I told her I should ask for a stay of execution she only laughed and recommended me to Italy. Mr. Bronson is waiting to take this letter to Talton. Hope you will have a fair voyage to Liverpool, but I can't possibly join you now.

Yours,

ROY

*Special Delivery Letter from JOHN
ELLERTON to HIS SON*

NEW YORK, *September.*

DEAR ROY:

I have put off sailing until the twenty-first, so you can get here in time to go with me. Now don't think your father too blind not to see that you are merely frittering away your time with a green young Kansas girl. You are born and bred to the city and you went out to that God-forsaken Solomon Valley only to get rid of your rheumatism. Now that it is gone, you must begin the life of a New York business man in real earnest. You can spend the Fall in Italy. That is your final polish. Then the grind begins for you. I need you in my office now and as soon as we get home from this trip abroad, you and I will make a firm that will cut rock in this great, busy, rushing city. Don't write, but come.

Your loving father,

J. E.

*Special Delivery Letter from LEROY
ELLERTON to HIS FATHER*

TALTON, KANSAS, *September.*

DEAR FATHER:

Your "special" got here all right. I had my plans all set for another month, but I am obedient, if I'm anything. It is too late for me to make the twenty-first. I'll follow on the next steamer. I told Eunice last night what you said about my staying in New York. You need not be uneasy about that. She is as willing I should be in that big human maelstrom as you are eager to fasten me there. I found that out without her knowing it. I had thought—but never mind. I didn't tell her what you wrote about her being a "green Kansas girl." I'll write you at Liverpool and join you there later.

Yours,

Roy

Telegram

LEROY ELLERTON,
TALTON, KANSAS.

I sail the twenty-fourth. Come at
once.

J. E.

Telegram

JOHN ELLERTON,
NEW YORK CITY.

Can't make it.

ROY

NOVEMBER

*Letter from JOHN ELLERTON to
DANIEL BRONSON*

LIVERPOOL

DANIEL BRONSON,

TALTON, KANSAS, U. S. A.

DEAR DAN:

I can't tell you how I regret missing your letter which Leroy sent on to me here.

Had I received it sooner, I could have cabled Roy to stay in New York until after your daughter Eunice should arrive. He could have made her feel at home at once.

You see, I had to come on here without Roy, and when he reached New York from the West, a cablegram from me kept him from sailing at once. I had to leave some business for him to look after. I had already wired for him to come on before I received the letter of yours asking me to look after Miss Eunice. And he will be on the ocean when she reaches the city. But I have sent word to friends of ours who will meet her and do all any one could do for her, I am sure, except possibly Mrs. Ellerton, if she were at home. She and Roy will spend the next two months in Italy.

After all you did for Roy, this is a poor return to you and Miss Eunice, and you know how sincerely I regret it. I hope your daughter may like the city as well as Roy seemed to like Kansas last Summer. I haven't seen him yet, but look for him on the next steamer.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN ELLERTON

P. S. We will all be back in March or April and if we don't show Eunice a good time, it will be the fault of New York, not of the Ellerton family.

*Letter from EUNICE BRONSON,
New York, to DANIEL BRON-
SON, Kansas.*

NEW YORK, *November.*

MY DEAR FATHER:

I reached N. Y. all right and found friends of the Ellertons waiting for me, who took me to the Conservatory of Music at once. I am nicely settled and I know I shall be as happy here as I can be anywhere away from you. The home on the Solomon seems pretty good to me to-night. I am homesick for Kansas for a minute. But only for a minute. The teachers here are full of praise for my work, and the promise of my future. Oh, if I could only fill a great opera house with my song until the very rafters rang with applause! I hope my ambition isn't sinful, because I know I should be giving the sweetest pleasure to music-hungry hearts. And why should not my ambition be fulfilled, if I put all my strength into my work? Since I was just a slip of a girl, I have been looking forward to this day when I should have the opportunity to try my powers. Even in the time when coming East to study seemed a wild impossibility for a Kansas girl, because we hadn't the money then, and New York was such a far-away thing, frowning coldly on a

farmer's daughter from the West. But now, oh, Father, I'm walking on the cloud-tops, I'm so happy to be here in this whirl of real life. If it wasn't for you and Seth I'd forget there ever was a Solomon Valley.

It is so good of you, Father dear, to let me come, when the house must be lonely, with only a housekeeper in it. You realize, for you have lived here, how great it is for me to get away from the farm and the narrow life on the prairie, and to be in this wonderful city where they *do things*. Buy to-day, and sell to-morrow; not plant in September—and maybe—after a long Winter and longer Spring, late in June garner in the harvest as we do our wheat. Provided always that the drouth and the winds and the fly—and the May floods—have been merciful.

I can see your eyes twinkle as you say:

“It is good wheat money that is sending my daughter to New York.”

It isn't wheat money that keeps this city on the everlasting jump, I am sure, and the queer thing in all this to me is that I seem to feel at home in it. I do believe that somewhere back in some past incarnation that Theosophists understand (I don't), I do believe that I was a real city girl, born and bred. Of course, I'm a Jayhawker still, but it is just glorious here. I know I'm

coming into my own, into freedom and opportunity, into the busy pulsing life of the great tides of humanity that surge these streets as the waters of the Atlantic surge up against its shores. And I am a part of it all, instead of being tied to the prairie like poor lonely little Waconda Springs, lost and forgotten by the big ocean to which it belongs.

And Seth is gone too. The call of the West was as strong for him as the call of the East for me. He has sent me a perfectly grand letter from the Columbia River country. No use talking, Father, one or the other of us will yet pull you away from the ranch. Which pole of the magnet will be the stronger, I wonder.

Your loving

EUNICE

P. S.—You would never guess whom I saw this morning. I was hurrying up to the Conservatory. The elevator was crowded, and, just as some one pushed me rudely—I'm not fast enough for New York yet—I found an arm put out to protect me, and in a moment the crowd had pressed me so close to Leroy Ellerton I could hardly see his face. He put his arm between me and the crowd to shield me. I was so glad to see him, for I am a bit lonely

here, when I look for a familiar face in the crowd.

I thought he went abroad in October, but it seems he didn't go. He said he had to stay here and look after his father's business, said he had to give up all that beautiful trip to Italy he had told you and me about before he left Talton in September. How long ago it seems now since I was at home and Leroy was our guest. He is coming Sunday to take me to hear a great soloist at one of the big churches. One has such opportunities for those things here. Oh, I am sure I shall like it more and more. But when it comes to saying good-bye, dear Papa, I am not real sure about that past incarnation. But let it stand. I remember what you said when I left home: "If I would study hard and if I liked it here, I might stay as long as I pleased." I'll tell you later about that.

EUNICE

*Letter from LEROY ELLERTON,
New York, to JOHN ELLER-
TON, Liverpool.*

NEW YORK, *November.*

DEAR FATHER: .

I am doing very well with the office work, although I'll be mighty glad when your ship steams in again. I read all you wrote about what I was missing by not trotting after you to Europe in October, as I promised to do when I left Kansas. Great guns! Dad, it was your own fault I did not go at once. Your cablegram keeping me here for a month was waiting for me when I got in from the West. I confess it didn't look bad to me, though, to read that I would be needed in the office here for a short time. I stayed willingly, because the old Atlantic had a sort of impassable look every time I saw it. And now you try to make me feel what I'm losing by not accepting this offer from you to tour Italy in December and January. I reckon Italy will be sticking on the map yet a while, and I can see it 'most any old December or January, unless Vesuvius takes a notion to blow it up. In that case I'm safer here anyhow.

By the way, old Bronson's daughter, the "green Kansas girl," you called her, is in New York now studying voice culture. Don't turn up your aristocratic nose and ask how a Kaw squaw can do anything with voice culture. It makes me wrathful with my paternal relative every time I think of how you regard Eunice Bronson. I met her in an uptown elevator this morning. I mean she met me, for I saw her come from her train and meet our friends, and I saw where they lodged her. In fact, I've been pretty much awake to every move she has made in New York. But to-day we came together in an elevator where a metropolitan hog was about to jostle the timid little Western girl off the edge of the earth.

She thought I had gone abroad, but I told her I was looking after your business. That's straight goods, Daddy; I'm managing your estate and I was n't telling any story. You'll say I could drop it any half-minute and join you if I chose. But I don't choose — not right now anyhow.

Yours aff.,

LEROY

DECEMBER

*Letter from EUNICE BRONSON,
New York, to DANIEL BRON-
SON, Kansas.*

NEW YORK, *Christmas Eve.*

DEAR FATHER:

It is Christmas Eve, — such a cold white Yule-time as I can hardly remember in Kansas. And I remember everything that ever happened in my life in the West, although I am thoroughly acclimated here, and feel as if I might have lived here forever.

Yet always I'm thinking of you and Seth. And especially to-night, my first holiday season away from home. I do so much wish you a happy Christmas, Father. There's a misgiving down in my heart as I write this. Can you have a real happy Christmas with both of us away? Is your heart in the ranch house on the Solomon to-night? Or is it half in Seattle with my big brother, and half in New York with me?

I don't blame Seth for going West. That is a man's right. But I am not sure of myself to-night. Ought I to be at home with my lonely father? It puts a sadness in this Christmas Eve for me. And yet, I remember how you delighted in all my plans for coming East, and every letter you write is so full of inter-

est in my work, and hope that I may win. I guess you love your little girl too much for either of us to be unhappy. And I am going to win, Father. That's what I came here to do. I am studying hard. I never worked in that farm house in the days when the crops failed and we couldn't afford to hire help as I am working now. But I am so happy in it all, it hardly seems like work. And as to liking New York—I love it. I have found so many pleasant people. New friends do not crowd out old ones at all. I find room for both. Leroy has been very kind to me and I've had such a round of good things I've been in a perfect whirl. I can't realize sometimes that I am the same Kansas girl who came to New York last Fall. Life here is so different, so hurried and feverish, I wonder where it will lead to, sometimes. Yet, I like it for this very hurry.

And here is your letter saying you'll send me to Europe where I may study all next year if I like. Of course, I want to go to Europe. It is the dream of all my years. Everybody says my success is assured if only I can get a little foreign training. You would be so proud of me if I made a name for myself as a singer. And I shall try so hard to earn a great name.

Leroy was here last night. He is a full-fledged business man now. We

talked of the trip to Europe. Somehow he is more enthusiastic than anybody else about my going, but he never mentions the matter unless I bring it up, and he always changes the subject. But when he does talk he just makes Europe out a perfect paradise of opportunity and urges me to go, even when I tell him how lonely you will be without me.

My teachers here say that I must have had very fine instruction before coming to them, or I could not have made such progress in so short a time here, nor give such promise of results when I go abroad. Of course, I know I had good teachers.

What do you suppose Leroy said to me to-night? He came over to wish me the season's greeting, and to bring me a big bunch of the most exquisite roses I ever saw. When I told him what the professor at the Conservatory had said of my training, he replied:

"It's because you sang so much in the open air. It was the prairie that put tone and volume into your voice."

I answered that it was my good college training.

"It takes the West to put foundation under the East," I said jokingly.

"Yes, and it takes some Western folks to knock the foundation out from under some of us," Leroy answered, and changed the subject.

It is getting late and the Christmas bells will be chiming soon their old, old music of "peace on earth,—good will to men." Peace and good will, and all a daughter's love, I am sending to you so far away in the Solomon Valley to-night, where the world is still and full of peace. The roar in New York seems never to stop. I am going to get away out of it for a little moment and dream myself back in the home with you.

Father, may I tell you a secret? I have nobody but you to whom I can write or speak. I wish I did n't care so much for what Leroy thinks. But I do. He does not know—will never know. He is wrapped up in this busy life of the city. And he is making money. He does n't care whether I go to Berlin or Talton. It all began last Summer. I tried to think I should forget it when he was gone. I put all my heart into my work and I'm keeping it there, for that is my life. So, giving it up now would be like giving up my life. And yet, sometimes, I've dreamed of how a home might be with one I most loved there.

But there is no use to think of what might be. What is, is a hard-hearted, cool-spirited, city-bred business man, engrossed heart and soul in dollars and cents and the great rushing crowd of a tremendous city, of which he is a part; and a maiden—destined to be a

maiden always—who longs for the success that must come, a name of world-wide note, and the fame that is honestly won and belongs to those who do great things.

Father dear, you must never tell that I told you this about Roy. It is a relief to tell you. Now it is written, I feel better.

When I get all my plans for Europe arranged, I'll write them in full. Are you sure you won't miss me too much?

These beautiful roses fill the air with their perfume. They are dainty and pink like the pink tints of a twilight sky that I've seen above the prairies beyond Waconda. * * *

Midnight, and the Christmas bells are chiming now. They seem to voice my love to you, dear, far-away Father, so good to me. I hope these sweet-toned bells bring dreams of peace to all I love—you and Seth—and even to Leroy, who is not thinking of me as they chime. He is dreaming of the business success he is to achieve. Peace and good will, and all good things be yours.

Lovingly,

EUNICE

*Letter from LEROY ELLERTON
to his MOTHER*

NEW YORK, *Christmas Eve.*

DEAR, DEAR MOTHER:

My Christmas greeting to you this white, clear Christmas eve, not by letter nor cable, but by that wireless line of love vibrating from the heart of every boy who loves his mother as I do you. And equal greeting and love to my father with you—but it's a different kind of affection. You know a fellow's mother is his *mother*, that's all. And if it was n't Christmastide and I had the chance, I'd like to punch the old gentleman a round or two just to paste time out of him, as the boys say, for the low-down trick he played on me last Spring.

To think of him and Daniel Bronson being boy playmates and old college chums at Yale, the lobsters! And of sending me, all verdant and innocent, out to Kansas to make a fool of myself. Well, it was a good thing the Atlantic was between us when I read your letter, explaining everything. As I say, it's the Yule time of love, so I'll be mild. Only, if old Vesuvius should get to acting ugly, keep him on the landward side of you. He ought to be shaken up and likewise scorched and have sackcloth and ashes for his portion for a while.

I've tried to think of all the silly, snobbish things I said at the Bronsons' last April and May—tried to forget them rather, for they come back to my mind often enough. I'm glad I had the sense to get over it all before many weeks and to see how the land lay. I inherited that sense from you, dearie (Dad hasn't that much altogether, let alone giving me any), and I quit acting the idiot pretty early in the game. But it is the hour of peace on earth and good will to men. I wish the angels had made it women too, and not in irreverence, I wish it.

Mother dear, I must tell you some things to-night, just as I used to tell you my troubles when I was a little boy and cuddled down by your knee on winter evenings. Let me feel your hand on my hair again as I write.

I learned more than father had thought about in Kansas last Summer. He wanted me to find out what the West is like. That rheumatism business was only a side issue with him. It did get me away from thinking of my own ailments. I'm doubly grateful for that. Heaven save us from a whining man!—or anybody else who dotes on "symptoms" and keeps his pains posted up for public inspection. Ellerton, Senior, wanted me to find out the worth of character in rural homes and

country lives. I found it out. Give me 99 per cent plus on Exhibit "A."

Mother, I found more than that. I saw clearly the way of life I want to go. It is in my New England blood to love the soil. Am I not the son of Vermont and Maine, both of my parents born and reared away from the city? I wakened to my kingdom one day out on the Kansas prairies. It began by finding fault with Seth Bronson for not wanting to stay on the ranch with his father. What he was turning down seemed so full of promise to me. I love those grand, open fields on the sunny plains. The growing crops and fattening stock, the bounty of Nature, and the chance to *think* and *live* all called to me as nothing else in this world ever did—or ever will.

Yes, I'm fixed here, in the city, with one foot lariatied to an office desk-leg, and I shall pay out my rope as far as the parks, now and then in the spring and summer time, while out in Kansas, the

*"Rolling prairie's billowy swell,
Breezy upland, and timbered dell,
Stately mansion, and hut forlorn—
All are hidden by walls of corn."*

I'm trying heart and soul to be the junior partner here and to do my work

well. And I'll keep on till it is second nature to me.

There was another lesson I learned in the West, one that Father didn't know was in the book, or he might not have selected the Solomon Valley as a sanitarium for me. Let me whisper, Mummy. I learned to love a dear, sweet-faced country girl, a wide-awake, capable, fun-loving, but scholarly, thinking girl. A girl with a life purpose of her own—ding it!—a plan for the future so big and definite that I cut no figure in it. I've told you about Eunice Bronson and her notion of being a musician. She is here now, taking voice culture under New York's Best. Said Best are wild about her, urging her to keep to this purpose she brought with her. Study here and abroad! Training under the best Masters of Europe! I hear it all the time.

For I stay pretty close to her here. You can guess why I turned down Italy this year. I'm a fool still. Father'll have to play a bigger trick yet to get me altogether cured. I'm going to stay here too, as long as she is in New York. It is my last, last time, you see. Also, you can see how there is nothing for me in the Solomon Valley now, even if I could cut this business career.

Have I told her all this? Not I. I tried to when we were at Waconda

Springs one August evening. But I read her story first and I knew it would be wasted time, so I kept still. I had hope then, of something changing things. I haven't any more. She is planning to go to Europe in June. When her steamer sails, it will carry my one dream of happiness with it. So, I'm going to keep her near me as long as I can; and when she gets ready to leave New York, I'll slip up to Montreal for a fortnight, so I can't play the ——— blamed fool and go with her. It would be like me. I'm such a ——— chump. And then when she is out in mid-ocean, I'll come back and resume my fetters here.

But, mother darling, I'll play the man and make my bondage my help. I'm not going to be a silly kind of idiot. I'll just do the best work possible and you and father will be proud of me as a business man some day, I hope.

.
The Christmas bells are chiming, so it is midnight. This is the strangest Christmas I have ever known. The only peace on earth for me, dear mother, is the peace of overcoming. Surely there will be a day when I'll forget all this and be as happy as I used to be. Life has these rifts, I know. But the chasms close again, don't they? * * *
There are the bells again, so sweet and

clear. I hope they are sounding softly in dreams for Eunice, who is dreaming of fame, not of me. To you and father, far away, a joyous Christmas. And to all the world, from Leroy Ellerton, good will and peace.

Good-night and good-morning, precious Mother.

Lovingly,

Roy

*Letter from DANIEL BRONSON,
Kansas, to EUNICE BRON-
SON, New York*

KANSAS, *Christmas Eve.*

DEAR DAUGHTER EUNICE:

This is Christmas Eve, and although I am all alone, I am happy to send Christmas greeting to my children. I sent all the Christmas gifts by express a week ago, so you will be sure to have them in the morning. The house seems pretty big and hollow-sounding, for it is the first time in a quarter of a century that I have been alone when the holiday season came.

It seems such a little while ago that you and Seth were toddling about in our little two-roomed house. That's the tool-house now. Ellerton, your oldest brother, was born in a dugout one Christmas Eve, twenty-four years ago. Poor, little baby! He didn't live the summer through. We had a better home—a palace it was to your mother and me—when you and Seth came to us. And yet, how poor we were! No Christmas stockings in those first years. We just kept Christmas in our hearts, which isn't a bad place, Eunice, to celebrate it. For we were happy in each other's love, my wife and I, and in our two sturdy little ones, who

never knew what sickness meant. These things made up for the lack of beautiful gifts. Such a little while ago all that was. And now Christmas Eve is here again. The quarter section of land I preëmpted on the frontier is only one-eighth of the Bronson ranch to-day. The little dugout is the dog-house now, and the 12 x 14 homestead, a vine-covered tool shelter. Fourteen rooms, and upper and lower verandas, hot and cold water, a lighting and heating system, etc., etc. These things have grown up from year to year.

But to-night, although I am utterly alone, daughter dear, I won't say I am lonely, for I know my children's hearts are with me. And space does n't count where love is strong.

Seth writes that it is bitterly cold in Seattle, and I see by the daily papers that New York will have a white Christmas. Out here the air is almost balmy, and the skies are cloudless. There is a sort of October haze over the landscape, a sweet restfulness and peace that seem to pervade everything.

I had business over Waconda way to-day. It was sunset when I reached the Springs coming home. I was in no hurry, for there were no little children waiting at home for me to-night.

So, I turned aside and went over to Waconda while the sun sank from sight and the twilight of this beautiful Christmas Eve came on. My heart that had been sore and aching for my children was at peace as I sat on the rocks and thought of you.

Seth is more than making good, he writes, and is infatuated with Seattle. It seems a certain black-eyed Manhattan girl, a classmate of his, has gone to Seattle in the interests of Domestic Science, and Seth, also in the interests of Domestic Science, is finding that city a good location. As I sat by the "Spirit Springs," as we used to call it, and watched the changing beauty of the twilight, I lived my youth over again until my own heart-ache slipped away. For love is a divine thing.

*"The love of home and native land,
 And that which springs 'twixt son
 and sire,
 And that which welds the heart and
 hand
 Of man and maiden in its fire
 Are signs by which we understand
 The Love whose passion shook the
 Cross;
 And all those loves that deep and broad
 Make princely gain or priceless loss,
 Reveal the Love that lives in God
 As in a blood-illumined gloss."*

I thought of my daughter away to the eastward. I know, Eunice, that your heart is full of joy to-night, because New York holds the best things in the world for you now, although you have put away the things that are making my boy's Christmas good. You will come back to them some day, when fame and success are won. God grant you do not return too late. There comes a time to all of us when the sweetest peace we can know is the peace of overcoming; of forgetting ourselves in our love for our fellow man.

Believe me, dearie, there wasn't a happier man in all Kansas to-night than your old farmer father, driving home in the quiet evening time. I lifted my face to the open skies and looked into the faces of the stars, the same old stars that watched this valley long before Waconda was here, and down through countless centuries while bald rock became sandy desert, and sandy desert grew to grassy plain, and grassy plain to verdant prairie, which human hands—even my hands—have helped to turn to fruitful fields, for a happy folk to thrive upon.

And back of these changeless stars is the changeless love of the Heavenly Father. His right hand has guided me down the years. I love the land where I have walked with Him in storm and

sunshine; so the Christmas peace and good will are blessing the Solomon Valley for me.

.
It is growing late — almost midnight. May the love of God, the Father Almighty, and of Jesus Christ, His Son, be and abide with my children now and through the coming years.

Your affectionate father,

DANIEL BRONSON

JUNE

*Letter from EUNICE BRONSON,
Talton, Kansas, to LEROY EL-
LERTON, New York City.*

TALTON, KANSAS, *June.*

MY DEAR FRIEND:

Here I am again out on the ranch in the Solomon Valley. Of course you, with all of my New York friends, will be utterly disappointed in me, for my career was so full of promise. And father had given full consent for me to go on with my music under German masters. Oh, it was a rosy world opening before me, full of busy days, of struggling onward, winning my way step by step, and maybe too, full of rivalry and much defeat before fame came. For that was what I wanted—or thought I wanted—the sound of praise, the cheering audiences, the power of mastery over listening minds, the rush and whirl and glitter of a grand career.

When you went up to Montreal on business just before I was ready to sail, I don't know what led me to stop long enough to sit down and take stock of myself. But I did. I weighed Life as if it were calculated in ounces and pounds. And the result was this: I gave up every plan and hope and

dream and came back again to Kansas, because my father wanted me and needed me. He didn't tell me so. Brave old farmer that he is! He learned long ago how to endure and not complain. One gleans that lesson from the prairie sod in the years when the sunshine is a furnace and the clouds forget their rain and the fierce winds blow all the seed away from the loose, dusty earth. In such years the farmers wait unchanged like Waconda, sure that other seasons will bring fruition of their hopes. And so my father waited, filling every letter with cheery words. He sent me all the funds I needed and put no bar in the way of my doing just as I chose.

Give me credit, or blame me alone, for turning my face from the East. And don't be too severe, please, for I have valued your friendship. And now that you are a fixture in the city, a wheel in the great machinery of its business, and I am only a home-maker in a Kansas farm house, our lives will run so far apart, it will be by merest chance of Fate that they will ever cross lines again. Please do not think I am making an utter failure of living. Remember me kindly if you remember at all. I told you once out by Waconda, the message of whose waters I could never understand, that we must read

life, each for himself. I do not know why that piece of the green ocean is held here in the heart of the green prairie, but I do know that my work is here with my father and home and the best folks on earth—these lifetime neighbors and friends—who are a part of this Solomon River country.

If you could only see how this home looks to my eyes that I thought could never grow weary of city grandeur, and if you could see the vast, beautiful outdoor world unrolling its June splendor, you would be gentle in your thought of me. The call of the West was in my ears day and night, much as I tried to drown it with the noise of the city and the roar of the Atlantic and the cries of Fame urging me on. The bustle of New York, the fever for a career, go down, for me before the duties of home; and the handsome parks, the huge buildings, the rushing crowds, all give place to the wide Kansas prairies and the peace of the Solomon Valley. You will be disappointed in me, and disgusted with me. But while I miss many things I have been having for nearly a year, I am finding real life here, and rest, and—well, you know, I was born in Kansas, and after all, I'm happiest here.

Yours sincerely,

EUNICE BRONSON

P. S.—Strangely enough, I can reach the high notes here when I sing out on the open prairie that I never could reach in the Conservatory. My voice is richest here. So, I must belong in the heart of Kansas.

EUNICE

*Letter from LEROY ELLERTON,
Talton, Kansas, to JOHN EL-
LERTON, Liverpool*

TALTON, KANSAS, *June.*

MY DEAR FATHER:

Don't be surprised when you get this, not too surprised, anyhow. I send this to Liverpool so you may know what to expect when you get to New York. I'm out hunting the rheumatism I lost here once.

You see, Father, I came West first against my will, for I am a born New Yorker, that is to say I was a narrow provincial. It didn't take many weeks for me to learn my lesson—that this is the real thing, not mere sham living, as I had supposed it would be. More than that, I found the dearest girl in the world out here. I lost my rheumatism and heart at the same time. And I learned to detest the city jungle as I learned to love this valley. The only thing I have ever really wanted to do is to put my whole energy into the life and work of a Kansas ranch. Maybe nobody ever heard of a city boy wanting to become a farmer. Let me tell you that lazy Leroy Ellerton never really lived in any city; he just stayed there to be with his parents and give dignity to the family through his infancy and boyhood, and until he had finished college. One day, out in

the Solomon Valley, his real self awoke, and clamored for its rights. Day by day through a glorious Summer he saw more and more clearly the work his heart and hand were yearning for. There are so many misfits in this world, the wonder is there is any success at all. So many "square men in round holes," etc., and the trouble generally comes in trying to make a "rounder" of the square man instead of working a little on the hole he must fit into.

Anyhow, the same Leroy boy knew eternally well what he could do best and was just planning to negotiate matters for getting into it, when there came the decree that he must give it up. And he gave it up, knowing, like Kipling's fool, when he did it that—

"Part of him lived, but most of him died."

But I obeyed to a degree. I tried honestly to do your bidding. When I had left Kansas and reached the city, intending to take the steamer the next day for Liverpool, your cablegram kept me back for a brief time. Then Eunice came to New York, and somehow a pleasure trip through Italy looked like hard work at once, and I cut it out. But I buckled down to real hard labor, and I worked all the harder to fill my place with you when Eunice thought her pleasure lay in a singer's career. I never tried to persuade her away from

it. She gave it up herself, and came back to make her home in Kansas and to make her father happy. And the joy of duty done was hers.

When Eunice was ready to sail for Europe, I knew I'd make a fool of myself if I stayed visibly in New York. So, I told her I was going to Montreal on business. I knew in a thousand years the Ellertons had never had any business in Montreal. But I told her that, intending to hide around a corner.

That wasn't going to work, I soon found out, so I put off — on a penance pilgrimage to East Machias, Maine.

Father, I understand now all about the reward of humble sacrifice. I went up to cheer Aunt Prudence in her lonely hours. And it happened that Aunt Pru was the one to confer benefits. One evening, sitting in the twilight by the wood fire, somehow — Lord knows — the dear old lady drew me on and on to talk to her as I never dreamed of talking to anybody but my own Mummy.

And then, with the firelight on her sweet old face and her snowy hair and with the wisdom of her eighty years of thoughtful living and good deeds to others, she seemed a sort of saint to me.

“Eunice is n't doing her duty to her father, so much as to herself,” Aunt Pru declared. “Far down in the girl's heart there is a voice calling her away

from all this thing she has planned, or she could not leave it. Take my word, Leroy, the girl isn't happy here, and she knows where her duty lies."

"But what should I do, Aunt Prudence?" I asked her.

"The work you can do best and love the doing. It's not always the easiest work, as labor goes, nor the work that brings the most money, but if it's the thing you love to do, and can work the prettiest pattern into it, do that."

Then I saw my duty. Father, I hate Wall Street, and I've come out here to live a broad, busy, free life, to be a farmer in the Solomon Valley. To the life I leave behind me in the city, it is as health to fever; as peace after turmoil. This is the best place on earth for me, for while our families are widely separated—you and mother in New York and Seth Bronson in Seattle—they centre here.

I know all about your friendship for Daniel Bronson, you two old sinners! I ought to be obliged to you for letting me make a fool of myself, for it was good for me, maybe. Only nobody, least of all a New Yorker, cares to make a fool of himself. I came here two days ago. Last night we went in the auto over to that same lost bit of the sea, I wrote you about last year—I mean Waconda Springs.

Sitting on the rocks looking out

toward the Solomon River, we saw the full moon make a new heaven and a new earth for this exquisite June night. I asked Eunice again, as I had asked her once before, if she knew the mystery of old Waconda, and the message of the waters to us.

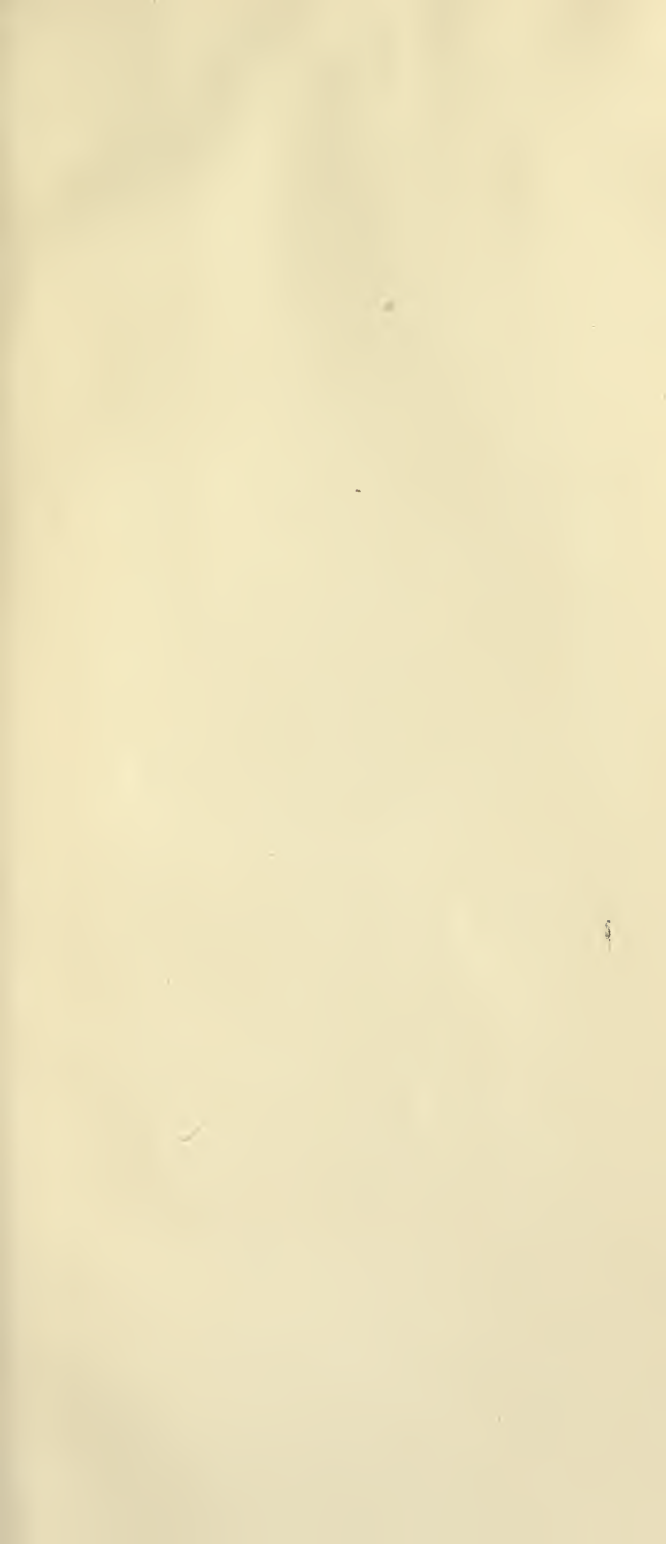
“I cannot understand why this spring was left here all these years,” she said. “It is a mystery I could never fathom.”

And then I told her what the waters had told me; that this tiny bit of the sea, left here for so many centuries, had so loved this place, so rested in the peace and beauty of the valley, sun-kissed and mist-swathed, with the tenderness of the springtime, the glory of mid-summer, the splendor of autumn, that it chose to stay here; chose to forsake the restless, stormy, seething ocean that hammers forever on its shores and here to watch the unfolding of a kingdom, the life of a people coming at last into their own.

The clear green water dimpled in silver sparkles under the glorious moon, and the peace of the Solomon Valley mingled with the peace of our own hearts. For we, too, had found our own at last,—our kingdom here in Kansas.

Your loving

Roy



14 DAY USE

RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED

LOAN DEPT.

This book is due on the last date stamped below, or
on the date to which renewed.

Renewed books are subject to immediate recall.

9 Jan '65 AA

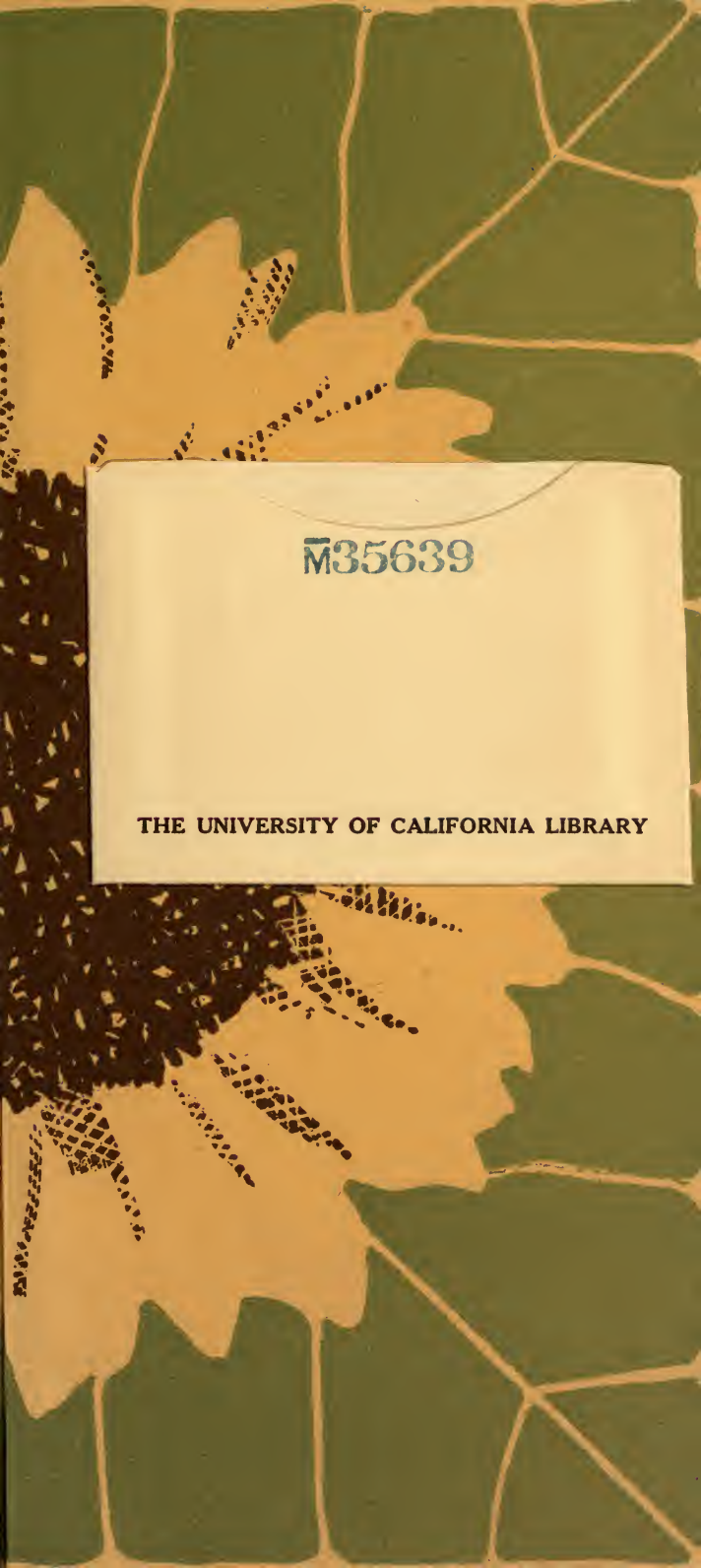
REC'D LD

JAN 8 '65 -8 AM

LD 21A-40m-11,'63
(E1602s10)476B

General Library
University of Califo'
Berkeley





M35639

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

