

Saturday Night in a Kansas Cattle Town.

The dullness which had so weighed upon us through the long, uneventful afternoon was but a lull, we soon learned, and not a stagnation. With the first approach of darkness the lethargic town rubbed its eyes, so to speak, and leaped to its feet; and in a twinkling, it seemed (like an incantation, Eastman said). Grand avenue was a carnival of light and motion and music. The broad board sidewalks were crowded with promenaders; smiling groups passed in and out of the drinking saloons and gambling places; in every quarter glasses clinked and dice rattled (is there another sound in the world like that of shaken dice?); violins, flutes and cornets sent out eager, inviting strains of waltz and polka from a score or more establishments, and a brass band was playing patriotic airs in front of the theater, where, oddly enough, the crude morality of "Ten Nights in a Bar-Room" was about to be presented, "with the full strength of the company in the cast." Everywhere the cow-boys made themselves manifest, clad now in the soiled and dingy jeans of the trail, then in a suit of many-buttoned corduroy, and again in affluence of broadcloth, silk hat, gloves, cane and sometimes a clerical white neck-tie. And everywhere, also, stared and shone the Lone Star of Texas—for the cow-boy, wherever he may wander, and however he may change, never forgets to be a Texan, and never spends his money or lends his presence to a concern that does not in some way recognize the emblem of his native State; so you will see in towns like New Sharon a general pandering to this sentiment, and lone stars abound of all sizes and hues, from the big disfiguring white one painted on the hotel-front down to the little pink one stitched in silk on the cow-boy's shilling handkerchief. Barring these numerous stars, the rich lights, and the music, we missed sight of any special efforts to beguile or entrap passers-by—perhaps because we were not looking for them; nor was there for some hours a sound to reveal the spirit of coiled and utter vileness which the cheerful outside so well belied. It was in the main much the kind of scene one would be apt to conjecture for an Oriental holiday. But as the night sped on, the festivities deepened, and the jovial aspect of the picture began to be touched and tainted with a subtle, rebuking something, which gradually disclosed the passion, the crime, the depravity, that really vivified and swayed it all, and made it infernal. The saloons became clamorous with profanity and ribald songs and laughter. There were no longer any promenaders on the sidewalks, save once in a while a single bleared and staggering fellow, with a difficulty in his clumsy lips over some such thing as "The Girl I Left Behind Me." An inflamed and quivering fierceness crept into the busy music. The lights paled, flickered, and here and there went out. Doors were stealthily closed, window-shutters slammed to with angry creaks. And at length, as we looked and listened, the sharp, significant report of a pistol, with a shriek behind it, was borne toward us from a turbulent dancing-hall to certify its tale of combat and probable homicide, and to be succeeded by a close but brief halt in the noisy quadrille—presumably for the removal of the victim.—Henry King, in *Scribner's Monthly*.

The Courtesy of Promptness.

In all the list of popular proverbs, there is none which is neater or truer than the old Latin declaration that "he gives twice who gives quickly." Nor is it only in charitable deeds that the advantages of promptness are thus manifest; for there is scarcely a line of human conduct in which such celerity as is consistent with prudent action is not found to be an effective promoter of good results.

But while all are ready to admit that promptness in thought, word and deed is an excellent characteristic, and one which is of great advantage to him of whose life it is an element, too many regard it as a matter within their own concern, and not affecting the interest or the comfort of others. If they choose to be a little dilatory, they confess that they are doing themselves some harm thereby, but declare that it is their own business, with which nobody else need trouble himself. In point of fact, however, a lack of due promptness in one's own actions, however personal and individual they may seem, is quite sure to be a marked inconvenience or discourtesy or positive loss to some one else. In this social world, where no one can live for himself, and where the whole fabric of society is woven with threads of mutual assistance, one man's neglect or failure must work injury to others; and this is specially true in matters of time. If you delay to do your part of any work, you are actually stealing time which does not belong to you, and may be thus diminishing the length of the working life of your friend or neighbor, or of some one whom you never will know. An unanswered letter, an unperformed errand, an unspoken message, an unperformed piece of work—if such things as these worked injury only to the lazy or forgetful man who has neglected his duty, the loss to the world's good work would still be material; but the injury is far greater because it hinders or destroys that which would have been done by some one else, or many others. And the pettiest men, by their lack of promptness, may impede great works on the part of the world's best laborers.

Indeed, it may truly be said that, if promptness is not always a characteristic of great men, it is an essential

mark of true greatness, and that its lack is a defect, not an eccentricity. As a rule, the most successful and competent persons, in any department of human effort, are those who most constantly bear in mind the duty of undelayed action. It is not the great merchants, or professional men, or statesmen, who are most negligent of the lesser duties of life, in all matters where quickness is necessary or desirable. Those who are the busiest are pretty sure to be the most prompt, for without trustworthy readiness they could hardly have achieved success to begin with, nor kept it when won. It is the little people of the intellectual world, or the world of business, who make the most fuss about "not having time" to do this or that. The Department of State, the large mercantile establishment, or the world-famous professional man, returns a prompt reply to your question of business; while it is the cheap cobbler or the cross-roads lawyer who keeps you waiting for a month, and disappoints you at last.

A failure to arrange one's affairs with a view to their prompt management is more often due to shiftlessness, or incapacity, or downright wickedness, than to an overwhelming pressure of duties, or to an accidental oversight. It was brutality, not greatness, which led Napoleon to leave all letters unopened for six weeks, because in that time nine out of ten would answer themselves. It was mental inertness which made that magnificent failure, Coleridge, leave all letters perpetually unopened and unanswered. Men succeed, or partly succeed, in spite of such neglect of moral duty, but never in consequence of it. It is not well for the most of us to think that our powers in other things are so great as to permit us to imitate that neglect of social decency, in the matter of promptness and the keeping of promises, which some celebrated persons have felt themselves licensed to display. No man is too great to be absolved from the duty of courteous promptness, and no man is too small to be aided by its practice.—S. S. Times.

A Forgotten Romance, Which Began in Jest and Ended in Despair.

A CORRESPONDENT of the Savannah (Ga.) *Morning News*, writing from Louisville, relates a forgotten and touching romance as follows:

Who would think of unearthing a thread of romance in a scrap-bag? And yet a few days ago a busy housewife, putting together one of those treasured mosaics, yept a "quilt," overturned a shred of silk whereby hung a tale of no ordinary interest. It was a scrap of satin, of the most elegant quality, once white, but now yellowed and time-stained. Here is its history: About twenty years ago St. Paul's church in Louisville rejoiced in the possession of a pastor who was the idol of his congregation. During his ministrations he lost his wife, and, consequently, as an interesting widower developed new charms in the views of the feminine portion of his flock. Amongst his most devoted and unswerving admirers, though personally unknown to him, was a maiden lady of uncertain age, many peculiarities and independent circumstances. The fact of her intense admiration for a man to whom she had never spoken became known to many, and a party of young people laid plans for what proved to be a heartless hoax. A letter was addressed to the young lady purporting to come from the reverend gentleman, containing professions of admiration and esteem, asking for a correspondence, and requesting profound secrecy. The victim fell into the trap at once, and the correspondence thus began continued until the pastor accepted a call to a church in Savannah, when it culminated in a proposal of marriage. This, of course, was readily accepted, and the final letter, announcing his approaching departure, and still enjoining secrecy from unavoidable circumstances, also declared his probable return at any moment to claim his bride.

Never did happy-hearted girl set about the task of preparation with more delight than this trusting, deceived woman. The greater part of her competency was expended in the purchase of bridal luxuries, a complete and elaborate outfit, from the heavy satin and costly lace of the wedding garments down through every item of elegant and dainty apparel. In the meantime the minister, soon after entering upon his charge in Savannah, died in that city of yellow fever, and the authors of this cruel jest, satisfied with its success, dropped the matter. But nothing could shake the perfect confidence of the expectant bride; her friends tried to reason her out of her infatuation; members of the church visited her and endeavored to prove how impossible it was her hopes could be fulfilled. She triumphantly showed her letters and refused to credit her lover's death or anything other than the belief that he might arrive at any moment to claim her. As the time passed she lost her friends and her property dwindled to a mere pittance. She was thrown amongst strangers, but wherever she went she carried her trousseau, taking it occasionally from the trunk to air it, and packing it up again with jealous care.

At last her mental and physical infirmities became more pronounced. She kept her room and admitted no one but her landlady. On her death-bed she requested this attendant to inform her lover of her death, and to robe her for burial in the bridal dress. When it was taken from the trunk it was found that these trappings were too ghastly for the corpse of a white-haired woman, and they gradually found their way, piece by piece, into other hands.

—Always in haste—the letter h.

HOME, FARM AND GARDEN.

REDUCING all the milk and cheese sold, together with butter, to a better standard, the average produce of all the cows in the country is less than seventy and one-half pounds per cow.

A NICE BREAKFAST DISH.—Chop very fine some lean ham; if you have about a half pint after it is chopped, add two eggs and a little cream. Cook about ten minutes, stirring it constantly, then serve it on toasted bread.

Persons wanting full returns of eggs from their hens must feed for it. Proper care will bring the best results. There are some breeds which give better satisfaction than others, but it must be recollected that the fowls of this day are so bred up and trained, that their end and existence is to produce eggs, but they must be fed for it.

FISH CROQUETTES.—Take the remains of any fresh fish, or codfish well freshened. After removing the bones chop it very fine; add butter, pepper, salt, one egg, a little cracker or bread crumb. Make into balls about the size of an egg, dip first into beaten egg and then into bread crumbs, and fry in hot fat until they are golden brown. Serve on a plate covered with a white napkin.

ROILED CHOCOLATE CUSTARD.—Grate quarter of a pound of unsweetened chocolate, and put in a half pint of hot water on the stove to dissolve; it need not boil, but requires occasional stirring; beat up four eggs, yolks and whites together, with half a pound of pulverized sugar, and pour over it a quart of boiled milk; then stir in the chocolate; strain the whole through a fine sieve, put back on the fire, and stir continually with a wooden spoon till it thickens, which it will do in about three to five minutes; when cool enough put in the bowl it is to be served in, and keep on the ice till you are ready to use.

PLAIN CAKE.—Take three eggs, two cups sugar, half cup of butter, or good fresh lard is better; two cups sour cream, half nutmeg, one teaspoonful soda, four cups flour, with two teaspoonfuls cream tartar well stirred in flour; beat the yolk of eggs, sugar and butter well together, then add the milk and nutmeg; then have the white of the eggs well beaten, and stir very slowly a spoonful of flour and a spoonful of egg at a time until all is in; after you begin to add the flour and whites of egg to the mass do not beat it, but stir very slowly; then put the soda in a tablespoonful of vinegar, and add at the last; bake in a moderately-heated oven three-quarters of an hour.

W. J. BEAL says of Alsike clover: Botanists do not consider it hybrid. I have twice tried to make crosses with this and white clover, but without success. I have never seen any plants which were intermediate between Alsike and white clover, though I have seen bees working on the flowers of each species where the plants were well mixed. If the plants can be crossed, we shall expect to see new hybrids. The stalks sometimes grow four to six feet in length, but they fall down and the leaves decay toward the base of the stems. The stems recline but do not take root like white clover. It is valuable for pasture and makes good hay, though its habit is not well adapted for meadows.

Common Roads.

THERE is still much complaint in many portions of the country about the roads, and this condition of things may be looked for periodically until a system of road-making is inaugurated differing materially from that which prevails now in nearly all of the Northwestern States. Although the *Prairie Farmer* has so often discussed this subject and advocated the adoption of measures intended to bring about a better state of things, we are impelled to return to it again and again by reason of its importance to the people. We have emphasized the necessity for good roads in all parts of the country, showing their value to the public and to individual property. We have pointed out the fact that most of the work annually done upon the public highways is of little account and in many instances worse than useless. It is plain that the value of good roads is not properly appreciated. It is only when a mud embargo occurs that our people are aroused to the benefits of good roads at all times. When the vicissitudes of a capricious winter are over, and the highways become passable, very little is heard about the roads until another season of rain or snow, and freezing and thawing has rendered them well nigh or entirely impassable.

One of our correspondents suggested, in the last issue of the *Prairie Farmer*, that the inconvenience and losses sustained by the country on account of bad roads are well understood, but that those who refer to them fail to point out a remedy. Now there are localities where this criticism will apply with great force; but on the other hand there are many others in this and other States where it has no force at all. There are many sections where gravel and beaten rock may be utilized to improve the roads with comparatively light expense. In such instances it is merely a question of public interest in the matter. In numerous localities the light cost of good roads is shown by the construction of toll roads, which almost without exception prove a good investment to those who build them. The statement is a safe one that farmers who use these thoroughfares pay in tolls much more than would be required in taxes to keep up good roads free of tolls, and at the same time, in most cases, they have to pay highway taxes also.

In other localities these natural means of securing good roads are not at hand, and a different course must necessarily be pursued, if good roads,

or those that are reasonably good, are to be had. To keep the highways in anything like good order under such unfavorable circumstances, underdraining is absolutely necessary. On all heavy soils, this is the first thing to be done. With underdrains three or four feet deep, and an outlet for the drain, a vastly improved condition of the road will be secured. Piling loose earth and sod in the center of a highway, is little better than leaving the road level; and, indeed, if the soil is vegetable matter the higher it is piled up, the worse the roads will become. The proper plan to pursue under such circumstances is to remove the surplus water by stone or tile underdrains, and then if gravel, or broken rock can be obtained, a good road is easily made.

Whether or not good country roads will be constructed to any great extent under present highway laws, is a question which we do not at this time intend to discuss. We have said heretofore, that under our present system very few good roads are to be found at all seasons of the year. If the laws on the statute book were executed according to their intent and purpose, there would be far less room for complaint than now exists, but it is patent that such is not the case. The facts speak for themselves; bad roads in bad weather are the rule; good roads at all times are few and far between. If relief or reform in road-making is to be secured, it may be that it will only be secured by the enactment of laws which will be a radical innovation upon those that are now on the statute books relating to it. It is asserted that as matters now stand, road taxes are increasing, and at the same time our country roads are getting worse every year. If this be so, it is high time that better methods were adopted, and it has been suggested that all highway taxes be paid in money to be expended under a system by which the roads will be in charge of and kept in order by experts in road-making. Past experience in this, and other Western States under the present laws, shows that something more is required before we shall have at all times of the year good public highways.—*Prairie Farmer*.

Packing Eggs for Transportation.

PACKING eggs to preserve them during winter for home market or consumption is a very different matter from packing them so that they can be safely transported long distances. Produce commission merchants, who are equally interested with the farmers in having the packages pass through the perils of rough handling and many changes uninjured, issue each year in circulars to their patrons directions for packing this very frail commodity. With one accord the rules laid down in the various circulars referred to discourage the employment of chaff as a packing material, and recommend, among the more available substances, dry sweet straw or hay finely cut. Clean oats are admirably suited to the purpose and are advised when the quantity of eggs to be packed is not very large, otherwise this material is somewhat costly. Whatever material is used it is imperative that the packing be sweet and dry.

Either boxes or well-hooped barrels may be used. Place three inches of fine cut straw, hay or oats, as the case may be, at the bottom of the package; follow this with a layer of eggs removed an inch or more from the sides of the barrel or box, and not touching each other; over these place several inches of the packing material, and press it down gently but surely, so as to fill all interstices between the eggs, and cover them about one inch in depth; then put in another layer of eggs, taking care that the packing is pressed between the ends of the eggs and the side of the package, and so continue the alternate layers of eggs and packing material until within three or four inches of the top of the package. Finish off with at least two inches of packing and an inch or so of hay. Press the cover of the package down closely and secure it firmly. With care the eggs can be thus packed so they will remain in the places they are put, and not move about to crush one another.

In placing the eggs a class of farmers hold to the old rule of setting them little ends down. A commission house in Boston advises this season that they be placed with the end towards the side of the package. Either way, if so packed as to keep the eggs from coming in contact, will, with ordinary care in handling the package during its transit, insure their safety a long distance.—*N. Y. World*.

How He Helped the Church.

A WELL-KNOWN Hartford gentleman was unable to attend the sale of the pews of his church the other day, and he requested a friend to bid in for him a pew for which he had for many years paid fifty dollars. Later he met another friend, and, incidentally mentioning that he would not be able to attend the auction, asked his friend also to see to it that he had his old pew as heretofore. The auction took place and the pew was put up. "Fifty dollars," said friend number one. "Fifty-one," said number two. "Fifty-three," "fifty-four," and so till there had been thirty-eight bids, when one friend, thinking he had gone as far as discretion permitted, stopped, and the other took it triumphantly at eighty-eight dollars. "Put it down for Dr.," he said, and the astonishment of the other knew no bounds. They had been bidding against each other, both in behalf of the same gentleman, who had forgotten to tell number two that he had also spoken to number one. The church is so much better off.—*New Haven Palladium*.

WIT AND WISDOM.

—"Good" for a headache—the game of fifteen.
—Hens make a dead set against China eggs.
—Farior matches—Courting in the drawing-room.
—Sawing wood is a healthy occupation, yet it has its drawbacks.
—The *Modern Argo* says that editors and hens must scotch for a living.
—The way to get over a culinary difficulty is to go to Bridget.—*Boston Transcript*.

—What is home without a broomstick?—*Yonkers Gazette*. A place that even a timid man might enjoy.—*New Haven Register*.

—The best and most thoughtful newspapers now allow contributors to the waste-baskets to write on both sides of the sheet.—*Atlanta Constitution*.

—Somebody says that the Czar has as many lives as a cat. But that remains to be proved. There are four more chances for the cat's reputation.—*N. Y. Mail*.

—When Chief Jack brought in the three prisoners to Los Pinos, the other day, General Adams looked out and exclaimed: "Hi! Lo! Jack and the game."—*Exchange*.

—Farmer Jonesbury says his hens always lay during winter. All he has to do is to casually remark in their hearing that eggs have dropped down to ten cents a dozen. Then they all go to work with a will.—*Boston Transcript*.

—The Princess Louise does not permit any one, even Lorne, to call her Looeyzer, and she is perfectly right. She was christened Looeyzer, and Looeyzer's her name.—*N. Y. Commercial Advertiser*.

—Ex-Empress Carlotta, who has for so long taken no interest in anything, has of late taken to insisting on wearing the very latest style of bonnet, and will have shoes just as small as she can get on. They think her reason is returning.—*Boston Post*.

—"You are an ojus, hidjus idjit, my dear," said a playful mamma to her daughter at dancing school the other day. "Oh, my dear Mrs. —," sighed one of her neighbors, "what wouldn't I give to have your knowledge of Latin!"—*Philadelphia Bulletin*.

—Human nature is queerly constituted. The average man doesn't feel as bad when he receives ten dollars too much change as he does when he gets ten cents too little. He is more anxious to correct the little mistake than he is to rectify the big one.

A Novel Duel.

A novel kind of a duel was fought lately in Indian Territory, near Atoka, between two Mexicans, cattle-drivers, returning home from a drive to Colorado. One was Don Juan de la Cruz, the other Pedro Garcia, and both were in love with the same woman—a circumstance not confined to Mexico. While discussing their claims to the possession of their mistress they quarreled—of course—and declared in the hottest of hot blood that the world was not big enough for both of them. They determined, therefore, that one of them must be extinguished, and were on the point of a personal encounter with revolvers, when common friends interfered, and persuaded them to adopt the native weapon—the lariat or lasso. Having taken position on the open prairie, at a certain distance apart, they wheeled their horses—they were finely mounted—and dashed toward one another, lariats snugly in hand, and crouching on saddle to avoid the flying noose. The lassos were simultaneously cast, Cruz missed his aim, but Garcia's lariat fell with unerring precision over the head of his adversary, who was jerked to the ground with the intent to break his neck. Cruz, fortunately, was thrown on his side, and would certainly have been dragged to death—for the horses were at full speed—had not the lasso snapped with the sudden strain. As it was, he was so seriously hurt as to be unconscious, and he may not recover. The lasso generally used in South America for capturing wild horses and cattle is dissimilar to the lasso employed mainly in Mexico. The former, a long, stout thong of skin with a leaden ball at each end, is so thrown that when it strikes neck or leg it coils round and restrains the flying beast. The Mexican lasso, or lariat, has a slip-noose, and requires more skill in management. The lasso was frequently directed against the Spanish soldiers during the struggle of the South American republics for independence, and also by some of the Russian tribes during the Crimean war, against the French sentinels, but with poor success. Occasional attempts were made with the lariat upon our troops during the Mexican war, though they were speedily abandoned, as the Americans proved much less tractable than the native wild cattle.

Mrs. HUME, of Girardville, Pa., sent a comic valentine to her sister-in-law, Mrs. Lishman, on the 14th of February. It was not favorably received. The fair creature, backed by their respective husbands, met in the street and fought. A jury of their countrymen will settle the question of damages.