HESPER

...BY...

HAMLIN GARLAND

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schedule time and had but a few minutes in which to make their transfer, and so they saw little of the great central metropolis. To them it was only a gloomy, clangorous shed fitted with long strings of railway coaches all marked with strange names—names which meant little to her, but which excited Louis almost to tears. "See," he cried, "there is a car from Oregon and one from Wyoming!" The people who filled the coaches were not markedly different at first glance from those she had been traveling with, but Louis, more keenly discerning, began to distinguish types at once, and when one or two big men came in wearing wide hats and chin beards he trembled with joy. "There are some cattlemen—I'm sure of it," he whispered hoarsely.

Louis did not return to the Pullman till after the train had left the city, and she was just beginning to wonder thereat when he came in with eyes ablaze. "I've struck 'em at last!" he fairly shouted in her ear. "They're all up in the reclining chairs, chin bearders, spitters and all. I'm just crazy to sketch two or three of them. It doesn't pay to ride in a stateroom if you want to see types," he added in conclusive discontent.

As that day and the next wore on the boy began to burn with a new phase of his fever. He commenced to count the hours till he might be able to discern Mogalyon, the great peak of the Rampart range, whose fame is worldwide. Ann experienced her first decided flush of interest as the swinging, reeling rush of the train brought the great peak into view, a dim, blue dome against the western sky.

At last, just as the red was paling out of the sky, the train swung to the left on its southerly course, and the whole Rampart range began to stretch and wind away to northward and southward, while between the plain and the foothills rolled a tawny sea of sod, deeply marked with ravines and dotted with pine clad buttes. The range grew dimmer as they gazed, and at last even Louis was content to sink back in his seat and wait.

"It isn't a bit as I expected it to be," he said, "but it is glorious. That purple green was wonderful. I'm going to try to get that some time. It isn't as precipitous as the Alps, but it's superb just the same, and just think how much wilder it was when father came here!"

"I'm glad you were not disappointed, boy," she replied, laying her hand on his shoulder and caressing his cheek, "but you need rest. You're seeing too much."

The train was now winding down toward Valley Springs, and only the splendid sky line of the range could be distinguished as the lights of the town began to sparkle out of the obscure murk.

The porter, with brush in hand, came down the aisle. "This is Valley Springs, miss."

They were met at the car door by a big, smiling man in modish summer dress, while behind him stood a pale, sweet faced woman in blue.

"Hello, Don!" shouted Louis.

"Hello, laddie! How do you do, Ann?" replied Barnett, and as Ann and her cousin embraced the big man caught Louis by the hand. "How's your muscle, my boy? Got all your traps? Here, Tom!" he called to a colored footman, "look out for these things."

CHAPTER II.

ANN'S entrance into the Barnett home cut her off from all contact with life distinctly western. She found herself still amid the velvet and silver of the parlor car and saw only remotely those who slept all night in the cramped corners of the ordinary coaches. Her cousins were not native; they were, indeed, only translated Philadelphians who had gone west in search of health—at least Mrs. Barnett was there for that reason. Her husband made the change for love of his wife.

A certain percentage of the townspeople and the members of the special circle in which the Barnetts moved were health seekers, and Ann was deeply relieved to find that all the comforts of an eastern home were to be enjoyed in [illegible] graystone houses on Rampart avenue. Indeed, the Barnetts lived quite as they would have done in Seabright or Lenox. They had a dozen horses, a suitable assortment of vehicles, saddles and bridles and were enthusiasts concerning polo and golf. Their neighbors and friends were unfailingly ecstatic in praise of the climate and the views and seemed illogically anxious to placate the prejudices of this haughty, pale faced, scarlet lipped young girl, who looked with calm eyes upon the great peak glooming to the westward. They formed, in fact, a colony of alien health seekers, busied with pleasures, set distinctly apart from the toilers and the traders of the place.

Ann was puzzled and a bit bored by their insistence on winning her admiration of the mountains and, being naturally perverse, withheld the expressions of pleasure she might otherwise have uttered, for she was profoundly moved by what she saw.

"I never did understand that girl," said Donnelly Barnett to his wife one night after a drive into the great Bear canyon. "She has everything to make her happy, and yet she goes about torpid as an oyster. What's the matter with her?"

Jeannette sighed. "That's her mother's blood. She's like her mother in a hundred ways. Louis is exactly like his father. I remember when he came back from his first and only trip to the west. I was only a child, but I recall his enthusiasm. He was a lovable fellow, but I never could stand Alicia. She was positively stony. I have hopes of Ann. Her hand is strong and warm—human, in fact. Don't you think her indifference a pose?"

"I wish it were. No, it's genuine."

"She needs to be shaken up by a good, hot love affair. Some man will come"—

"That's what I've been saying, but the man don't come. She's twenty-six."

"How awful!"

"That's the part I don't understand about Ann. She has money, is handsome, and yet here she is quite disengaged, if we except her affair with Peabody, which Adney writes is quite as tepid as any of Ann's other affairs."

"Well, now, I'll tell you. She's come to the right place to have men ride up and demand attention. If she doesn't have at least an offer a week it will not be my fault. I'm going to invite all the young fellows home to dinner while she's here. Now watch things 'bile.'"

Barnett, nominally a mining broker, was, in fact, president of the polo club, secretary of the Sage Grass Golf association—in short, financial nurse to every collection of amiable sports in the town. He knew all "the best fellows" in the state and now became more popular than ever. The young men accepted his dinner invitations with gratitude, and each and all paid prompt and undisguised court to "the proud eastern beauty," as one young fellow called her. But they soon acknowledged failure. Her reserve led to a sense of injury and was reported to be arrogance. They were seldom flattered by the slightest unbending on her part.

However, several of these young fellows turned out on acquaintance to be socially related to some of her friends in Boston and New York and in that way won a certain acceptance which no mere civil engineer from Omaha or professor from St. Louis could hope to attain. They were met on the conventional plane, and they got no further at any time.

Meanwhile Ann was really troubled about Louis. He was eating less and less each day, and his sleep was broken, and at the end of the first week he fell in a state of collapse. The excitement, the late hours, the contact with new types and, above all, the attempt to understand the country and his relationship with it had worn him out. Then Ann said in her decisive way: "I don't believe this altitude is good for Louis. I think I will take him home again."

"Oh, don't do that. It isn't the altitude; it's the social whirl. Send him down to my ranch. It's a hole of a place, but it's just what he needs—nothing to see but coyotes and cowboys. We'll put him under Rob Raymond's wing. Rob's my foreman and a good chap. He'll take to the boy like anything. I'm sure of it."

The plan as worked out by Barnett involved a trip on his automobile for the four of them; but he delayed too long. Mrs. Barnett entered upon one of her "poor spells," and Donnelly, faithful as a big dog, promptly told Louis to go ahead and not wait for the party. "I must stay and nurse Jeannette."

Ann was afraid to let Louis go alone, but Barnett poohpoohed her. "He'll get on all right. In fact, he'll rejoice to be free of us for a day or two. I'll wire the mail carrier to meet him and take him down, and I'll send a letter to Raymond to look out for him. He'll be more than safe. He'll be happy, and he won't miss us in the least."

Ann insisted on going down herself "I want to see him properly settled," she said.

Barnett slyly winked at his wife. He really wanted to see Ann "jarred." "It'll do her good to rough it a little," he said privately. Thereupon Louis, trembling with eagerness, began to "rustle his outfit." He bought a pistol, a rifle, a broad rimmed hat, some blankets and the most highly ornamental cattleman's saddle in the Springs.

"What a child you are!" Ann exclaimed as she watched him, her eyes warming with love and pride. "You're a dear boy!" she added as he came to her side.

He looked up at her tenderly. "You're good to me, Hesper," he said fervently.

"Sh! Don't ever call me by that absurd name."

"It isn't absurd. I like it," he said.

Barnett, seated at his telephone, made every arrangement for them. "You'll be met by old Jones, and when you get there Mrs. Jones will look after you. She's a very good cook, so don't get nervous when you see her. She's not pretty. Raymond will do his best to entertain you, and when you come back you'd better ask Raymond to put his own horses in the cart and drive you out. He'll be better company than Jones."

CHAPTER III.

BARNETT'S ranch, one of his chief amusements, lay at the head of a valley surrounding a spring which was the source of Wildcat creek. The buildings stood just where the ravine opened out upon a grassy meadow. It was a comfortable place, shielded from the desert winds by the low hills to the north, while a small artificial pond, graveled and rimmed with cottonwoods and willows, gave it enviable distinction among the bleak and barren farmsteads. It was known as the "Goldfish ranch," for the reason that at one time Barnett had filled the pond with ornamental fish.

At about 5 o'clock of a hot and windless July day a horseman galloped swiftly up the valley into the yard and was met at the door of the house by a tall, composed young fellow in broad hat and spurs.

"Hello, Perry!" he said quietly. "You made good time."

Perry, a young Mexican, showed a score of his white teeth in a grin. "Here is letter. Some people coming to rancho tonight."

The young man tore the end from the long envelope and read the letter in silence. His face darkened. "Well, that's a nice case o' beans. So they're on the road, are they?"

"Yes; 'bout fo' miles back."

The young foreman turned toward the house, from which the faint strains of "Annie Laurie" came. A plump, light haired young fellow of about thirty sat tilted back in his chair, with one leg thrown across the corner of the table, playing a mouth organ.

"Hello, Rob!" he called.

Raymond was in bad humor. "Put up your plaything, you monkey, and listen to me a moment."

"What's up?"

Raymond pointed at the letter. "Read that. Nice thing the old man works on us." His indignation and disgust deepened into a growl. "This settles it. I'm going to pull out."

The other man composedly took up the letter. "What's he done now?"

"Going to quarter a crazy kid on us, a New York degenerate, who'll be a confounded nuisance every hour of the day. And that isn't all—the kid's sister is coming down to stay a few days"—here his dismay was fairly comical—"'to get the lad settled.'"

Baker's eyes widened, and his fat face lengthened. "Not comin' today?"

"That's what!"

"And us without no woman round."

Raymond broke forth again: "That's it, now. You'd suppose Barnett would at least read my letters. I told him last week that old Jonesy and his wife were going up to Skytown."

"Well, we're in for it. We can't turn a woman out on the plain. Jack, you slovenly whelp, set to work and clean up the mess you've made. Perry, go rope some snags for a fire. Hustle, now!"

Baker began to read the letter aloud in a monotonous, painful way, while Raymond moved about the room, picking up the litter.

My Dear Rob—I'm sending you a new hand and a visitor. They are cousins and nice people. The lad is not very strong, and I'm sending him down to you to get an upward turn. He's crazy on the subject of wild animals and cowboys and is a very clever artist. He'll want to have you pose for him.

Raymond came over and seized the stove lid lifter as if to break Baker's head. "We're to cook and purvey like boarding house keepers and doctor like a nurse at a health resort, and in addition we're to pose for a delicate youth who thinks we're 'material.' That settles me. I'm going up to Sky and take a shy at mining."

Baker broke forth into a slow drawl, "Hadn't you better strike a few attitudes so's to be in practice when the boy comes?"

Raymond throttled him half in earnest. "I've a mind to wring your neck," he said through his teeth. Then, suddenly releasing him, he again commanded him to clear away his dishes.

Baker was not yet finished with the letter. "Hold on. Don't be in a rush. I hain't got to the girl yet. That's what interests me. 'Miss Rupert will only stay a few days to get the lad settled.'"

"She can't stay too quick to suit me."

Baker's voice took on a little more expression as he read Barnett's appeal. "'Now, don't be cranky, old man. The Ruperts are good stuff, and on Mrs. Barnett's account'"—

"Ends up by laying me under obligation to his wife, knowing mighty well I'd do anything for her. Well, I'll do it, but I reckon the atmosphere won't bake a cake while she's here. I'll leave you and Dutch to do the talking. That'll chill her cold."

Baker began to show alarm. "Not by a hatful. Right here is where I take a sneak."

Raymond's brow darkened and his eyes threatened. "No you don't, my Christian friend and neighbor. You remain right here and do the honors. You will pass for the boss. I've got to cook."

"Great Peter, you mustn't do that! I can't carry it through. I'm no spieler."

"Play the mouth organ for her."

"Oh, see here, you're joshin'."

"You won't find it any 'josh.' You've been getting gay with me lately and need discipline. You pass for the foreman. Understand? You amuse the girl and pose for the boy, while I knock pots. That is settled. Now take the pail and rustle some water, and don't you peep."

Perry, entering at the door with an armful of brush, called out, with quiet joy, "The senora has come!"

Raymond seized him by the arm. "Listen here, Perry. The old man has written down to say that he has made Jack the boss. I'm going to cook a few days, and then I leave. You tell the other boys that Jack Baker is made foreman, and they've got to obey him. You sabbe?"

Perry grew solemn of face. "I sabbe. If you go, I go."

"Never mind that. Get out there and help take care of the team, and, Jack, you go too." He laid a hand on his back and pushed him through the doorway just as the two seated hack rounded the corral and drew up to the door.

"Oh, isn't this fine!" called a clear, boyish voice, and a moment later the cool, deliberate voice of a girl replied: "Oh, what a blessed relief after the hot sun of the plain!"

Then Baker was heard to say, with elaborate courtesy: "Shall I help you out, miss? I reckon you are the friends of the old man—I mean Barnett." And a moment later the young girl stood in the doorway looking out at the plain. Raymond gave her but one glance from the corner of his eyes, but her firm, well balanced body and calm, high bred face touched him with admiration. His resolution to be disagreeable weakened, though he kept about his work.

"I never knew how grateful the shade of a tree could be," Ann said partly to Louis and partly to Baker. "Is it always so fiercely bright here?"

"Oh, no; this is an unusual spell. I mean it is rather"—

She was now aware of Raymond moving sullenly about in the gloom wherein the stove sat. He was dressed in a light tan, loosely fitting shirt and

"It sure makes a filling combination."

brown trousers without braces. His spurs rattled at his heels as he walked to and fro, lithe and powerful. He did not look up—did not appear to notice what was going on, but came and went at his work, deft and absorbed.

Louis was instantly delighted with the room. "Isn't this ripping!" he exclaimed as he studied its furnishings. "Won't this make a strong background for an illustration? Only that stove—isn't it too bad?—that's all out of key. Why don't you have a fireplace, Mr. Raymond?" he asked, turning to Baker.

Raymond gave Baker a glance, and the plump one waded in: "Too little wood in this country. Cook, draw up a chair for the lady."

Raymond's eyes flashed with a silent menace, but he did as he was told, and as he put the chair down for Ann he dusted it with his hat.

Louis was husky voiced with joy. "Did you see that, Ann? I'll have to work that in somewhere."

Baker continued, in the same tone, "Can't you rustle a little grub for the company, Jack?"

Raymond curtly replied, "I'll try hard."

Baker, who was gaining self control, turned to Ann. "We have to humor our cooks out here. They're scarce and mighty uncertain in their minds—stop and shy at nothin', like a locoed steer."

Louis clapped his hands. "Oh, isn't the talk good, Ann? And these chairs—aren't they fine?"

"Cook made 'em," said Baker. "He's handy as a bootjack with tools."

Ann ignored the chairs, but studied the cook, whose curiously absorbed, sullen yet deft movements interested her. He appeared to be about thirty years of age, and his lean, powerful figure dignified the rough and dust stained clothes he wore. His profile was stern and manly, but his chin was youthful. His eyes she had not yet seen.

Raymond, on his part, was fairly abashed by the grace and youthful charm of his visitor. She reminded him, as she stood there calmly looking about the grimy walls, of the stories he had read of princesses visiting the huts of their peasantry. She was of good height, but the proud lift of her head made her seem taller than she was, and the cut of her gown, the color of her gloves and hat, told of good taste and the service of the best tailors and milliners. "Great Scott!" he said to himself. "She's an up to date beauty. What will I do to feed her?" And, imperturbable as he looked, his heart sank within him, and if he could have fled honorably he would have done so instantly.

Raymond took no pains to be noiseless or dainty in his work, but every moment told. He sloshed out the coffeepot and sliced the bacon and stirred up the fire, all with a grace and quiet dignity which opened Ann's eyes in an effort to understand him. His hands were noticeably fine, and the poise of his head expressed strength and pride. He was very brown, almost as brown as the leather cuffs he wore on his arms.

Once, when he passed out of hearing, she turned to Baker suddenly and asked: "Why does your cook wear spurs? An affectation, I suppose."

Baker flushed and stammered. "Well, no; he has to help with the cattle once in awhile."

Raymond called to Perry, who was seated on the doorstep. "Perry, jump your horse and round up a dry cottonwood snag. This brush is of no sort of use. I want a hot fire."

Louis beamed on Ann. "He's talking just like Walter Owen's heroes."

Ann silenced him. "Hush! He'll hear you."

Baker, quite ready to take a fall out of Raymond, interposed: "He's a little hard at first, but reel sociable when you git him started. He's shy as a rabbit when they's any company round."

Raymond uttered a cough which made Baker start. "I guess I'll go out and see what that driver has done with his horses."

Louis sprang up. "I'll go, too, if you don't mind, sis."

As Ann looked round the low ceiled room in which the flies buzzed her eyes fell upon a little case of books in the corner. For lack of something better to do, she rose to inspect them. She was surprised to find them mainly essays, and wondered who of these men read Emerson and Burroughs. One of them was a book of verse. Raymond's name was on the fly leaf.

"How handsome the cook is!" was her inward exclamation as she returned to her seat. She was not one of those who sit in silence when they wish information, and, lifting her voice a little, she said:

"I understood Mr. Barnett to say that you had a woman to cook for you?"

Raymond shifted a stove lid. "We did."

"Where is she?"

"Gone—a week ago."

"Isn't there any woman about the place?"

He peered into the coffeepot. "No one but you."

Ann sat in silence for a moment. "I didn't understand. Mr. Barnett said"—

Raymond straightened and looked at her somberly. "If Barnett paid a little more attention to his ranch and less to polo— I wrote him, more than a week ago, that Jonesy was pullin' his freight." He returned to his cooking.

Ann composedly went on, "Was Jones the name of the foreman?"

"No, he was assistant; but he was married, and his wife was our dough twister. He's gone to Skytown gold camp. The whole country is full o' the fever."

Ann, with a note of sympathy in her voice, said: "I don't like to see a big, strong man cook. Do you get extra pay for it?"

"Not a cent. We all take turns at it, to tell the honest truth."

"I hope you're the best cook?"

"That wouldn't be saying much, lady. I cook in self defense."

Ann opened her eyes at the significance of this phrase. "Then you don't do it as a—a business."

"Not by a whole row o' steers. Do you like prunes and rice?" he asked hastily.

Ann looked into the dish which he held out toward her and gravely replied: "I don't think I ever ate any. You don't mean they're cooked together?"

"That's what. It sure makes a filling combination," said he, dishing some out before her.

"I can well believe it," she replied, with a humorous intonation. "Let me taste it. Perhaps I'll like it." As she nibbled a little of the mess from the spoon she glanced up at him with a queer little smile that made the room whirl before his eyes. "It seems a nutritious mixture."

He recovered himself. "Oh, it's a hearty mess, all right. My cooking isn't fancy"—

"I beg your pardon," Ann hastened to explain, "I didn't mean to criticise. I didn't intend to hurt your feelings. I'm sure it's a very tasty dish."

"Oh, I don't blame you; but, you see, we're not running a summer hotel exactly. Still, we'll make you as comfortable as we can while you stay."

"By which you mean to hint you hope I won't stay long." She was frankly amused.

He became very sincerely grave. "I didn't say that, lady."

"But you meant it. I'm not obtuse. I know when I am out of place. I shall flee tomorrow."

She was forcing his hand, as he well knew, but he remained gravely simple. "I'll be sorry if our grub or anything else should scare you out."

She changed the subject quickly. "I can see that Louis is to be perfectly happy down here. I am glad I came. I shall feel much more resigned to his being here now that I have met Mr. Raymond and you."

Raymond remained inexpressive. "Your brother is an enthusiast, I believe you said. He'll be more charitable than—than you, for instance."

Ann didn't like his emphasis. "I don't wonder at your resentment. Our coming is an imposition, but if I had known—please be kind enough to admit that I didn't know how you were situated."

Raymond resumed his cowboy manner. "Now, lady, you let that go. I don't blame you a hair. You're here, and I'll see—I mean, the boss will see—we'll all see—that the boy is treated right, and I'll guarantee that he gets a fair share of what's going. I'm not apologizing, but I hope you won't take us on the wrong slant. I hope you'll come often. You brighten up the place wonderfully."

Ann drew herself up. "I don't understand you, Mr."—

"Call me cook—Mr. Cook. Anything goes out here."

They were now squared before each other, he with a malicious smile lurking at the corner of his mouth, she with dark and puzzled brow.

"Of course, you cowboys are all strange to me—I mean your manners and customs—but my roommate at college told me a good deal about this life. She was from Colorado."

He betrayed new interest. "What was your college? Smith?"

Ann lifted her eyebrows in surprise. "No. What made you think it was?"

Raymond began to retreat. "Oh, I don't know. You seemed about that style. I mean to say, you carry yourself like a Smith college girl that came down here once with Mrs. Barnett." He caught up the water bucket. "Excuse me a minute. I'll run down to the spring and get some water." His going was equivalent to flight.

Ann smiled composedly as she sipped her coffee, which was very good indeed.

Louis burst in at the door. "Sis, you ought to see the corrals out here. They have ninety head of horses! Think of that! And I'm to ride all I want to."

Baker, who appeared just behind him, put in a drawling word: "'Peared like he wanted to ride four to once, like a circus man. Are you gettin' somethin' to eat, miss?"

"Oh, yes, indeed."

Louis, throwing down his cap in imitation of Raymond, cried out, "I'm hungry!"

Ann turned to Baker. "Mr. Foreman, isn't there something mysterious about your cook? Part of the time he speaks like a man of the world and part of the time like a rancher. I think he's playing a part, and playing it badly."

"What makes you think so?" asked Louis. "They say he's a bully rider."

"They ain't none better, miss," replied Baker, who began to look a little uneasy.

Ann pursued her point. "I think he's one of those romantic cowboys who have seen better days—perhaps an English nobleman in disguise."

Baker was always ready when a chance to get even with Raymond offered itself. He puckered his plump face into a frown of deep concern. "I guess you're some right, miss, but he ain't no English lord, I don't think. We never inquire very close into a man's pedigree out here if he can ride a cayuse and flip a gun. But he's American, all right, and a good cook."

"Is Cook his real name?"

Baker became cautious. "Did he say his name was Cook? If he did, that goes. I'm not in the habit of disputing him."

"No, he didn't tell his name, but he intimated that I might call him Cook. Your name is Raymond, isn't it?"

Baker was again slow to answer. "Did he intimate that my name was Raymond?"

Ann after looking at him in silence remarked gravely: "Of course, you're both having fun with us because we're from the east, and I don't think it quite nice in you."

Baker began to look distressed. "Oh, see here, miss, you mustn't think—you're all wrong! Why, we're delighted—we—you see"—

Ann turned to Louis. "Louis, you are living out one of Owen's stories this very minute. I want you to stay here until you can meet these people on their own ground." She faced Baker again. "Tell me more about this cook. He's a college man, and there's some hidden mystery, as the story books say. What brought him to this pass? Is he a fugitive from justice?"

Baker took a seat and appeared to ponder. "Well, now, I don't like to say. You see, it ain't safe to tell tales on Cook. If you'll swear not to breathe a word"—

"Hold up your hands, Louis, and swear!" cried Ann. "Of course we won't tell."

Baker settled into his chair. "You mustn't blame him till you hear the hull story, but he killed a feller back east, somewhere in Illinois."

Ann started melodramatically. "Really?"

Baker, pleased with his success, added, "Two of 'em, in fact."

Louis, wide eyed with interest, "What did he do it for?"

Baker, glowing with pleasure in the work of his own imagination, cut loose from his moorings. "It was this way: He was courting a girl—the daughter of a rich farmer—and her family was hot because Rob was poor, and her dad put another fellow on to tell lies about Rob's drinkin' and all that, and Rob met up with this feller and just naturally piped him full of soft nose bullets. That led him to seek higher altitudes, as the newspapers say. Now, that's the plain truth of the whole business, as I heard it."

Louis pursued the inquiry. "Who was the other man he killed?"

"The deppity sherf. Had to do that to get away."

Ann looked about. "You say he reads these books?"

"When he has time. He dotes on 'em."

"Do you read them?"

"Great Scott, no! I'd go to sleep over such things. 'The Boy's Own' is about my size."

Ann's tone was reflective. "That's queer. Mr. Barnett said you were a great reader."

Baker paled, then got red. He had walked into a clever little trap. He wriggled in his chair. "Did he say that? Well—I—I used to, but lately"—

Ann looked at him keenly and said calmly: "You also are an impostor. Your name isn't Raymond—you're not the foreman. You are all bandits and have stolen my cousin's ranch and are running it to suit yourselves. I believe you killed poor old Mr. Jones and his wife."

Louis sprang to his feet. "Ann, what do you mean?"

Baker threw up both hands. "Hold on! Don't shoot! I'll come down. I knew I couldn't keep the game going." He rose, and his manner changed. "Now listen. I'll tell you the square toed truth. It was my turn to cook, and Raymond—that's our boss—when he heard you was comin', knowin' I couldn't cook sour bran mash, says: 'Baker, you'll have to play boss while the company's here. I've got to toss up the bacon and prunes.' Now that's the fact, lady."

Ann, with conviction, turned to Louis: "Now I believe he's telling the truth. What is your name?"

"John Edwin Baker—Jack, the boys call me. I never had any other name, I'm sorry to say, and I came here from Kansas. I never killed anything bigger'n a coyote. I'm just a plain cow puncher at twenty-six per month."

Raymond, reappearing at the door, put them all into guilty confusion. His eyes were too keen to be withstood, and Ann's lashes fell for a moment as he offered the dipper. "Like a cool drink, lady?"

She recovered herself instantly. "Thank you, if you will be so kind."

Raymond threw a glance at Baker that propelled him through the doorway as palpably as a kick, then turned to Louis. "How does the grub go, youngster?"

"Bully!" replied the boy as he took up a spoonful of rice. His eyes followed the little figure of the rancher with joy.

Ann cut in with a grave face, belied by something in her voice. "I didn't suppose a foreman would stoop to cook."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

MUMMIES.

Some That Do Not Come From the Tombs of the East.

Many persons who have an interest in archaeology will be surprised to know that all the mummies to be seen in museums have not been taken from faraway tombs in Egypt or other eastern lands. Well preserved mummies have occasionally been taken from the ruins of the cliff dwellers in the mountain canyons of Arizona and in New Mexico and southern California. These mummies, though very poor specimens of the mummifying art, are considered great treasures by scientists, because they give the anthropologist a vague idea of the strange people who had the earliest civilization on the American continent. The best of them are almost entirely ignorant of who the Aztecs and Toltecs were, how they looked and lived and why they have been so entirely obliterated from the face of the earth.

The reason for this ignorance is found in the fact that no satisfactory remains of the dead Aztecs have been found. These people were cremationists, and they probably buried household effects with the dead, leaving little or nothing for the scientist to build a theory upon. Frequently a party of explorers in the valleys of Arizona will come upon sealed jars of burned bone dust.

Flowers In the Shade.

It is not unusual to hear a complaint that one's yard has no sun, and therefore flowers cannot be raised. But there are a large number of flowers that prefer shade to sunshine in summer. The begonia is of this class. Those who have north walls or fences may have great beauty during the summer by setting out the different kinds of begonias. Even the gloxinia, the achimenes and similar hothouse plants bloom splendidly throughout the summer season when grown on the north side of walls.

Keppel's Recipe For Health.

Meeting me in a bitter east wind one day in Piccadilly on his way to church, Keppel asked how Mr. Gladstone was. I told him he was very ill. "Ah," he said, "he is overnursed. If he would do as I do, climb up eighty steps, have a cold bath every day and sleep with his window always open, he would never be ill."—Memoir of Sir Henry Keppel.

Foot In It Again.

Mr. Brakes—Who is that sour looking dame over there? Mr. Grubbins—Sir, she has the misfortune to be my wife. Mr. Brakes—Oh—ah—er—indeed, sir, the misfortune is—er—all yours, I'm sure!—Cleveland Leader.

Possible to All.

She (philosophically)—Do you think it is easy to die? He (commonplace)—Well, a lot of very stupid people have managed to do it.

HAND GRENADES.

It Requires Nerve to Use Them as the Bulgarians Do.

Reginald Wyon in his book on "The Balkans From Within" writes from the interior of a blockhouse on the Turko-Bulgarian frontier: "We are shown captured bombs, heavy cylinders used for blowing up buildings and the dreaded hand grenade, whose short fuse is calmly lighted by a burning cigarette and hurled among the attacking Turks. A man must indeed have nerves of iron to do this deed. Picture a devoted handful of men surrounded by an overwhelming force of Turks, slowly but surely drawing nearer. Now they are a hundred yards away, fifty yards—luckily they shoot abominably—but it is too far to put the weight with effect.

"They must wait, though here and there a bullet fired at random thins out the little band. A rush—now. See! One coolly lights the fuse and quickly hurls it at the foe. He must make no mistake, his aim must be correct and his arm strong. A slip at the moment of throwing means his and his comrades' lives instead of the Turks', for the fuse is very short. But he has thrown it well. The Turks see it coming and halt in blind fear.

"A deafening crash, screams and yells of anguish, and the Turks break and run, shot down by the triumphant insurgents. Down into the valleys they fly to the nearest village, where their officers, anxious to save themselves a semblance of authority, order its massacre and pillage. And the next day we read of the extermination of another band."

CROWS HELP FOX HUNTERS

They Follow the Alert Birds When Reynard Is Roaming.

For some reason crows have seated and mortal antipathy to foxes. As crows build their nests in trees, where no fox can climb, and as an adult crow can escape from any fox by flying, we cannot understand why all crows seek to harass and destroy every fox they see. But we know this to be a fact, as we have watched the performances of crows when foxes were near many times.

We have seen crows watch for running foxes on such occasions for hours at a time, and as soon as a fox emerged from the thick woods and let a crow get a glimpse of its body every bird would hover over the running beast and peck at it and scold it and show marked evidence of a bitter hatred. Several fox hunters whom we know make a practice of following the alert crows when the foxes are roaming across back lots, claiming that the birds are fully as reliable as hounds and less trouble to maintain.—Bangor News.

The Tramp.

The curse of the man who will not work has always been with us. In Henry VIII.'s reign he was not allowed to beg the bread that belonged to honest folk, for a statute was made by which the old and impotent were granted licenses to beg, and any one found begging without one was soundly flogged and sent home to his own parish. In this way as many as a hundred in one day in Elizabeth's time were sent "back to the land." The begging license seems to work well enough abroad, where the row of authorized beggars is a familiar sight outside every church and where the halt and maimed are seldom seen anywhere else. The rise of the vagrant in England no doubt took place after the destruction of the monasteries and before any other relief giving body took their place.—London Chronicle.

Doomed.

"Emily, if William today asks you to marry him you must tell him to speak to me."

"Yes, mamma. But if he does not?"

"Then tell him I want to speak to him."—Fliegende Blatter.

Can it be true, as is so constantly affirmed, that there is no sex in souls? I doubt it exceedingly.—Coleridge.

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Train No. 8, leaves Manchester at 2:10 p. m. arrives at Oneida at 2:30 p. m. connects with C. G. W., No. 4, east bound, and No. 9, west bound. Returning leaves Oneida at 3:22 p. m. arrives at Manchester at 3:45 p. m.

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No 33 †5:53 p m	....Clipper....	No 34†8:55 a m
No 5 †8:40 a m	Local Express	No 6† 11:18 a m
No 3 2:40 p m	.Day Express.	No 4 3:38 a m
No 21 7:27 a m	Ft Dodge Ex	No 22 7:50 p m

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