Sweet Singers Will Cheer Poor Farm Inmates.

IMAGINE a long, low, straggling line of buildings, some painted only by the weather, all so ugly in outline and detail that before you dismount at the gate you decide that the poor farm of Silver Bow county is a blot on the landscape This when you see the exterior.

The entrance door gives you a view of a narrow hall, gritless as to paint, so dark at midday one almost has to feel the way. Go along a few feet and a similar passage-way runs east and west. It ends in a long, bare room, called by courtesy the dining-room. In the center is a long, very narrow table, no cloth, not even that refuge of the poor—the oilcloth. On either side is a wooden bench, running the length of the table. No support for the poor,aged back at all. Not a sign of furniture of any kind, and the "china" is not china. "It's white granite ware," as one of the nationality famous for bulls explained.

Off from this is the kitchen, where a Chinaman and a Chinaman woman do the cooking. Such a hole of a room Honestly not large enough for one person to turn around in with any degree of safety to food or person. The facilities are few, very few, but the two cooks accomplish wonders with them.

Cheerless in the extreme, but nothing compared to the rest of the building, near at hand is the women's ward. On each side of another great barren room are ranged rows of tiny, antiquated beds, covered with bed clothing which has outlived its usefulness these many years. Not even shades at the window. In the room are just two chairs, and these the hard, kitchen chairs—no rocking chairs or cushions for those old bones.

Lying on the beds are wrecks of womanhood. Women who have been wives and mothers; who have shared the heat and burden of the day, but who from some cause or other, rarely their own fault, have been turned over to the tender mercies of charity as represented at the poor farm. Some are bent and warped almost out of human shape by inflammatory rheumatism—their joints enlarged and fingers twisted into fantastic claws. Willing, even praying to die, yet forced to live on in a world which has no further use for them, they have outlived their usefulness, have outgrown the love of kindred and friends, or they would not be here in the last refuge of the poor.

There are ,of course, several cases where they prefer the bread of charity to the grudgingly bestowed alms of relatives, and some who would rather live at the poor farm than work. The latter are few in number, for nearly all are helpless, or nearly so. There is one deserted wife, and one morphine fiend who not so very long ago was pretty and happy. The primrose path led to the poorhouse, and now she is one without hope.

If it is sad to see women in such plight how much worse it seems to see men who have lost their chance in the battle of life, who have failed utterly to achieve even a bare living. Here are several cases of men who will not work, who have come to regard it as their right, this food and lodging given by the county. The world owes them a living, is their motto. Yet even these are so old and broken that they could with difficulty get anything to do in the world of labor.

Then there are the hopeless one who neither care for life or for anything it holds for them. They have played the game and lost. Long and earnestly some of them struggled but fate was against them; success was impossible and the end—the poor farm. There are some who at one time possessed a modest competence—a home. Fire in one case, a dishonest partner, in another, an unfaithful wife in the third, swept away the earnings of a life time. Battered wrecks on the shores of time, these men of the poor farm.

Their ward is similar to the women but—oh rare luxury—they have a reading room. A bare room, with a long wooden table uncovered, a few old chairs. In the corners of the rooms are beds. On the table crib boards made by the men who play crib. On one bed the mattress was stained deeply with blood.

"What is that?" was asked of an old man who took great interest in the visitors. "One of the men died yesterday, of hemorrhage. Where is he? Buried. Died at noon and was buried before 4." Further questioning elicited the fact that no minister officiated, never did in fact. This seemed strange when it is well known that any minister in Butte would gladly go out if summoned. "Why is this?" was asked. The old man's eyes filled with tears. "Once you get to the poor farm no one cares about you."

That is the secret of it all—no one cares. No one takes the trouble to visit the place and see the conditions existing. If they did would any one stand by and see the body which one held a human soul carted away and buried before a burial service had been said over it. "Rattle his bones over the stones,
He's only a pauper whom nobody owns."

That is the feeling of many. Get them out of sight as soon as possible. In the hustle and bustle of life who has time to look after the failures. But there are some. Two or three women of Butte have been investigating, have consulted with the county commissioners. There were no complaints, hence things must be all right. It is inaccessible, this poor farm. A carriage is necessary and the commissioners are busy men. When they did go they saw that things were clean and running smoothly. Now that they have been made aware of the real state of affairs they will speedily remedy them. This fall they will build a new brick for farm and county hospital. All the hospital there is about it now is an operating room—heaven save the mark—a tiny room in which is a wooden table covered with yellow oilcloth—the operating table, if you please.

Auditor Crossman, since he learned of the conditions, has gone out often, as indeed have the commissioners and things are changing for the better as rapidly as possible. Mr. Crossman took out the books and tables and arranged the reading room. The inmates speak highly of him, and of the matron, Mrs. McDonald, who has won the good will of even the cranks.

The Ministerial association will meet next Monday to discuss going out to hold service, which they will do in turn. And any will go when asked to officiate at a funeral. Owing to the kindness of Fireman an organ was taken out this week, purchased at a nominal cost. Tomorrow Mrs. F. P. Holbrook will lead the singing. Rev. S. C. Blackiston will talk to the inmates. Vennon Matlack, organist at St. John's will play the organ every Sunday. The pathetic delight of those who were told they were to have services every Sunday, and hereafter burial services, was pitiful to witness.

When the new building is erected, the present one should be burned for it is the home of vermin of all kinds, which simply swarm by thousands and which cannot be eradicated from the flimsy wooden structure. For as it was needed, one by one, the wood boxes have been added.

Those who can should once in a while visit the poor farm—now before they are too much improved. Yet nothing can "improve" away the old age, the suffering the hopelessness of the men and women. Perhaps it will induce the thoughtless to begin to save for that certain od age. Perhaps one can do some act of kindness to cheer the ot of those unfortunates.

Bear soft his bones over the stones,
Though a pauper he's one whom his
Maker yet owns.

Mrs. Margaret Grace Holbrook.

SILVER BOW COUNTY POOR HOUSE.

Vernon Edward Matlack.

Montana Sportsmen Burn Powder By the Carload.

MONTANA is a famous stamping ground for sportsmen. Here game of all kinds is found in abundance, the rivers teem with fish and the true sportsman finds unending delight. Here, too, the sportsman spends money on his outfit and gets the best of everything before starting on a jaunt for game. The dealers cater to the best trade and Butte is headquarters for sportsmen supplies.

A Few Old Muzzle Loaders.

"You would be surprised to know the amount of money spent in a year in Butte for sports of various kinds," said a well known dealer in sporting goods and hardware, in conversation the other day, as he leaned back in his chair and endeavored to keep cool. "Of course, I could not give you the exact figures for what is sold here—no one could, as the goods come through so many sources—but here are some of the figures, estimated as closely os one can do so from the sales of our own house and those of the other leading dealers.

"There are three solid cars of ammunition of various kinds every year, besides all the broken lots that dribble along through the season. These cars are worth upwards of $4,000 each, taking the average orders. Probably $20,000 would not be a cent too much for the annual sales. This includes ammunition of perhaps a hundred varieties; yes, more than that, counting each variety of shotgun shell and the various loads, which are legion.

"The proportionate value of shotgun ammunition to rifle cartridges is about two to one. The two varieties come at different seasons of the year, the rifle being used almost exclusively in the winter, while the shotgun has the call in the spring and fall. Rifle ammunition is far more expensive for a given weight, some of the small shells costing more than shotgun shells of four times the real weight.

"If one wanted to know what became of this great amount of ammunition, he need go no farther than to the shooting grounds of the gun clubs to see the great piles of empty shells thrown around the gun stands. It is very common for a shooter to use from $3 to $5 worth of shells in a day's shooting at the traps, and some of them go once a week for six months of the year. They use the greater part of the ammunition, though the aggregate of small sales for men who go out for an occasional hunt is very large.

"There is some sale of loose powder and shot, especially to the careful sportsmen who load their own shells, and there are even a few antiquated muzzle-loaders in the city. But probably there are not a dozen in the city; though in some of the country districts of the state they may be found in greater numbers. The ridiculous cheapness of modern breech-loaders has driven the old powder and shot weapons out of the field.

"It would perhaps surprise some of the men who bought high-priced breech loaders years ago, when they were still somewhat of a novelty, to know that a really good hammerless gun can be bought nowadays for $25, and a good hammer gun for considerably less; guns, too, with points of excellence that the highest priced ones of a few years ago do not possess. There are comparatively few guns imported today, the American product being as good or better in every respect. Not so very many years ago, it was the ambition of every shoot to own an English made gun, now, the possessor of an American weapon is the envied one, and is likely to win at the traps or in the field. Of course, if a man wants a fancy gun, he can get it, either home made or imported any one can own one.

"You would hardly guess the number of guns of all kinds sold here in the course of a year. For instance, we have sold almost all of a shipment of 100 Savage rifles received less than a year ago, and our this year's order will be as large, or larger. Then we sell other rifles, especially the smaller calibre, and about 150 shotguns of all grades; probably three hundred for the yearly total. There ought to be nearly 1,000 guns sold annually in the city of Butte, by all dealers, and through the mail order houses.

"The sale of the 30 calibre, smokeless powder rifles is one of the wonders of the sporting world. These weapons are powerful enough for any class of game, and are so light as to seem no burden in an all-day's tramp in the hills. The ammunition also is so light that a man can carry enough for a week's shooting in his coat pocket, and find it no burden. But there is no need of weapons of such great range, especially for mountain shooting, about the only kind we have in this part of the state. On the plains, where antelope are the principal game, long range is necessary. But here, most of the game killed is found within 100 yards; an experienced hunter will probably do most of his killing at half that distance. At that range, almost any kind of a gun of reasonable size will do the business and there is no need of a two-mile gun.

Everybody Goes Fishing.

The Kids Like Baseball.

"It would be hard to estimate the number of revolvers and pistols sold. There are hundreds, however, from the cheapest small calibre weapon that comes within the range or the small boy's purse, to the elaborate target weapon that will shoot like a rifle, and cost even more than one. There is a great falling off in the demand for the cheapest 22 calibre pistols. Whether the boys have given up these miserable little fool-killers, and taken to larger weapons, I cannot say; but there are not nearly so many of them sold as there were a few years ago.

"One might suppose that a professional league team would stimulate the sale of baseball supplies but it doesn't. Last year, when the league team was doing all the playing, the people simply wouldn't look at anything else. Now, every 'kid nine' in the city, every amateur club of whatever degree of proficiency, has an enthusiastic following, and the way they buy supplies is a caution. There is at least double the sale for baseball goods this year that there was last. Probably $5,000 will be spent that way this year in Butte. Without counting the small boys, of whom there are many hundreds, and all of them play ball, there are upwards of 500 players in the city who buy goods.

"Almost everybody goes fishing, and the total number of Izaak Waltons in Butte would look like a census report of the city. Fishing is one of the least expensive of outdoor sports, if one cares to make it so. The small boy with a capital of ten cents can lay in a supply of hooks, a line, cut a willow pole dig a few worms or catch grasshoppers, and run a pretty good prospect of winning something. However, most of the fishermen spend more than that, and the total for a year runs up to the thousands of dollars. Fishing is about the most profitable of all the sports, for there are enough prizes in the streams for everybody to get something besides the sport.

"Butte is a great market for all kinds of sporting goods, and the total for all the outdoor sports would reach surprising figures. A far larger proportion of the people interest themselves in outdoor sports than in most other cities, and they spend more money per capita in whatever branch of sport they take up. Most of the trade here is local, there being comparatively little shipped to other points. The figures given are the actual yearly demand from the city of Butte, and the territory near enough for the people to come in and do their buying in person."

TALK WITH M'CALLA.

The Captain of the Newark Discusses Affairs in China and the Philippines.

Capt. Bowman H. McCalla, commanding the United States cruiser Newark, which dropped anchor in the North River off Fiftieth street on Saturday afternoon after making New York from Hong Kong in the fast time of 46 days, was at home yesterday aboard his ship and spun tales of his experiences in Chinese and Philippine waters for the many old friends who called upon him. Ever since the early days of the Spanish-American war, when Admiral Sampson sent Captain McCalla and a little company of jackies and marines from the Marblehead ashore at Guantanamo to clear the place of Spaniards and blaze the way for the army, McCalla has been enshrined in the popular heart as one of the rough-and-ready fighting men of the navy.

His record shows that he is all that his countrymen insist he is, and yet in the cabin of his ship on a summer afternoon Captain McCalla seems to be anything but a fighting man. He might be taken for a college professor or a doctor or a lawyer, but hardly for a sailor. Still he's big enough to fight well, for he stands 6 feet in his shoes, is broad-shouldered and looks hard as nails. He has a broad, reflective brow and his gray blue eyes look out through big spectacles. He talks like an educated son of New England, who has lived much in old England. But one might be pardoned if he mistook the Yankee sailor for a born and bred Britisher.

Captain McCalla is a poor sort to tell about himself. He'll tell you all about his ship and his men and the exploits of other fellows, but it is like drawing teeth to get him to admit even that he was ever in the vicinity of where men were killing one another for national prestige. A Sun man kept firing questions at him yesterday afternoon until finally the captain had to put some action into his answers.

"Oh, yes," he said mildly, "we've had some rather stirring experiences since we sailed from San Francisco on October 18, 1900. We had a fine ship's company and they behaved splendidly, as American sailors always do when strenuous work, as our vice president would say, is to be done. We got to Manila on Nov. 25, stayed there five days and were then ordered to cruise off the north and west coasts of Luzon, rendering such assistance as we might to General Young, who was in command of the land forces in that district. Splendid fighter is General Young and a splendid man. When he matures a plan of campaign you may depend upon it that it will be executed. I took with me from Manila the gunboats Princeton, Helena, Wheeling, Samur and Coleo and the supply ship Zafiro.

"Young's operations up there, the rescue of Gilmore and his men by Colonel Hare and Lieutenant Colonel Howze are old stories and the Press has told them all. In my opinion, however, the rescue of Gilmore has never been adequately told anywhere. The privations of that little expedition of 300 men under Hare and Howze, as they pushed their way with wonderful speed through an unbroken and mountainous country to where Gilmore and his men were held prisoners, was a marvelous piece of work. We were able to assist them a little in keeping the mountain passes open, but that was all. General Young was good enough to say that he couldn't have done much without us, but General Young is a very appreciative person. Northern Luzon was at one time entirely pacified while we were there, but Aguinaldo came along and the natives became rebels again. When Funston turned that clever trick of his, there was little more trouble. I see the Europeans didn't think much of Funston's achievement. It's very hard to please those people. Perhaps it isn't worth while trying.

"The Philippine problem is working itself out splendidly under the splendid administration of Judge Taft. It has seemed to me that he was specially raised up for the work he is now doing. The natives were, when we left, giving much attention to politics. Two parties, the federal and the conservative, had been formed under Judge Taft's encouragement and the members of these parties were taking an active interest in the business of government—a most healthy sign. The party names really mean very little as yet and the parties might as well have been called by any other names. The parties interest themselves only in internal politics. We have an empire in territory and in wealth in those islands only waiting for development. The Pullman Palace Car company has already gone out there for some of the fine woods of the islands. But our first great duty is to educate the people. That is a solemn charge upon us and we are accepting it in the right spirit."

Suffering Women

Don't Despair! This is our message to weak women. Here is assurance of help from one who has suffered and found relief.

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"For about ten years I doctored continually and employed several physicians. I continued to grow worse and finally the doctors told me that my only hope was in an operation. I would not submit to this.

"Seeing Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People advertised in the papers I decided to try them. That was four years ago. I thought they helped me and I took, in all, six boxes of the pills. They are the best medicine I ever found. No one who sees me now would believe that I had suffered so much. I do not find it necessary to take the pills now and am able to do my own housework. I take pleasure in recommending Dr. Williams' Pink Pills to all who are in need of a good medicine."

(Signed) MRS. ELLEN ERLENBECK, Turin, N. Y.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 6th day of February, 1900.

[SEAL] T. R. EVANS, *Notary Public.*

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