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*Woman
in the West.*



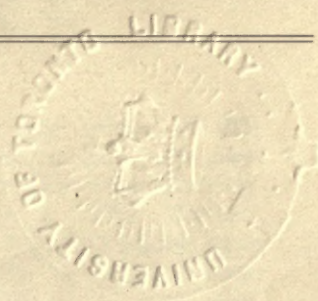
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By Gertrude Balmer Watt.

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A Woman in the West

By Gertrude Balmer Watt



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A WOMAN IN THE WEST



P R E F A C E

A WORD of explanation is due the reader of this modest volume. The writer has for two years past been a staff contributor to The Edmonton Saturday News, conducting a department entitled "The Mirror" under the pseudonym of "Peggy." Several kind friends have represented to her that if extracts from the mass of what she has written during that period were put in permanent form, it would not only be appreciated by those who have read her page from week to week, but would serve a useful purpose in giving those in other parts of the globe a glimpse of the Canadian West, as viewed from a woman's stand point. Most of those who have written of this great heritage of ours have adopted a distinctly masculine attitude in dealing with it. The few women journalists who have visited us and published their impressions have been mere birds of passage. But the present volume is the work of one who has lived her daily life in the centre of the activity that has been exciting the interest and the wonder of the world and whose good fortune it has been to come into touch with many of the men who are making history in our midst. For this reason it is thought by those, whose suggestions are responsible for this volume, that it should be of value quite apart from that which it would have in the eyes of the friendly readers of The Saturday News. As a true daughter of the West, the writer earnestly hopes that their belief will not prove to be ill-founded.

A Day on the Street.

ONCE I confided to you that the writer of these lines has her habitation way up among the telegraph wires and chimneys, on the main street, near the birds' nesting places where together we learn many secrets. Thus, while being among the crowd, in a sense I am not of them and splendid opportunities I find of studying the life and ways of Edmonton and her citizens. Sometimes in the early hours, when I am awakened by the milk wagon's heavy rumble and the first stirrings of the street, I rise, and throwing on a dressing gown, hurry to my observation tower to see the bustling little city stretch herself and prepare for the day's work. The first evidences of rousing animation are furnished by stray day-laborers, who clatter down the street in their heavy-heeled shoes, tramping joggingly and contentedly along. Presently some delivery wagons put in a rattling empty appearance, the drivers rubbing their eyes to banish the last traces of the enchantress, Sleep. These are in turn joined by the heavy drays; the artisans by the shop-openers. The sensation of emptiness and loneliness has gradually dwindled. The street is awake.

In the doorways appear the men and boys whose task it is to see that the shops are made ready for the business of the coming day. With much good-natured badinage, brooms and polishing cloths are brought into play, and store fronts begin to assume an appearance calculated to attract the most fastidious. After brightening up the handles of the big front doors, the pavement has still to be attended to, and amidst a cloud of dust, clerks may be seen hurrying to

their various places of employment, and sandwiched in between the portly figures of those employers who believe in personally seeing to it that everything has been made properly ready for the carrying on of business.

Edmonton is a city of strange sights, and the morning rush to the city is one of them. All the familiar types are here—the jaunty bank clerk, with his well-brushed hat; the smart shop girl, whose knowledge of what is worn keeps her well in touch with Dame Fashion; the shabby out-at-heel adventurer; the complacent factory worker; the girl whose string of Parisian pearls has been such a cause of offence to her feminine critics; the worried small speculators; the stolid, well-groomed business man.

Little by little the noise and rattle and rush have gained momentum until at ten o'clock the street presents a surging wave of humanity and horse flesh—each pushing his little way, and going about the carrying-out of his individual plans, as hard as he can. At mid-day things slacken up a bit. Women have completed their marketing and shopping, and the men have stolen off for a pipe and a moment's lull. Between two and three o'clock a little excitement is caused by the busses' departure for Strathcona. There are always some stragglers who have missed their connection and who have to tell about it. Follows another period of calm, to be broken by the arrival of the passengers from the afternoon train.

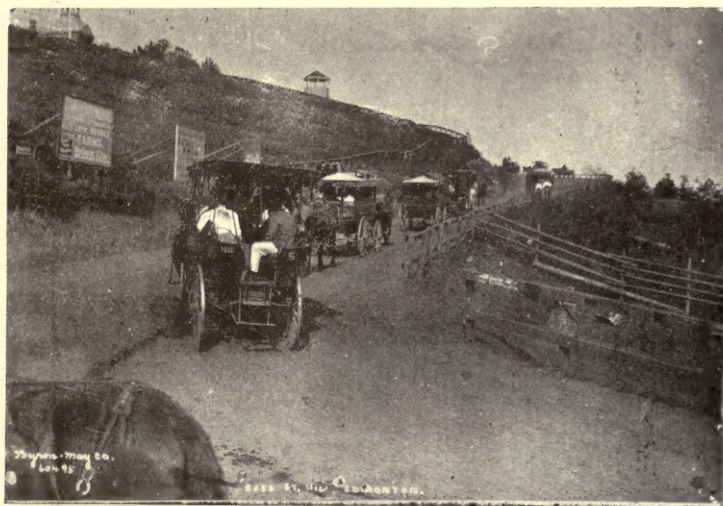
They come in an apparently never-ending throng, pouring from McDougall Avenue on to the main street, by foot, in bus loads, covering the side-walks and pavements. It would give an outsider a pretty good idea of the growth of the city could he stand at the corner and watch the various vehicles discharge their passengers, could he see the swell and turmoil of the street after such disgorging, and the laden vans and vehicles bringing in their heavy loads across the Strathcona bridge.

The passengers are themselves a source of endless interest. See them gazing up and down the buildings, taking in the sights.

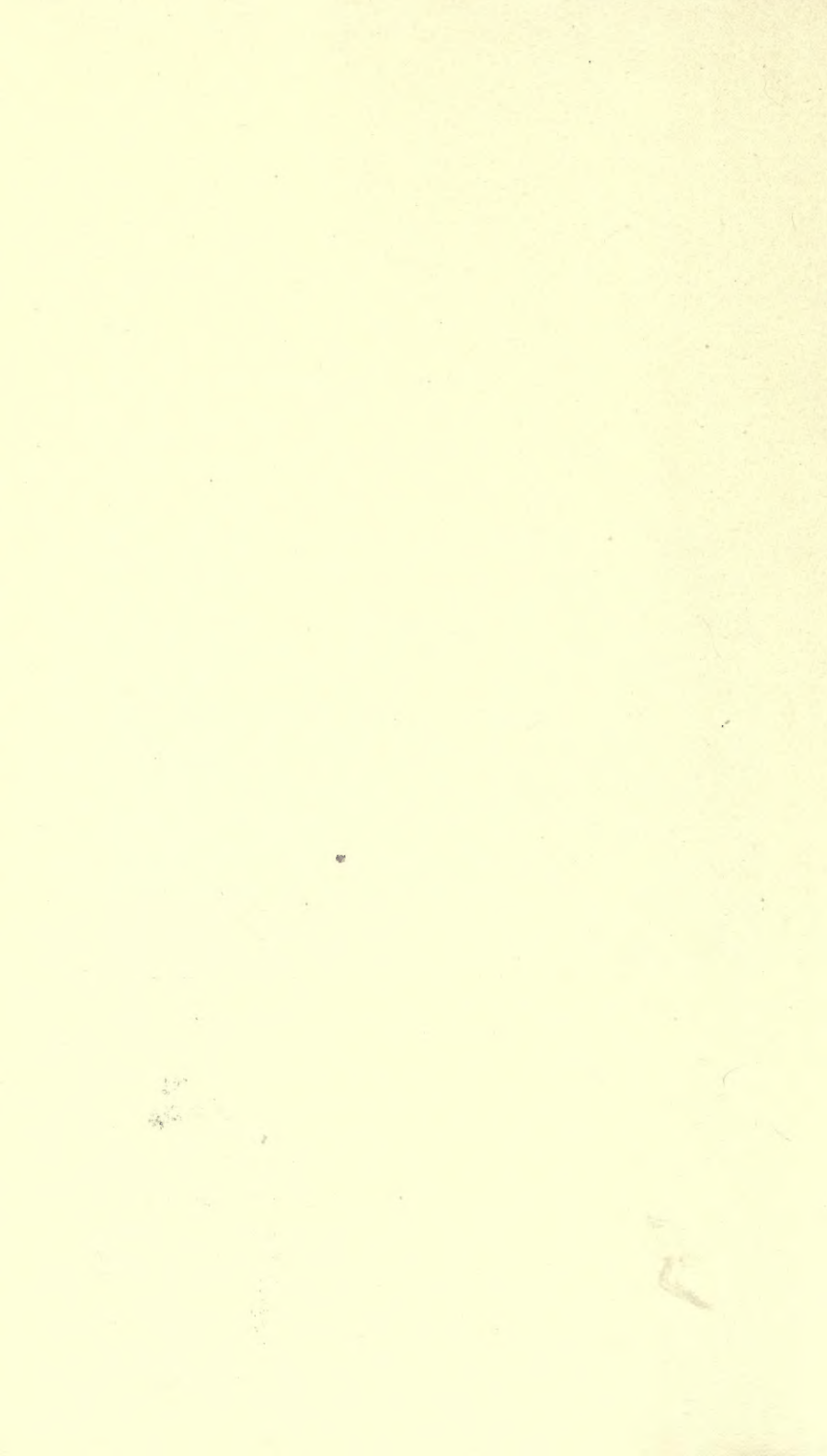
Look at the English family across the way who have just come out and who are curious as to every feature of this new place they are to call home.

That distressed man is certainly looking for the land

Up the Hill to Edmonton



“They come in apparently never-ending throng”



office; and the little woman in the green-black coat is more than a little concerned if she has made a wise move in striking out to such a bustling city. All have one thing in common, high hopes; you see it in the weariest set of shoulders, in the most nervous of the women. God grant that their rosiest dreams may be realized. I came to Edmonton a stranger myself, not long since.

With six o'clock the same crowd of busy workers again line the streets. The post office is first visited; then happy or disappointed, as letters may or may not have arrived, they wend their homeward way. It is curious to note the difference between the morning and evening crowds, going to and returning from their work. At nine in the morning they are fresh and spruce, with well-blacked boots and clean linen, and an air of having just breakfasted pleasantly and well. All are ready to chat, and interested in the morning's news and the prospects of the day's weather. Take the same people at night, fagged, jaded, and weary, with dusty clothing, muddy boots, and a bored half-sleepy look. The day's little annoyances have left their impression: most of them are ready for a good dinner and an evening's rest or fun. Half impatiently the last boy in the store slams the door to with a bang. He's, to use a slang phrase, "all in."

A Summer Day on the Prairies.

IS there anything in the world one-half as appealing as a perfect summer day on the Canadian prairies? How the air transmits sounds, and what an awakening prophetic character all sounds have! The piping of birds from the nearby thicket, the distant lowing of a cow, the whirring of the wild ducks overhead, seem from out of the heart of Nature, and to be a call to come forth. Across the fields one catches a flitting glimpse of a modest-thatched homestead, with its comfortable barns and out-houses huddled close in the rear.

Way off a farmer is working in the fields, while near-by herds of cattle are cropping the grass that has gone to make the Canadian west famous.

The fields of wheat and oats, how they too stand out of the fair June landscape—great green squares on a field of brown or grey! Who wouldn't be a farmer on such days as these? And while we saw everywhere evidences of homesteading life in the chrysalis and moth stage we saw too its culmination in many handsome farm houses and substantial buildings. Around each there was an air of hopefulness and good cheer that did the heart good. One thing that struck me about all the homesteads was the number of fine healthy children in evidence. They're raising great crops on this new land and the least of these is not the coming race, whose parents are our present day settlers.

If I were asked to define my impressions of the Canadian West I would lay great stress on the heroic element that seems to have entered into it from every source. You find it in its enormous proportions, in its people and in the magnificent railroads that pierce its fastnesses.

An Oat Field Near Edmonton



"Himself."

Talk about a railroad dispelling the romance from the landscape. If it does, which I am not prepared to allow, it brings the heroic element in. How many settlers looking out and seeing the steady, unflinching light, and hearing the roar of an advancing train have felt comforted and been made stout of heart, knowing that through its medium they are made once more a part of the great busy world they have left, and that in the belching steam from the huge engine lies their hope of future prosperity.

* * * * *

Were we slipping through the little towns we saw on every hand the signs of reviving animation; for the fresh hours of dawning are very precious in this new land, where every moment counts. Around the doorways of the brand new shacks and dwelling houses busy housewives could be seen preparing the morning meal. "Himself" was generally pottering around the barn, airing the stable and getting the work laid out for the day. The very children seemed to have some well-appointed tasks, such as feeding the chickens or taking the cows to pasture. Oh, but it's good to see a people so early astir, so thoroughly in earnest to make good, that the day is all too short for the work planned out!

At the station and in front of the hotels, van loads of prospective investors seemed ever to be starting out on land-buying missions intent. Leaving the ambitious hamlets in the rear one came upon solitary waggoneers driving their heavily-laden carts out into the broad prairies. I never saw them, but I immediately started to frame a story regarding the young fellow and his probable destiny. First, there would be the modest lean-to or tent, erected with high hopes and a full heart; gradually the land taking on a cultivated appearance. Our hero is now becoming a prosperous man of affairs, neighbors have erected their homesteads in his near vicinity; he is no longer lonely. With a respectable house the need of a woman's hand has come to be very keenly felt. Result—pretty neighbor's daughter changes roof-trees and—but you can follow the rest.

Out in the country the sun is up and sparkles across the prairie, tipping the transparent foliage in the groves. Little lakes shimmer and glisten and fade out of view. Across the broad sweep of land one catches a glimpse of Indian tepees and gaily-blanketed savages busied around a swinging

pot. Here and there a prairie schooner toils joggingly along, with a mongrel straggling in the rear.

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As night closes down, the capricious scene assumes new splendours. From the little towns as we pass we catch the twinkling from the lights in the cottages, a will o' the wisp view of the gaily illuminated main streets, and many chair-tilted loungers in front of the snug little hotels. Out from the heart of vast stretches of country there comes the dreamy charm which arises from its power of calling up vague reveries and picturings of past, present and future. From little thickets is heard the chirp of unseen moving things. The hills close in about us and the great Night comes on.

At Banff.

IF you are a globe trotter you may possibly take Banff philosophically—if you are on the other hand still unspoiled by an over-dose of sight-seeing, you will find in the little village a veritable Heart's Desire.

My first view of the mountains I shall never forget. In the distance they appeared a succession of great slate points against a background of heavenly blue; then as our train approached nearer and nearer, the great monsters closed in on us, encompassing us about with a cordon of strength and magnificence that took us easy captive. From the mighty spell they cast over us on that first morning I, at least, never recovered. To-day I have but to close my eyes to see again the wonderful greens fading into violets the misty greys merging into deep purples, that burst on our view as we gazed up at them from the station platform and to feel once more the thrill of awe and wonder which shook me as I got a close view of their snowy caps. The great hills themselves are terrifyingly majestic and beautiful beyond belief, but their snow-covered peaks sum up, after all, that indescribable something that takes hold of you and hurts while it fascinates. It is a sense of aloofness and unapproachableness that in certain moods baffles you to a point of madness.

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To leave Banff without a drive to Minnewanka, the Devil's Lake, would be like snatching a handful of mediocre diamonds, leaving behind a stone of matchless value. Minnewanka is nine miles from the village. The road leads you past the animal corral situated in the heart of the National Park,

which embraces 5,000 square miles of an area, on through Bankhead, the model coal-mining town of America, around the base of the Razor-back, past a canyon that deserves a write up in itself, and your destination is reached. I could tell you, did space and time permit, of the quaint little museum on the banks of the lake, but the lure of the Devil himself is on me winking from the eye of the water, blue-green, green blue, opalescent in its fascination. In a trice you are in a rowboat. You must see for yourself what spirit broods over this water that impels you to it with the power of an evil eye. Nearer view only adds to your wonder. Gazing into its depth you see a blue so magical, a green so illusive there is no word or phrase to convey the sense of it. Shut in on all sides by the mountains you get the idea of being held prisoner, while impish eyes wink balefully at you from the almost imperceptible ripples of the lake. Dreamily you hear your oarsman telling that there are places in the heart of it that are apparently bottomless, and then a great desire seizes hold of you to break away from it all while there is yet time. "Please row us back as speedily as possible," I mumble; "I am not myself." And as we go I fix my eyes on the eternal hills which have suddenly become wooingly protective and comforting.

A Mormon Welcome.

YEARS ago, when I was a very little girl with two spiky braids down my back and very abbreviated skirts, I once went to the station to see a man of note make a triumphal entry into town. I remember being deliriously delighted with the crowd and the enthusiasm displayed, but who can describe my feelings when the band struck up "See the Conquering Hero Comes!" What bliss, what exquisite joy to have a real band playing for your particular benefit; the man must be crazy not to swagger more! I had to gulp very hard to keep from weeping. I wondered if the day would ever come when a band would play in my honor. If it ever did, I knew one thing, I would look heaps more important than His Nibship. In the words of the small boy "the day has come," and it all happened in Cardston, two thousand miles from my childhood home.

Oh! that day! that day! Did ever a crowd of mad-cap children, out for a time, experience the delight we hard-working journalists did, as we drove through that exquisite country, and sat on the fence during a breath-holding bucking contest? Did ever play-hungry youngsters bolt their meals as we did that luncheon? For life to us, as to them, had become all too short for such a prosaic proceeding as eating. Oh, and the cheery little after-gathering in the quaint Mormon meeting-house when the kindly Mayor-Bishop made us a speech of welcome and Kit and Mrs. Alden "talked back" with the tears in their eyes! Shall any of us ever forget it? A drive through the pretty, prosperous looking town and out into one of the finest bits of country, I saw during the journey, brought the day to an

all too speedy finish. Where were our interviews, what data had we gathered regarding the Mormons as settlers? None in one sense, books full in another. For what need have you of questions when you see a town of 1,500 inhabitants having a school roll of 340 children, evidences on every side of the farm land being carefully cultivated, and a healthy live interest being manifested in all matters pertaining to civic problems. The Mormons need no champions to proclaim their good citizenship, to those whose good fortune it is to pay even the shortest visit to their busy little town.

A City of Contrasts



Old Fort, Edmonton



A scene on Jasper Avenue

A City of Contrasts

LAST Thursday morning I went out to get my first glimpse of an Edmonton holiday crowd, and what met the gaze on Jasper avenue well repaid one the loitering. The whole air of the street was a festive one, business being practically suspended for the day. Flags innumerable floated from every building of any consequence, and in the distance came the strains of some long-dead favorite played by an "Uncle Tom's Cabin" band, while the crowd wandered on putting in time till the event of the afternoon should materialize.

Nowhere else are such contrasts to be seen as in Edmonton.

You realize this as you pass the smartly groomed man and encounter a step behind his brother in sheepskins. Down the middle of the street pounds an Indian mounted on a broken-down pony, and behind him comes an officer of the Mounted Police, in the smartest get-up on the continent. Pretty Galician girls with shawls on their heads jostle miladi in the latest spring headgear. French, German, "United States" and dear knows what jargons are wafted in on your ear, but you are unheeding of anything but the faces of the crowd. There truly you have a study. As I have said, we are a cosmopolitan people, and every type from the slick Yankee to the stolid Redman has joined the procession to see the "toot." The word "toot," by the way, I am using on trust, having garnered it from many expressions overheard in the rink and on the street.

"Seem sort of new to the job" was the comment of more

than one husky native, as the preliminaries to the formal announcement were gone through with.

"Catch on to the guy with the woman with the hat, don't he just think he's doing it?" came from a specimen forty years behind the times; while the women and their gowns evoked an all-round hum of comment. There was only one opinion on the smart appearance presented by the Lieutenant-Governor's handsome Body-Guard of Mounted Police. "Regular top-notchers" said an admiring by-stander, and the criticism expressed the consensus of opinion.

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Coming home from the Premier's reception at the close of the afternoon we met the Uncle Tom's Cabin outfit still wheezing forth "After the Ball," while the one forlorn "lady" drummer-boy lagged in the rear gazing longingly at "the ladies of quality."

March 24, 1906.

Types I Have Known.

“So many men, so many minds,
Every man his own way.”

I MET Her—but who minds where? You know Her as well as I. “She” is generally an empty-headed, giddy young thing—pretty, but uninteresting. She has lately been taken up by prominent people and is in consequence haughty and very—oh, very important indeed. If you meet her out, you are apt to learn of her prominent connections. “So and So has just purchased a \$5000 auto. By the way, So and So is a cousin of mine.” She informs you her sister attends a fashionable boarding school!—which is “very expensive, but father doesn’t mind, not, that is, if Mayme gets properly polished off in the end.” She is leaving for New York in the near future. “I find ——so slow, don’t you know.” “Oh, My Dear, do look at Mrs. C——, isn’t she a fright?”

“I don’t know what I’m ever going to do, my maids leave in the morning. What did you think of Mrs. de Black’s tea on Thursday? Didn’t think much of the flowers and refreshments, did you?”

She is generally addicted to nerves and flutters and fusses as she converses. If she is down town, she walks with an interesting droop or stride, glancing into every store window to note the effect. Naturally she is “airy” and critical, oh very much so!

She is never interested in you or your affairs beyond collecting material for adverse comment. Her opinions are as free and of as much importance as the passing breezes.

The most prominent hostess, possessing the most caustic

tongue, is her little tin goddess, and you and I, my reader, with your and my reputations, are her butts.

“He” is confined to no walk in life, you may meet him in Alaska or India, and even in Edmonton.

Of his antecedents you may learn much or little; that is as fate or he decides. That he has a past you know; men rarely get that air of repression of having been and done things, who haven't knocked about and seen a great deal. Sometimes he is merry, more often he is merely well-informed and pleasantly cynical, but always—always he is interesting. Even the cut of his clothes has a distinction, individualistic, commanding attention.

I met him once in an Ontario town. He had a wife—somewhere, children too, to whom I can honestly affirm he was rarely devoted. Few knew that even they existed. His days he gave over to literary work and in his own Free Lance column of commentary he was a peerless writer. When there was time he rode, swam, went shooting, did all and sundry that a live, healthy, able-bodied man may do—and in the evening he read and wrestled with his ghosts. He wasn't just the most sociable sort of a man, not till you knew him. Then you grew to love his society. For a walk he was the prince of good fellows. Such a fund of information as he had, such a way of dispensing it. Always when you were with him you caught a little danger signal—Mrs. Grundy was waving the red flag of warning. Behold here was a wicked man, a man with a past. To the average woman what a fascination! What child doesn't love to tamper with fire?

But if in the day-time he was charming, at night, in front of a grate fire, or seated on the verandah, where one could draw out his views on life, on women, on books and travel undisturbed, he was a prince of good company. Throughout his conversation there was just that little touch of pessimism and an undertone of regret that added the charm of the unusual. If you were sympathetic, subtly so, he rambled on indefinitely; but when once he was suspicious that you were only morbidly baiting him, his jaws closed like a steel trap. With a hasty good-night he was gone, as I knew, to imprecate himself for having allowed himself to indulge in the weakness of craving companionship and sympathy.



"Pretty Galician girls with shawls upon their head"



"Out to see the toot"

“He” is the man who is attempting to work out his own salvation with the illusive phantom—What might have been.

“Smutty” is a newsboy, so small your hand creeps to your pocket involuntarily; so unkempt and yet so cocky, you turn around to take another look at him.

“Smutty” whistles constantly. Why shouldn’t he? The thought has never come to him that he hasn’t had a fair start. If he lives from hand to mouth, so do heaps of other folks! Maw does herself, but maw manages to piece out where Smutty can’t. Is trade good, there you surely have cause sufficient to make you glad, and “I tell ye,” he says, “if I haven’t sold me papers I’ve seen some sights today. Why up there, Peggy in a window’s a couple of the cutest little bears ye ever saw. Believe I’ll buy some like ’em when I’m rich.”

“Say, but I struck the meanest guy today y’ever saw. Read me paper and then gave it back. Gee! What dy’e think of that?”

‘A feller up the street gave me a quarter just now. Said t’ keep the change. Guess I’ll buy n’ orange. Like one?’”

“Smutty” is a sport and he hasn’t a mean bone in his body. On my desk I have a “cream” he gave me that would do for a baseball.

“Smutty” is a gentleman too, according to his lights, his code of honor being summed up in fighting his own fights, doing a good turn whenever he can and not crying when he’s licked.

“Smutty” is a little human castaway with the dirtiest face and the bravest heart in all the world.

You are calling and she opens the door. “She” is Aet. 7.

“Who do you want to see?” in her shrill treble.

“Your mother, my dear,” from me.

“Well, then, she ain’t at home, she’s gone down town and dear knows when she’ll be home.”

“She’s just awful for hanging around the stores. Father says she is the most extravagant woman—and she’s not half dressed to-day, either; got on a soiled old blouse and one of Aunt Jemime’s,” but hastily whisking out of the gate, you leave “mother” and mother’s apparel in her small,

unmerciful daughter's hands. Who would seek to uncover the family skeleton?

“Bow to the wittiest,
Smile at the prettiest,
And kiss the one you love best.”

If I am to do that—to kiss the woman I love the best—I must hie me away to an old brick house in an Ontario city and sitting down in the great leather chair that always stood on a heavy rug in front of the black iron fire place, must paint you a memory picture of my grandmother, for she, in the course of an eventful lifetime, has stood to me for all that was best and sweetest in womankind. I kiss her with many tears, for it has come to me now that I ill-repaid her devoted care. I kiss her with a new understanding for I know she comprehends the full great love I bring her “after many years.”

I speak of my grandmother as my ideal woman, even as I know many of you will look back on your mothers and grandmothers in the same hallowed light.

In the days when I like most to think of, women's clubs and men's, too, for the matter of that, were practically unknown. The home life with its simple joys and tender ties represented the all in all of a woman's existence. In my childhood home, with the most devoted of grandparents my grandmother moved with the dignity and grace of a duchess. I don't remember if she was what we have come to term an up-to-date, well-read woman. I only know the rich and poor alike looked up to her as a creature more than human, and that she seemed to bless and benefit all who came within her influence. My grandfather found in her the most loving and devoted of companions, and the sick and sorrowful came to her as naturally as a needle to a magnet. She was wonderfully skilled in all housewifely arts, this grandmother of mine, and some of the very dearest memories cluster round great cookings and bakings for Christmas cheer, that she superintended and assisted in with all the enthusiasm of the skilled house-mother. Something I like to look back upon when the hurry-scurry of modern life crushes in on me is the sweet restfulness that seemed to encompass her at all times and seasons. She was never

flustered and yet I knew she had been as impatient and impulsive and high strung as any other girl. She never said uncharitable things and she was always ready with an excuse for the erring. She was ever the acme of daintiness and wholesomeness, and she was interested in everything. Her hospitality was one of the most charming experiences that could come to you, and we never talked over guests we had once entertained.

Is it any wonder I raise my glass to this grandmother of mine—the most devoted of mothers, charming and charitable of women, a queen among her kind.

Julia, the Half-Breed Girl.

WHAT a collection of good stories and quaint yarns must filter through the over-worked thinking apparatus of the hotel clerk in Edmonton these days? What material for a novel that might make thousands of readers glad! I never take a dinner in one of the hotels and restaurants but this thought is brought home to me. It may be by a few stray sentences that reach me from a table over the way or but the intelligence that so and so from the north is just in.

I haven't yet discovered what powerful fascination it is that seems to set men half crazy with the spirit of adventure whenever the far north is mentioned, but I know it is a very real thing.

If the south land with its happy prosperous people and rich and fertile acres appeals to the author as a field for the setting of his book, how much more should the great north, wrapped around in its mantle of awe and mystery?

I have heard men tell strange stories the witchery of a life spent for the most part in silence or in contact with the original dwellers of the forest, and a faint comprehension has dawned upon me of the great country which at present rests in a suspense of waiting—for what, who knows?

Last week the Rev. Mr. Whittaker and his wife came up from Herschel Island where they have labored as missionaries for the past five years. Herschel Island is over two thousand miles north of Edmonton, situated at the mouth of the McKenzie river in the Arctic Ocean.

In that time Mr. Whittaker and his wife have seen no white people except those who came up on the whaling

vessels and the detachment of mounted police who have been stationed on the island for the past three years. Surrounded by Eskimos, whom they found sullenly unresponsive to their teaching, this good man and his wife, put in five long lonely years.

What food for a novel dealing with life among the silent places have you not here?

Again, who will give to the world the story of the Rev. Father Duprez who spent a few days in town on his way down from Great Slave Lake, two weeks since?

Twenty-nine years ago the good Father forsook the ease and comforts of a civilized life and struck for the far north to carry the message of the gospel. In that time he has never once returned to the dwellings of his kind; laboring early and late among his chosen people, the Indians, he has lived his own gloriously circumscribed life, while history has been made and great changes brought about in the big outside world. Now he has gone to France for a "bit of a change."

Think of this dear padre lolling back on the deck of one of the great ocean liners! Imagine his Rip Van Winkle-like experiences when he reaches the gay, fascinating Paris!

Oh, but I should like to be with His Goodness to jot down some of his impressions. As it was, he just escaped me.

When I learned that he was here I hastily grabbed the tools of my kind, a camera, pencil and pad, and hurried off to interview my man.

Had I qualms that the dear Father wouldn't talk? I don't think so. You see, I happen to be convent bred and that is always an open sesame to a faithful Catholic. But disappointment came from another source. Father Duprez had already left on his long eventful trip.

Coming home I was out of sorts. A chance for a cracking good interview had only just slipped through my fingers. And then opportunity, fate, a kind providence pitied me, and lured me into a passing jeweller's. Here I toyed with tray after tray of pretty trifles and then a swarthy looking man and a fair woman entered.

"I want to know what you charge for making hair chains?" queried the first named.

"Ten dollars," the clerk replied.

"That is a great deal," said the would-be buyer, "and I'm afraid I haven't enough money. You see it's for a half-breed up north who has just lost his wife."

As he spoke he unwrapped a small parcel he had held in his hand, and disclosed to view a long braid of sunny golden brown hair.

The incongruity of a half-breed with such glorious bright hair, and a sight of her photo, which revealed her a splendid young figure of womanhood took captive all my imagination and newspaper instincts.

"I wonder if you won't tell me all about her," I suggested "I'm more than interested." And that is how I learned the tragic story of Julia, the handsome girl half-breed.

Twenty-one years ago, when the great epidemic of measles swept over the north country an old Indian chief sat in his desolated wigwam, and side by side on a coverlet on the ground lay his five sons, the pride of his heart, cold in death. Rocking to and fro in front of the tent squatted his handsome young French wife, moaning that the great God in Heaven had been cruel to his daughter, that the light of her life had gone out with her five young braves.

The next we hear of the stricken parents, a little daughter has been born to them—Julia. In time the now happy mother went the way of her sons and Julia was sent to the mission school. There she learned our English customs, and "Oh, but she was quick to pick anything up," the missionary assured me.

"Look at that picture now and judge for yourself," he continued; and gazing at the intelligent, comely face before me, at her attire with its evidences of cultured taste; I acknowledged that the girl had indeed made splendid uses of her opportunities.

"A year ago Julia married an employee of the Hudson Bay Co.'s store," continued our narrator, "a sturdy young half-breed, and things went along gaily until a wee baby was born and the young mother sickened with measles. We have just come down from burying her and before we left, her husband handed us this braid of hair with two dollars, all he had, and begged of us to have it made into a chain that he might wear always.

“He is quite heart broken as is the poor old father and as we left they were going away together on a hunt up the Battle river to lose themselves and fight out their great trouble together.”

After some bargaining the lovely hair was left, and when the young husband comes back from his hunt he will find his girl's legacy to him awaiting his coming.

Thus do we come across touching little life stories in the most unexpected places. But the heart of me is aching as I think of that old man and the lonely young husband.

Julia is happily beyond the need of sympathy.

Christmas in the West.

GO where you will, if you are a white man, you can't shake it off, this Christmas spirit. It stalks you to your club, where being a lone man in a far-off country you would fain forget it;—it confronts you as you pick up your magazine, and the daily papers howl it at you with announcements of "Holiday books for Sale," "Bring your wife or sweetheart some Christmas roses," etc., etc. "I'll be glad when the wretched day is over" you say to yourself, "the thing gets on my nerves." And as you crawl into bed at night you heave a sigh of relief. But all night long you dream of rosy-faced night-robed children dragging in their wake bulging stockings, of your mother bending over you on the joyous morning.

* * * * *

Six days before last Christmas I started out on my journey for my future home—Edmonton. How well I remember the long trip out, the sitting day after day, gazing out at the dead-level prairie, snow-covered—desolate. Across from me sat a wee boy, merry of face and intensely—oh so intensely enjoying the situation. With him there was no looking backward—all life lay before him—and half of mine I had left behind me.

While he stretched himself out, eagerly watchful for a stray coyote or lone deer, "for you do see them sometimes you know Mother," I remember repeating over and over again to myself—as women will—"I won't, oh, I won't be buried out in this God-forsaken country," for with my sex's illogical sentimentalism it was all that appealed to me in my then mood. Then came the little villages—and the sight of

them somehow warmed my heart. Presently I grew interested in watching for them—would Edmonton be anything like this or that, should I like the life—would the people appeal to me?

In such fashion the days passed by—we were at Strathcona. During the drive over I learned that a new venture had first seen the light of day that morning. That was enough—all Christmas forenoon seated in two straight-backed chairs in a room in a lodging house we discussed the probable fortunes of the modest little sheet. Rushing out to the restaurant for dinner we discovered the door of the hospitable shack locked. We were “after hours”—visions of turkey and plum pudding vanished like a dream in the face of that stubborn barrier; so we went dinnerless. And that was how I celebrated my first Christmas in sunny Alberta.

This year the paper is firmly established; kind friends are legion; Edmonton has become the dearest place in all the world—I no longer utter a mental protest against the prairie as a final resting place. Our Western life is too real, too vital to waste time in gloomy speculation. It is enough that you are alive and can take your chances in the great future that lies just at hand.

* * * * *

Fancy anyone trying to turn out a woman's page with Christmas just a tip-toe on the threshold! Imagine having to settle down to serious thinking with sleigh bells jingling by at a two-forty gallop, small boys rushing in to make presentations of every store calender in the town; every two minutes the express man pounding on the door just as an idea strikes you; and a particular small boy dashing in to see his Christmas tree every little while.

Motherree! but a journalist's life is no sinecure! and yet how you love it! How dear grows even the hardest grind of it; what jolly good friends it brings you, what a fine broad outlook it gives you on life. For in the day's work you learn of much that is splendid and generous in humanity, even as you discover a vast deal that is base and cruel and heartless.

Sometimes I am disposed to be a cynic—but never at Christmas. Never when away from dear old Ireland comes a real bit of Limerick lace, sent for by one of the dear new friends the new land and my work have made for me. Never while big-hearted John Chinaman peeps in the door with a

tin of genuine Canton ginger, "a melly Chlistmas" and a big bag for "little boy." I wonder how John knows about melly Chlistmas!—what it means to him?

He has just gone down stairs gripping hard a photo of the small boy which has apparently delighted him. John and I are the better for the good wishes and the little mementoes.

But oh what kindness you encounter on all sides! In a strange land, away from one's kin, how was it possible to imagine such loving hearts!

In the East I thought Christmas the dearest of days. Out West I have no name to describe the tenderness of it.

At home it was human to expect love and love's offerings, but here, a year ago no one ever dreamed of your existence! Just there lies the wonder of it, the something in a man and woman that grips you to them, them to you, and says "Behold a friend."

"The chance in life of a friend or two this side of the journey's goal." What on earth amounts to a twopenny bit beside it?

A Drive into the Country.

ONE day when my heart and soul were dusty through too long and intimate sojourning among correct folk and conventional environment, a man stopped me on the street, with the query, "Do you think you'd like to go for a seventeen mile drive this afternoon?"

"Did I think I should like to go?" "Yes and yes, and of course I would." And so an hour or so later came dashing up a team of spirited young horses, just off the range, in I bundled, and away we went, the man, with his broad Stetson and gaudily embroidered buckskin gauntlets, seemingly an harmonious part in the picture of those plunging, sensitive, mad things, that took us on and away—out into the wilderness of things—past the funny little real estate signs, down the long hill, where let me whisper, I half held my breath for fear of kissing Mother Earth. On, on, jingle-jangle, jingle-jangle, jingle-jangle, past heavily laden carts, loads of hay, the old Edmonton hotel, the bridge—and we were out into the really-truly country. The keen air how it nipped one! how every breath of it seemed to penetrate every fibre of your being! Where at first I had talked a good deal I soon kept silence. Out on the prairie there is no need for speech or polite amities; there you come close to life—the natural, appealing sane life, where much that we prate of in town somehow just comes home to you unconsciously; and you sit back quietly, drinking in a mighty wisdom.

Now I know something of the wild, and the invisible hand that knocks at the doors of men and calls, calls, and calls again for them to be out into the open—fighting and buffeting against those natural forces that set a color in the

cheek and a glow in the heart. I looked at the hills, at the quaint evergreen sentinels that, marshalled up against the skyline, might seem to a poetic mind to be a mighty invading army—but to even the most practical must represent a picture of the most appealing nature.

Nearer in was a solitary farm house—primitive—but somehow mighty with the potentialities contained within its heart. Over there, beyond a trackless stretch you could just see the sun touching up a golden straw stack. In a moment these lay behind us, and now the only sign of human or animal life was to be found in the triangular rabbit tracks, that crossed and re-crossed each other in a veritable maze of railroading. Up against the fence were regular rabbit runs—the main streets of Bunny Land—where furry bundles of white exchange tidings of the juiciest discovery in willow bark, and pink eyes look eternal sympathy into others no less pathetic when word comes of a rabbit-pie feast in one of the near-by farm houses.

Fewer and much farther between were the hollowed out trails of the Coyote—but nary a peep did we get of this farm-yard depredator. I should like a glimpse of him on his native stretch—and next time someone has promised there shall be two or three hitched up to the posts along the route for a news-woman's particular benefit, when I shall be able to tell you more of him.

As we drove farther and farther beyond the fence lines, involuntarily I drew a deeper breath. I know of nothing in life more exalting than to drink in the breath of the prairie air in Winter. The rosy light coming across the shimmering deserts of snow, the faint sough of the wind, and the sense of driving on and on you know not where filled me with an intoxication of living that swept me off my feet.

Now we were turned right about and the horses were leaping and cavoting with the knowledge of the homeward journey—the lights reddened and threw broad curtains about the landscape, and then the hazy grey mist of early evening descended and found us home.

The Man from Back Home.

I HAVE a friend to see you," said Himself recently ushering in somebody—and that is all I knew till I sank into my chair again—feeling that I had come through a sharp fighting engagement. But it was only the greeting from Somebody who had just reached Edmonton from "Home."

And when I had regained my senses I saw the face of the beaming dear German, who had sat by one of my wee family when the hand of sickness lay heavy upon him, and he was more than we could manage by reason of a fearful delirium. And so this big, cheery neighbor, had sacrificed his rest and come in of a night, helping us through that dark time, though all day long he stitched, stitched, stitched—in a down-town tailoring establishment, till I am sure his poor eyes were weary for the tender touch of Sleep, and his aching body for the rest the night would bring.

How his face brought it all back! How it called to mind a thousand incidents!

But this has all to do with a purely personal history. Wonder of wonders—the man is no longer to be associated with the old home town!—At forty years of age he has pulled stakes and struck for the Peace River county, where, with his little family of four, he is going to start all over again.

All of which he tells in one breath, while I question and nod assent, and interrupt, a thousand times in five minutes.

There is so much to learn!

Whatever gave him the notion; how did he ever bring

himself to part with the snug little home; how did his wife like the prospect; did he know it might be awfully lonesome, how far would his place be from the railway; what would he raise?——

Between times he tells me he was very fortunate in finding a buyer for his house. All those who were young enough or at all able were striking out for the West. Why shouldn't he? There was no future for his boys back east. He was a splendid all-round handy man, why should he go on eternally stitching until his eyes grew dim, when the most magnificent country in God's green earth was calling for willing hands to work it?

Oh! and would I know of the kindness of the people when he left?

The big framed picture sent by the nephew of a late cabinet minister, since gathered to his long rest, "my political chief," which is lying so carefully packed amidst a wealth of quilts on its way out West; the purse from the old "Nepigon Club," ("God Bless Them and me only cooking for them one camping season"); others from his fellow employees and members of the firm; from the Masonic Lodge and the "Boys;" the letters of recommendation he will never need, seeing he's come to the land where no man's smile or frown can help or injure him a penny's worth.

And thus we ramble on, interjecting blessings on the heads of as fine a community as you will find the world over, until presently we come to discussing "home gossip."

What fun to hear the "new" house we last occupied is freezing another family this winter, that the new council are still discussing erecting a "new town hall"—which makes the twentieth year for the self-same discussion—and that they are no nearer accomplishing that end than they were when they started two decades ago.

The town jogs along at the same old gait, with the same church gatherings, the same "mock parliaments," and the familiar town characters doing the same old things, in the same old way.

How we shriek over this and that! how funny it seems to live it all over again.

The home news exhausted, we return again to the Newest Westerner's prospects. Amidst many enthusiastic expletives

An Edmonton Employment Office



"The most magnificent country on God's green earth
calling for willing hands"



we decide that my friend has made no mistake in leaving even so good a town for the great unknown land. Bubbling and brimming over with enthusiasm he takes leave of me—in a day he starts by wagon for a two-hundred mile journey north—where from the very bottom of my heart I wish him and his, the good fortune he deserves, and which I am sure he will command—seeing that he has come out with no false or ridiculous ideas, but with the fixed purpose to work hard and make good.

Polly Hears of the Opening of the Alberta Legislature.

MY dear Polly:

The opening is over. It wasn't a bit what we expected it would be, but then here in the West things never are. That's half the charm of the place. For instance the daily papers announced that the Lieut.-Governor would leave Government House accompanied by his escort at half-past two. At three o'clock little groups of half-frozen sight-seers still kicked their feet to keep from developing into full-fledged frozen statues, and still His Honor came not. Presently, however, the Canadian Mounted Rifles who formed the escort dashed into view and a moment afterwards the Lieut.-Governor stepped into his carriage. On the instant a dozen little clicks made themselves distinctly heard. The camera fiends were at work. While I am not at liberty to say just what damage they did at this time, I may confide that from some results I have since seen His Honour has distinct grounds for a suit—or an overcoat, for, as I suppose is customary, altho' it was twenty below, he wore his Windsor uniform sans pardessus, and his cocked hat, without any protection for his ears. As he rode off, I must confess it, looking very swagger and fit, he had his hands to the side of his head. Thank fortune we have a Governor who is not afraid to be human!

While it was not my intention to take in the formal opening at the school, having heard that there would be nothing of any importance transpire; that is that there would be no gowns, nor any men and women of high degree to get a peep at, in the excitement of the moment I followed the crowd.



“A Governor who is not afraid to be human”

When we arrived the Lieut.-Governor was reading his speech of welcome. Having no ticket I expected to have to stand at the back of the hall during the proceedings, but presently, just as I was resignedly settling myself for all the world like a huge stork to give ear to the speech, and wishing for the nonce that I was a member and could sit in one of the cushioned seats up at the front, the lone usher spotted me and rushed me, and incidentally the yellow pup, up to the little reserved space at the side.

Here I had a fine view of what was really going on. Out in front the desks were all filled, and the members were stretched back in various attitudes of importance and attention. Around me there was considerable prattling as to who was among the faces in front of us, and one officious man who didn't know one from the other, earnestly pointed to Mr. Bredin as the Hon. C. W. Cross, "the boyish Attorney General," which evidently was perfectly satisfactory to his "lady friends."

Suddenly the speech has stopped. There is a confused murmur of something and then the members mumble, "we are agreed." In a moment someone makes a move to adjourn, and the preliminaries of getting down to work for the second session are over.

It is all very funny and red-tapey and one wonders what it is all about, but then I suppose we must go through some forms and ceremonies.

In a little glass box at the side of the house where some one banished the Lieut.-Governor while the Speaker did his little stunt, I saw a vast collection of military-aries, doing goodness knows what, and serving, as far as I could learn, absolutely no purpose. But they seemed to like it, and what harm did it do?

Leaving the hall I couldn't help my scattering thoughts flying across seas to the suffragettes in the old land.

Good-gracious is it to take part in such proceedings as these that a goodly number of fair agitresses are now languishing behind the bars? Is it to oust such placidly, capable, good-natured creatures as the occupants of these soft-seated chairs I had just left, that woman, lovely woman is shouting herself hoarse in the foggy little island across the pond, or is it for the pure joy of occupying the centre of

the stage where the calcium shines and figuring in an heroic scene encircled by the arms of a fine stalwart "bobby?"—(arms and the men are, I understand, scarce commodities across the sea)—it is to wonder.

For me I desire only my quiet little game of Bridge, a laugh at an occasional opening, and a smothered yawn when the affair is over. Hoping you yourself will have come West in time for the next opening, I remain your loving sister,

ANNE.



"The Lieutenant Governor's handsome body-guard"

On Pet Stock Shows.

WE have a standing joke in our family, we also have a yellow pup. Incidentally the two are one, for the time honored bit of humor has to do with the pedigree of the dog in question, whom his master with an utter lack of any knowledge on the subject insists is pure bred bull terrier while others maintain he has first claims in the thorough-bred mongrel class.

When the subject of a Pet Stock Show in connection with the Seed Fair was first mooted our pup's pedigree was again the live topic of conversation. Was he or was he not pure-bred, had he or had he not this point or that?

To solve the mystery one forenoon I took myself and the faithfulest of four-footers, over to a man who knows what's what in the dog line, and while (being a gentleman and a diplomat) he assured me that I had indeed a treasure in the aforesaid pet, still he had to admit that his nose was a trifle short to be just right, his jaws were too heavy to conform to good breeding, and his tail —last point of all —was undeniably too long and too thick.

"He's in the pink of condition though," he hastened to add, "and he really is a dandy dog, take him all around."

With the latter part of which decision I am (needless to add) in perfect accord. But for that short nose, and those heavy jaws, try as I will, I can't convince myself he should be blamed. It would seem just as reasonable, wouldn't it, to twit Miss Filpper-Snapper for her receding chin, the manner in which she toes in, or for her saucy little turned up nose, as to blame my pup for certain features which his mother never for one moment consulted his wishes about.

Come to consider the question what fun we should have, if, instead of a pet stock show, we humans should have to mount the benches, and the judges had to mark us for our various "points" and features, instead of these great soft-eyed blue ribboners and the other house-hold pets who for three days are to be put through their paces.

I suppose first of all we should have to furnish pedigrees—laws a mercy—what a commotion we should have then! Col. de Lacy would have to show wherein his pretensions to bluer blood than Mr. Smith's consisted. Madame Own The Earth would have to bring forth her family skeleton, and we should see that rake of a by-gone ancestor or music-hall tenth-favorite, whose taint is still perceptible in Madame's pouring her tea in a saucer, or in the slip of her h's, and which We Knowing Ones had suspected when we met together to size her up.

I wonder if a generally degenerate cast of countenance would debar one from ribbon honors? Surely not—if so, where would many of us be!

Oh but it would be interesting! but what a jam there would be in the class, "Open to All Comers!"

Of course you know there IS a continual judging class going on amongst men and women. The place where it is held being a more or less strictly guarded enclosure whose fences bear the legend "Society." Some people break into the Members' paddock, and are soon identified as amongst this chosen, but for the most part, persons seek admission, and the qualifications may be money, the grand air, position, a thousand things, rarely, if ever, though, just common everyday goodness and wholesomeness and ability.

And so I maintain that the rules for awarding the prizes are in both cases a bit off color. You see either man or dog may start out with every point in his favor, good looks, pedigree, and all the other requirements, and still fall far short of being as useful a member of society as is the so-called mongrel whose faithfulness to duty, great love, and desire to be of use, are aiding in making the world a better place to live in.

And last of all I think the system wrong because snub noses and heavy jaws don't come under the heading of our

ability to make or change them, whereas being "a generally dandy dog" does.

The yaller pup and I, as a consequence of the judge's decision, will do the show from the outside. And while the prize dogs pant and strain at their chains, we will move about and offer as saucy commentaries on blue-ribbon Fido, and handsome Bobs, the great Dane, as may be, seeing we're only just generally "dandy dogs" in no particular class, and above their restrictions.

And still for the old sake's sake dears,
He's the finest dog in the world.

The Joys of Housekeeping.

THE delights of Bohemia and those of keeping house are very, very different.

Bohemia is the triumph of the unconventional, little late suppers, unexpected guests, conversations about anything under the sun except the ordinary topics we discuss who make our dwellings as, is the way of our kind, with the old domestic problems as a common meeting ground.

By day life consists in a little play house keeping, more music, a deal of hap-hazard discussion and many, very many delightful hours with books and papers.

I could live forever in such surroundings and scorn to call the Queen my aunt and yet—being a woman, consequently fickle—I can write with quite as many raptures about the joys of keeping house.

This week I have spent in trying to get settled. This doesn't necessarily imply in arranging furniture and hanging curtains, but may rather be taken to mean re-adjusting myself to new conditions.

For instance I find it tremendously hard to remember that now I am supposed to be fearfully and wonderfully interested in grocery orders, arranging the quantity of milk and butter we shall need, and matters of that nature.

I am glancing over a fascinating article in an old magazine I have discovered among my long-stored treasures, when thump! thump! comes a rattle at the back door.

"Please ma'am and will you be wanting any butter and eggs to-day, and by the way, we have some very firm new cabbages," reaches me from the grocery apparition, who did the thumping.

"Butter and eggs," I repeat, "really—um—oh, yes I suppose we will!" Candidly, I haven't given the question much thought. As to the cabbages! Vaguely I turn over in my mind just what cabbages should be. "Firm and white"—whispers the ghost of past experience, and I order a cabbage.

It is like a page of a fairy tale.

Running upstairs to hang the pictures in the den, I re-discover my friend, the magazine, temptingly spread open at the page I have just left.

Shall I, or shall I not? I decide not.

And with a renewed purpose I proceed to adjust my art treasures. I have just decided to hang the little sketch of "Twilight on the Saskatchewan" over the desk, when I get to wondering what ever Booker Washington decided to do with his shiftless colored brethren at Tuskegee. They must have been an awful millstone when he was working heart and soul for the success of his great life project. I can't help speculating what measures he adopted to drill them into line and have settled in my mind for just one peep when I catch the far-away odor of burning gingerbread.

What a bore! I have entirely forgotten the cake in the oven.

Gracious! I never could manage a wood fire anyway, and so grumbling I descend in a whirlwind to rescue the poor forlorn hope of what was to have been a culinary triumph. House keeping is made up of a million trifles, and some of them are very funny.

You should see me gravely pondering on whether I will order 3 in 1, to polish the stove, or 1 in 3!

I begin by deciding on the first, but after five minutes of reflection elect to use the 1 in 3. I hope I am right.

I had a book agent this morning—one of the bores of being a stock pattern occupant of a house.

In Bohemia, book agents were not. The two flights of stairs finished them.

I rather had hopes that a certain yellow dog would have had the same effect when I went a house keeping, but evidently high living is toning his looks down a bit.

(Memo—See that the yellow dog receives a course in how to behave to a book agent).

Queerly enough the said agent's book had to do with good form on every occasion. How not to conduct oneself in church; what to wear at various functions, etc., etc.

A hasty glance at this really valuable contribution to social etiquette, assures me that it is never permissible to wear tan boots with a frock or dress coat. (Memo for the Society column: make use of this item).

N.B.—All persons desiring to know what not to wear at any or every function may assure themselves by subscribing to this estimable work.

This winter if the agent is correct, as I never doubt is the case, there will be no wild excitement at teas, etc., to learn what Mrs. B. intends wearing to Madame G.'s. We shall all be in the know, a couple of hundred copies of "What's What" will have put us right.

Armed with a testimonial that I will use no other the B.A. retires happy, and leaves me more so.

For the first time in my life I have given his profession a conge without an order. I wonder if Mr. Encyclopedia had called if I should have been so successful. I leave it to the gentleman's victims to answer.

I have placed my desk in the quiet little den upstairs where I can see the trees and look out on the peaceful neighborhood it is now my joy to live in.

I like to watch the fluffy fuzz blowing airily by from the poplar trees and descending in ghostly whiteness on lawn and road.

A wee boy who now owns a real yard, has confided to me that the downy little balls of white are really-truly fairies, for he saw them dance all up and down the verandah, and heard them sort of whispering. Children's ears and eyes are wonderfully clear windows from which the dear universal Godmother, Imagination, may look out. I'm hoping that now as I live among trees and green things, I may polish up my means of vision. There are a lot of little sturdy boys and quaint wee girls "on our street," and you never know how many friends you have until you live in a house and make up to them. They are all of them very wise wee youngsters too, who know about bumble bees and war, and making gardens and not being afraid of worms. In one way or another at first or second hand, I am gaining much wisdom.

To-day my maid asked me what I meant I had to do by writing for a paper, when there were cushions to make, and heaps of other things to do.

"Was it important work, and did it have to be done just at a certain time?"

"Yes," I answered. It wasn't like giving people news or anything like that, of course, but it was keeping them amused, a harder thing. Sometimes, naturally you didn't accomplish what you set out to do because you hadn't spiced enough gossip at your command, but they mostly read what you wrote anyway and you couldn't please everyone.

I am afraid she is still in the dark.

As time goes by I am going to tell you some of my experiences with trade's people, my impressions of prices, domestic service, western methods, etc. Surely I may do so without fear, seeing the Calgary people stood for Emma Goldman, the woman anarchist, telling them last week, face to face, that their gay little city was more like Hell than any place she had ever been in. I can't imagine myself what they ever did to give her that impression, and it's well she didn't come farther north, as Calgary people are commonly reported as coming to Edmonton to have a good time.

The carpenter has just reported a fresh tragedy, the screen doors won't fit. This after paying freight and storage, isn't it a fright?

When the Circus Comes to Town.

WHAT a week! what a week! when shall we see its like again in Edmonton?

One would think that with the cares of a new household on one's shoulders, there would be enough and to spare to do, without chasing up extra excitement in the shape of circuses and the latest New York Ideas, and careering off to Fairs and so on and so forth—but when I haven't time, I take it, and so I took them all in. You see I am evolving Memories. Monday morning then I began what I intended to make a week of it. I didn't commence at four o'clock with the small boy and an alarm clock, because, well, I hung that picture in Memory's Gallery many moons ago.

A dull grey, misty morning, the atmosphere more than a little chilly, queer bundled hustling figures, scurrying to a common Mecca; a long, ghostly line of cars, from which emerged what looked for all the world like the inmates of Noah's famous Ark. In every direction, the sleepy faces of every variety of small boy, and of some boys they call old, but who really are the youngest of them all.

The ever-old yet ever-new mystery, The Unloading of The Circus!

As I said I left the four o'clock programme for others to enjoy, and for myself breakfasted late and well and—very nearly missed the parade.

Nearly, but not quite; I generally manage to catch the last car. And so just as the "One and Only, Greater and Better Than Has Been, Par Excellence, the Biggest, Most Magnificent, and Finest Upon Earth" procession hove in sight,

Circus Day Sights



a small boy and his mother dashed wildly up the Bank of Montreal steps, and, kneeling hurriedly on its top-most side railing, from that coign of vantage saw the long string of mirrored wagons, with their pathetically world and sleep-weary drivers lumber slowly by, the splendid milk-white horses, ridden by the spangled ladies and their automatic attendant cavaliers, the elephants and camels, the haughty beauty and the fine driver in the supposedly smart turnout, the ubiquitous clowns, the same old circus bands, that somehow make your blood beat quicker time than any other band on earth, and last the fearful and wonderful calliope whose Choo-chel-e oott chee-choo, chee, hoot, very nearly made the wild little western horses jump out of their skins.

“The Most Stupendous and Ever Wasest” once by, you could take time for the bigger circus yet—the crowd.

What an infectiously merry, excited bunch they were!

Carry-Alls full of them; Aunt Jemima and Father and Mother Jones, and all the rosy little Jones; the male element in their stiffest white collars and boiled shirts or false fronts—all with the inevitable button-hole of unholy pink artificial blossoms, the feminine portion radiant in their starched summer finery, and Sunday Go To Meeting headgear.

Every best beau with his very best girl; every man, woman, and child in fact, who could navigate to town.

At noon I met a number going on to the laying of the corner stone, but for the most part the crowd made for the hotels and restaurants to rush in their dinner before the afternoon performance.

How many money boxes were rifled, how many love-sick lads gave up the price of their summer straw hats to take their blushing girls to Monday’s doings no one will ever know; but as you entered the huge canvas you wondered wherever all the people came from. Tier on tier of them, they rose, a galaxy of faces you would have sworn had tipped the fifteen thousand population mark.

Up in the chair seats, so-called reserved, because some officials did their best to keep you out of them, even when you’d paid your extra half dollar, were seated the people who

had the price, accompanied by their children and nurses, these favored ones awaiting the entrance of the first set of performers as eagerly as any of the small urchins who had only the price of an entrance, or better still had squeezed in under the tents to get their entertainment gratis.

The entrance of the entire show in a spectacular grand march was greeted with a satisfied sigh of contentment, but when the clowns, mouthing all the old jokes and a few new ones, put in an appearance, the spirit of the performance took hold of the audience, and shrieks of delight and half-ashamed laughter became the order of the day. And when Tony came out and did his little rabbit shooting stunt, a trick puppy dog in the Peter Rabbit role, a salvo of applause reverberated through the tent, and cheered the funny hunter and hunted to do their prettiest. Then from behind the screen appeared in rapid succession, The Famous Avalon Troupe of bicycle riders; the Russian Dancers, the performing elephants, Mademoiselle Sans Gene, the lady of the paper hoops, and exceedingly abbreviated mauve satin Gold-Dust Twin skirts; Mademoiselle Coquette with her highly trained hunter, Black Beauty; acrobats, tumblers, saucy trick ponies who did some very clever acts at the command of a consumptive looking man, whose chest blazed with medals, and whose slender form was more than subtly indicated by his be-draggled yellow tights.

All the items of what had been described as a mammoth programme produced at an enormous cost.

At intervals the crowd refreshed itself with the same old dried-up peanuts, and the pinkest pink orangeade, served by hawkers who lured your pennies from you with their "Don't be stingy boys. E---very body buys peanuts, ---ho---ky po---ky peanuts."

All in all, what a rattling good circus it was, to be sure!

But the end had to come and tired but exquisitely happy the great crowd streamed out to see the animals feed and take in, did their pockets permit it, "The Greatest Side Show that ever happened."

In the Edmonton Second- Hand Shops.

I HAVE a hankering for dropping into the Topsy-Turveydom of the second-hand shops, every little while. To do so means to encounter things that grow "curioser and curioser."

Perhaps the musty air and the half-dim light that filters through the tiny sunless windows has a bit to do with it, but I leave it to you if even an old brass lamp in the setting of this Castle Curious doesn't take on to itself a romantic interest that it couldn't possibly effect if set in the common every day surroundings of the cheery living room.

Brilliant Harold Begbie, one of the British journalists who have just visited Canada, said in a recent article, that what the world lacked to-day—in its churches, its schools, its every phase of life, was imagination—in other words the faculty of make believe, which the good God gives to every little child ever born, and which we do our level best to eradicate, by our "do tell the truth" and "you know that isn't so."

Happily for me, when I was very, very small, I was sent off to the quaintest old convent in all the world; a great rambling school with big airy dormitories, lovely oak pannelled class rooms, a very love of a dining room and library combined with long French windows and books, books, shelf after shelf of them up to the high ceiling; we always wondered what ghostly, funny little books must be way up on top—and out of windows came in to you the queerest forest sounds made by the great chestnut trees and

the sougning of the pines, while as far as one could see was the loveliest green lawn with the most distracting box hedges.

In such surroundings the child of imagination lived in a very dream world of it, became imbued with such an atmosphere of make-believe that in time the real world became the unreal, the imaginative the every-day life. I cannot remember when every dear and well-loved object had not a story to it, handed down from girl to girl like the priceless laces and jewels of our ancestors are handed down from generation to generation of us.

The old angelus bell in the corner of the great upper hall, a monstrous black bell—who that ever left Loretto but knows that whenever a sorrow or danger menaced the house or its inhabitants that the night before, the bell rang a ghostly warning?

And then the studio! a long quaint room almost buried in pictures and hung round about with stately dames and courtly beaux of the long ago, with madonnas and forest scenes, with paintings of the Crucified One—who that lived and moved in such a dream world, with fancy given free rein but all her life must carry with her the soul of a Peter Pan, the faculty of “seeing things.”

Nurtured in such a school, a second-hand shop draws me to it with the attraction of a needle to a magnet.

The world of bridge and tea parties and butchers and grocers, and domestic problems and loves and hates, slips away, and I can revel to my heart’s desire in another Loretto; an enchanted castle full of dear know s what not.

I was speaking of the romance summoned up by the sight of an old brass lamp. I couldn’t help it for the life of me, but I got to imagining that it must be the Simpson’s banquetting lamp that Rebecca of Sunnybrook helped win as a soap premium. The way it acted up when I ventured to turn the wick only strengthened the impression—so anyone wanting a literary curio should take the tip.

“That old walnut table,” you suggest to the King of the Castle, “I suppose it has a history?”

“Well, now you’re just right there,” says a voice from back shop. “that old table was brought out from England and belonged to a man who——”

But enough, the second-hand shops are the common meeting ground, of scores upon scores of interesting facts and melodramatic histories—haunt them for yourself and you will find out.

Undeniably of more recent date—but somehow mighty with potentialities was a great office desk, its varnish still unworn and every part of it in spick and span order.

Now how, why, and wherefore I immediately asked myself such a piece amid such staid old company.

Pasted on an inside compartment I found my answer.

“Give to me the life I love,
Let the lave go by me;
Give the jolly heaven above
And the by-way nigh me.
Bed in the bush with the stars to see,
Bread I dip in the river—
There’s the life for a man like me,
There’s the life forever.”

It mattered not that such texts and mottoes as “do it now,” etc., etc., winked back at you from here and there, the sum total of the man’s ambition lay plain to be seen in Robert Louis Stevenson’s verse.

Small wonder that the desk came into the shop it did, and the man—why perhaps the man has his wish at last and is out and away—the vagabond that he is—out in God’s great out-of-doors; imagination runs riot.

And then I came to a book—the queerest little dusty yellow-leaved book—the landscape of a woman’s life written oh so many, many years ago by the Lady ——

The volume is a quaint record of the marriages, wars and rumors of wars, births, ailments, and alas! deaths of children the sins of tiresome relations, and the money worries of a clever and vigorous woman with an encumbered estate on her hands. Recipes there were too for the complexion made of long-forgotten herbs, a statement of the young girl’s dower, and stories of triumphs and failures. Ah! the old gray book, from whose pages the dead woman stirs and rises, vivid, simple, outspoken in her habit as she lived. Solemnly, tenderly, like one who stirs the moss from the letters upon some honored tombstone, across all the years one meets her

eyes, human with the inevitable and inscrutable pathos of a life not imagined, but lived.

The live touch of the mistress on her tiny world of East Newton throbs still through all the minute, unconscious picture of country life in Northern England two hundred and fifty years ago. The mists of years break between us and the wide, airy seventeenth century home, with its long passages, and noble kitchen chimney bright with pewter and brass, its low wainscoated "parlores," and broad latticed windows.

The sound of the fire bell ringing six recalls me to myself. Across the bridge of two hundred and fifty years I come back to take up the little joys and sorrows of the modern up-to-date hurrying scurrying life of Edmonton.

And yet how sweet the old existence! but the shop is now grown strangely dark, I must be going: "Good night," I call back to the little old keeper—and good night again to the motley collection who for all we know hold high revel when the lights are out.

Golf Madness.

GOLF, as you know, is the most contrariest, uncertain, fascinating, aggravating game that ever lured a sensible crowd of men and women to follow in its mazes. I have learned a lot about the royal sport during the recent tourney. For instance a man who makes a shockingly bad score would never dream of suggesting, nor must you, that his play is hardly what might be termed "good;" get wise, our friend is only a bit "off his game,"—delightful all-embracing term—and is not to be judged by any specific record. If on the other hand, he goes one better than the distinguished and highly revered Col. Bogey, you must not express surprise, the correct attitude at this time is to merely assume that your friend is playing in his usual fine form. Oh but there are many pitfalls for the unwary in this game of games, believe me, many revelations of character that would astonish you! But I think one error we can all avoid is, betraying too great an interest in the play of any member of our individual families. There lies the greatest snare.

I know all about it; your husband may be all you say he is, "long-suffering, patient, a darling—a wonder"—still, take my advice don't get too near him on the links. I think perhaps it's in the air, but somehow, somewhy, when a man starts out with that queer litte bag of clubs, a strange change comes over him, and the dignified male person becomes for the time being, possessed.

At the first hole, where you have followed him at his own urgent request, you will notice he commences the most extraordinary antics, first getting down on all fours to arrange his tee. Next he commences to smooth the green

very elaborately with the back of his hand, addresses the ball a dozen times or more, only to delay again to remove several imaginary obstacles. Finally he is off, bravo! Oh but heavens he has missed it! You begin to feel uncomfortable, well you might, even now your patient husband is fixing you with a look of ineffable resignation and is asking "Why will you women venture on a golf course?"

He, who only three minutes ago would take no refusal, even though you have despairingly suggested that you "know what he is when he's playing a game!"

The next stroke is even more disastrous and you begin to gaze longingly into space. Where now is your "darling" and who is this primitive creature who taunts you with your malicious hatred of himself and your designing gloating over his defeat? Who is this who accuses your friend of being a "saucy minx" and yourself a Jonah? Your angel, dear, gone golf mad!

No need now to gather up your skirts and flee to the shelter of the club verandah; if you were wise you would never have left it, the harm's done, and you might better follow him round, and mutter the conventional "hard luck," and "try another club, it's a brute of a lie anyway."

Golf madness is happily only a temporary insanity and vanishes over a cup of tea. If it were not so, we women would speedily organize a "No Golf" club agitation and add yet one more to the problems of the day.

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