

THE OLD PIONEER.

Old settlers' meeting, did you say? Yes, boys, I think I'll go. I'd like to talk of the good old days of thirty years ago. 'Tis a long time since I left the east and came away out west; I was a young man in those days and my health was of the best.

I bought my land at government price, and settled down to stay. Hauled some logs from the timber, seven or eight miles away. And built me a little cabin with windows looking south. A fire-place and a chimney, with a great wide-open mouth.

If you want to see that cabin, you can walk out to my farm; and a trifle side-ways at the corner of the road.

I covered it with prairie-hay to keep out rain and snow; and used it for a chicken shed a dozen years or so.

The roof is best in the middle, the chimney flat on the ground; the door on the hinges, and loosely swings around; the poor old empty hovel, so lonesome and forlorn. Doesn't look like the cozy house where all my boys were born.

We built the new one long ago, east of that heavy grove, and planted every one of the trees, and every one I love; maple and willow and cotton-wood; poplar and ash and pine; and you see what a forest I've raised for me and mine.

From my open door in the springtime you'll hear the plow's click. You can scarcely count the houses, the neighbors are so thick; a sea of teams are working in the level fields below; I didn't look like that, my boys, thirty years ago.

All the prairie was pasture then, you could scarcely see a house; I've traveled miles and miles at night, after my trusty cows. All the prairie was pasture, but they wandered far away; strange that, with feed so plenty, the creatures wished to stray!

There wasn't a sign of a village at the foot of the hill; a winding road ran over it—I've followed it oft to tell; it twisted and turned away from sloughs to go around the ridge; and when we came to the "Wapsie"—we crossed it without a bridge.

I was glad to see our busy town grow proudly up of course; and glad to see our daily mail brought in by an iron horse. I know, when the market is nearer, it helps us to save the dime; but once in while I long to go back to the good old times.

Strangers have come among us! They're welcome to be sure; friendship is always valuable if genuine and pure. But one by one our early friends are leaving us every year; and I miss the genial fellowship of the sturdy pioneer.

A real "Old Settlers' Meeting!" Get me my hat and cane; 'Tis a pity that my rheumatism makes me a trifle lame. The strongest feature of old age is that of "going lame." I'm thankful that I still have strength to go.—Emma Eggleston, in Western Rural.

main office in which was located the train runner of the division. At frequent intervals sharp cracks of lightning would reach through the room as they struck the arrester on the switch. But the man worked on totally oblivious of his surroundings.

"Suddenly I caught the drift of what he was sending out over the wire, and was horrified to learn that he was trying to manipulate the train orders so as to cause a wreck. Trains No. 47 and 48 passed each other about five miles up the road from my station and he was sending out orders with a cool, steady hand to train 47 to take a siding about ten miles east of Medicine Hat and to train 48 to pass 47 at the regular place. These orders would have thrown the two trains, which were heavily laden with passengers and express matter, together very near my station.

"I could easily hear the sander, and with his orders knew the would-be wrecker was an expert telegrapher and thoroughly familiar with train running. Every now and then the wrecker would raise his hand from the key as a more severe stroke of lightning would come in over the wire, but he was too intent upon his deadly work to desist.

"The tramp of heavy boots on the platform outside told me that the contemplated wreck was an organized scheme for robbing the express company and passengers. Muttered curses frequently came from the man at the key as his plans for wrecking the train would meet with obstacles in the shape of pertinent questions from operators up the line, who wouldn't follow the new order of things without fully understanding their import.

"My mind was in a horrible whirl and I frequently strained at my bindings to get my hands loose, but a savage curse from my guard warned me to be careful or my life would not be worth much. On account of the trains



"HOLD UP YOUR HANDS!"

being behind time I knew they would be pushed to their utmost speed by the engineers, and if they came together, the wreck would be a horrible one.

"The storm continued to increase in force, and peal after peal of thunder echoed over and above the little station. Still the wrecker at the key kept steadily at work weaving his web of destruction. Suddenly he called out in a voice of mingled satisfaction and devilish glee:

"Ah! that fixes the matter all right. Forty-seven has signed the orders at the water tank, and in ten minutes they'll go together. Tell the men to spread out up—"

"He never finished the sentence. A blinding flash at the switchboard, a shriek from the wrecker and the office appeared to be one mass of flame. My guard rushed from the building, and with a mighty effort I wrenched my hands free of the key. The little station was as dry as tinder, the oil from the trainmen's lamps added to the combustible nature of its make-up, and in a moment flames were breaking out in every part.

"With loud cries several of the wrecker's confederates dashed toward the little room to pull their leader out, but the heat drove them back; and as voices were heard up the country road coming toward the station they all disappeared in the darkness.

"A man named 'Humpty' Logan untied my legs, as my hands were useless on account of the great numbness occasioned by the tightness of the thongs, and I quickly explained the situation to him. He hunted up a lamp and dashed down the track and around the curve in one direction, while I swung the lantern upon the train coming down the straight piece of track to the station in the other direction.

"My lantern was not seen by the engineer, but the burning station acted as a danger signal and the train drew up at the station, the engineer totally ignorant of the danger they were escaping and only intent upon helping to subdue the flames.

"Twenty-five words explained the situation to the engineer and a group of passengers that gathered around, and as train 47 slowly rounded the curve from the east, substantiating my story, the organization of a prayer meeting there and then would have been an easy matter.

"The engineers of both trains with their conductors held a consultation and 48 finally backed to the next siding, followed by 47, and the tangle was straightened out.

"The next day the remains of the would-be wrecker were found in the ruins of the station, and the railroad company's physician, after holding an autopsy, declared that the man had only been stunned by the lightning and while unconscious had been smothered and then burned to a crisp.

"In all my experience with lightning that was the luckiest bolt that ever hugged a wire," said the narrator as he finished his tale, "and the lucky stars of the people on those two trains were undoubtedly in the ascendant on that terrible night."—Washington Star.

—Both Sides Admitted It.—Gargoyles—"The jury in the Swayback case must have been composed of very ignorant men." Gummy—"Why?" Gargoyles—"The lawyers on both sides asked the judge to instruct them."—Detroit Free Press.

FOREIGN GOSSIP.

—The house in which Christopher Columbus once lived, in Via Dritto, Ponticello, is being restored. It will be provided with a Latin inscription to the effect that "no house is more worthy of note than this, within whose walls Christopher Columbus passed his youth."

—The days of the giraffe are numbered. Where herds of seventy or eighty could be easily found ten years ago, nowadays nineteen is considered an unusually large number to find. Khama, an African chieftain, has taken the giraffe under his protection and is striving to preserve it from entire extinction.

—The work of installing the Jewish immigrants in the Argentine republic is being actively carried on. A branch railway is being constructed to what is known as the Maurice colony, where the Hebrews are being established, and two hundred families are comfortably settled and engaged in the cultivation of the soil.

—The mysterious subject of hypnotic influence has been agitating society in Calcutta. A young government clerk made several attempts recently to get married to the girl of his choice, but each time he was mysteriously overcome at the altar and thrown into a trance of stupor. He has made no less than six attempts, failing each time.

—In the winter in Norway all the vehicles are sledges—the carriages, cabs, carts and even the perambulators are on runners. Outside the town, where the road is not trodden hard, it is impossible to walk without the snowshoes of the country. These are called "ski" and are long wooden planks, measuring nearly nine feet for a full grown man. The wood for ski is not sawn, but split with the grain, so that they never break and can bear a tremendous strain.

—A notion said to be prevalent in London is that of temporarily exchanging housekeeping, as it were. Just what benefit accrues is not stated, unless it is to indulge for a month in delicious entrees at the expense of poor sauces, while your friend with your treasure is undergoing a vice versa experience. Naturally such exchanges must be carried on between establishments connected on the same plan, or trouble will promptly begin on reinstatement.

—Women are not permitted to sit in the body of the Temple church of London, because many hundreds of years ago the seats were reserved for the monkish knights, for whom the church was erected. Another story, illustrating the tenacity of custom in European communities, is that of the sentinel at a certain point in a public garden in London. Nobody knew why he was stationed at that particular point until some one, delving in old records, discovered that generations before a sentinel had been placed there to warn people of a newly-painted bench.

—An interesting discovery has been made in a deep railway cutting at Andresy, near Paris, France, where the workmen ran upon a huge Merovingian cemetery of the sixteenth century. As many as six hundred tombs have already been uncovered, yielding a hitherto unheard-of mass of carved sarcophagi, knives, spears, vases, ornaments and pottery of unique shapes and styles of decoration. It is recalled now that the tiny hamlet of Andresy, in the generation succeeding the introduction of Christianity, was an important missionary center.—Philadelphia Ledger.

THE DAYS OF HOMESPUN.

Our Grandmothers Span and Wave and Knot and Kestled and Embroidered.

In the days of homespun four ounces of lint cotton, or a half pound of lock wool, was a day's stint in spinning, though a clever spinner could easily do twice as much. Wool was often colored before spinning—dyed black or red, then carded with white. The resultant thread, steel or red mixed, was wonderfully soft and harmonious in color. Old silk carefully reaveled, then carded with white wool or cotton, made the silk mixed that was such a favorite for the long stockings worn with knee breeches, as well as for homespun gowns. They were woven in checks, stripes and cloudings. One of the prettiest was dice-cloth—a kind of basket weave, of alternate white and black or gray threads, thirteen to the group.

It was troublesome to weave—a thread too many made a balk in the pattern. Children and servants had simple checks in blue, or coppers and white. Linseys for winter wear were gorgeous in green and scarlet and black and blue. Dyeing was part of the home work, as well as weaving and spinning. From walnut hulls, bark and root came twenty shades of brown. Green walnuts and sumach berries gave a beautiful fast black that did not stain the wearer. Hickory yellow; swamp leaves gave a glowing yellow; swamp maple, a blackish purple; sugar maple, a light leather tint, and oak bark, set with coppers, a handsome grayish color. In fact, the skilled dyer could get twenty colors from the woods and fields.

Except for flannels, carpets and blankets, the warp was usually of flax or cotton. A very pretty carpet had half the warp of coarse wool doubled—a strand of green and one of brown. In weaving, when the wool came up, a very fine thread caught and held it almost invisibly. Beaten up thick, the effect was that of a moony, clouded Turkey fabric. Other carpets were woven in stripes or plain, like webbing, the woolen wool threads passing over and under the cotton warp, two to a size.

Size was estimated by the number of threads that laid side by side, made cloth the regulation yard wide. The coarsest was four hundred. From that it went up and up with hardly a limit except that of the spinner's skill and patience. There was scarcely anything they couldn't weave on the looms—jersey and serge, and cotton and linen, house linen, bed linen, blankets and counterpanes. The counterpane was homespun high-water mark. Woolen ones had usually the figure in colors skipped up on a white or blue ground. Those of cotton were left white and bleached till they dazzled the eyes. Of some easy patterns a clever woman could weave eight yards in a day.

Of honeycomb, huckaback and diamond diaper three yards was a good day's work. Fancy patterns were more tedious. The crown of skill and patience was knotted cloth. The weave was perfectly plain, but at intervals of an inch a big soft cord was woven in and pulled up in little knots all along its length. Over the body of the cloth they formed regular diamonds. For the center they made an elaborate arabesque design. Down one side of the spread the maker generally drew them up to shape her initials, with either the date of making in Roman letters, or her husband's name opposite.

There was room, and to spare. Beds, in those days, stood four feet from the floor. Counterpanes were three yards by four, without the fringe, which was either woven with dates and initials in the deep open heading or knitted in open lozenge pattern to which deep tassels were attached. It fell over a valance, also homespun, and was either fringed or edged with setted points at the bottom.

Weaving was not the sum of housewifery in that era. The good dames knew as much of embroidery as their fathers had left behind her a monumental piece of work, in which can be found no less than nineteen different stitches, many of them among the rarest and most difficult known. A piece of work somewhat similar is a stuffed counterpane. The fabric—also homespun—was taken double and stitched into flowers and leaves with coarse linen thread. Then, through slits in the under side, the figures were stuffed with lint cotton, the medallion center and the stemless roses standing above the plain surface.

The netting needle and stirrup filled up many a day. The bed was the piece de resistance in furnishing them. It was a tall four-poster, and, besides counterpane and valance, had netted curtains and netted points edging the long pillow and bolster cases. Window curtains were netted, too, besides edgings and fringes for all kinds of household articles. In particular the "toilets" that fell over the high, square bureaus had often a netted fall half a yard deep around them. In addition, caps, ruffles, purses and schuss were netted. The latter were called dress handkerchiefs, and folded high about the throat over the low cut gowns. On them the netter lavished her choicest art. Sometimes the mesh was as fine almost as bobbinet. Netted caps were high in favor, but the square with long ends was accounted better for young women. Sometimes they had fringe or tassels about the edge, or even a ruffle of the net with a rug pattern run in. The handsomest finish was embroidery. For that the net was tacked smooth over cloth, the figures were wrought through both, then the under fabrics were cut away, leaving something closely approaching old rose point.

The women who practiced these arts made tating, knit lace, stockings, mittens, tufted gloves, overboots, comforters, garters, galloways, and many things besides. Before their works folded, it might be well if some collector should gather up and keep safe for later generations a representative array of the homespun masterpieces.—N. Y. Sun.

DOMESTIC CONCERNS.

—Crude oil is excellent to wipe the woodwork and furniture with, according to a painter. Wipe off with a clean cloth.

—Cannelon: Mince and season with salt and pepper. Add a beaten egg and about one-half as much fine bread crumbs as there is meat. Make moist enough with gravy to shape into a roll, and bake one-half hour in the oven. Serve with tomato sauce poured around it.—Good Housekeeping.

—Dutchess Potatoes: Take two cups of mashed potatoes, add a gill of hot milk and a tablespoonful of butter, season with salt and pepper. Beat the potatoes rapidly until they are perfectly white and light. Then form them into little balls; stand them in a greased baking-pan, brush them over with milk, brown in the oven and serve immediately.—N. Y. World.

—To Can Quinces: Allow just as many tart apples as you have quinces; rub the down off, peel, quarter and core the quinces, cook in cold water until tender, prepare the apples, and weigh them and the cooked quinces together. Make a sirup with the juice the quinces were cooked in, and half a pound of sugar to each pound of fruit. When hot, put in and cook slowly, until the apples are tender; then slip into cans and seal. Save the cores and peelings to make jelly of.—Housekeeper.

—Most housekeepers keep themselves provided with rubber gloves, to protect the hands while engaged in any light housework. A woman who used hers to wash dishes in was chagrined to find that a pair of the best would last only ten days or a fortnight. The dealer told her that it was the grease in the water, which ate through the rubber like an acid. She was careful afterward to use one of the mop dishcloths with wooden handles, and her gloves resumed their former period of service.—N. Y. Times.

—Pressed Chicken: Take an ordinary-sized chicken, and after dressing it boil it in just enough water to cover it well, until it is thoroughly done. Then take the skin off and pick the meat from the bones, keeping the white and dark meat separate. Chop the meat fine, season it with salt and pepper and put it into a crock or any sort of mold, putting first a layer of white and then a layer of dark meat until it is all used. Boil down the water in which the chicken was cooked until it makes a small cupful. Pour this over the chicken and push it to serve in slices. This is nice for lunches or for cold meat for supper.—Demorest's Magazine.

—Sun Preserved Fruits: For strawberries, sprinkle a scant pint of sugar over a pint of the berries after they are hulled and placed on shallow plates or platters. Set them in the hot sun and cover with glass or netting. At night keep up the drying by placing them in a warm, but not hot, stove. In two or three days the juice will have stiffened and the fruit become practically dried and transparent. They may now be placed away in glass bottles or in self-sealing jars and kept for winter use. Blackberries, raspberries, cherries, etc., are all said to be nice if dried in this way and are thought by many to be more delicate than the canned or cooked ones.—Orange Judd Farmer.

—Clear Soup: Five pounds lean meat cut from the lower part of the round, five quarts cold water. Bring to a boil very slowly and skim carefully for the first one or two hours. A little salt will help the scum to rise. Let it simmer slowly from eight to ten hours. About two hours before straining add one onion, one carrot, a little parsley and celery tops, all cut in small pieces. Six whole cloves, stick of cinnamon and three whole allspice. Salt and pepper to taste. Strain through a cheese cloth, set in a colander and let it stand all night and skim all the fat off carefully in the morning. If there is a bone in the meat do not let the butcher crack it or it will make the soup muddy. This quantity may be used for two dinners.—Old Homestead.

—Drying Macaroni.

The drying of the macaroni is the most difficult and delicate part of the manufacture, and depends much on the state of the atmosphere. It is first dried in the open air, whether in the sun or shade, depending on the temperature and dryness of the atmosphere, perhaps from half an hour to three hours. The time also depends somewhat on the size of the macaroni. It is then carried to close, damp room to rest, where it remains, perhaps, twenty-four hours. If the room is not sufficiently damp, it must be kept so by artificial means—by small steam jets or by the evaporation of water. It is sometimes covered with cloths during this stage to prevent too rapid drying. This rest is a retarding process, and is intended to prevent the surface of the macaroni from drying too fast, or as fast as it naturally would, and to allow the interior to harden. If the macaroni is not put to rest at this stage, it is liable to crumble or split. When properly rested, the succeeding stages of drying proceed without difficulty.—Drake's Magazine.

—How Not to Find Fault.

One who was a guest at a dinner party given by Dr. Whewell, the famous master of Trinity college, Cambridge, relates the following: The master was finding fault, in the presence of the assembled company, with an old favorite servant who was waiting at table, for some act of omission, when the man quietly interposed with the inquiry: "Had we not better talk of this, sir, when you and I are alone?" This made Dr. Whewell look very foolish, and he afterward said that he felt at once that he was wrong and the servant right. This is an illustration of one of the ways in which we should not find fault. There are times when most people are in duty bound to find fault; but their fault-finding has either no effect at all, or one the opposite of that which they intended, so badly is it done. To find fault well is a fine art, requiring a considerable amount of tact, judgment and, above all, sympathy.—Detroit Free Press.

PITH AND POINT.

—Miserly—"I have been so poor at times that I would have sold my soul for a quarter." Cynicus—"That showed a sharp business sense."—N. Y. Herald.

—She—"Darling, do you doubt me that you hate to have me go away to the seashore?" He—"No, that's not it—but I'm not sure of myself."—N. Y. Herald.

—Young Mother (proudly)—"Everybody says the baby looks like me." Bachelor Brother (amazed)—"The spiteful things don't say that to your face, do they?"—N. Y. Weekly.

—"I have just gained your mother's consent, Clara dear." "But, Mr. Swift, I am so young, I—really—" "I don't think it will make any difference, as I am to be your stepfather."

—"The trouble with Tommy is that he is shallow." "Tommy? Nonsense. If he had ever tried to fill Tommy with champagne you'd have changed your mind about that."—Truth.

—"Hello, Jones, what are you doing with your coat buttoned up to your chin? Are you sick?" Jones—"Hush, don't mention it; I have on a tie that my wife selected."—Chicago Inter-Ocean.

—"How did you like the comedy?" "It's better than any I've seen for a long time. My husband was so carried away with it that he failed to keep his appointment with the 'man.'"—N. Y. Herald.

—Mrs. Grimley—"Our loaman is very strong. He carried 500 pounds of ice from the street to-day clear into our cellar. Isn't that wonderful?" Mr. Grimley—"No, not if he weighed the ice himself."—Boston News.

—Ethel—"Every time Mr. Doodly calls papa is inclined to make light of it." Her Mamma—"Yes; and, on the contrary, I notice you are inclined to turn down the gas. I rather prefer your father's way."—Boston Post.

—"You should always weigh your words," said the lady who lives in Boston. "I suppose so," replied her brother from the west, "but I should think some of yours would require hay scales at the very least."—Washington Star.

—Caruthers—"I'm afraid she's been engaged before." Waiter—"What makes you think so?" Caruthers—"Because I gave her the ring a week ago and she hasn't tried to write her name on a pane of glass with it yet."—N. Y. Herald.

—"So you have tramped all the way from New York?" "Yes, sir." "Couldn't you get employment there?" "No. I came pretty near having a place in a Bowery restaurant." "What prevented you?" "I couldn't learn the language."—Washington Star.

—Needed Cheering—Husband—"Smikeson's wife is away, and I'm going over there this evening to cheer him up." Wife—"Why don't you bring him here?" Husband—"Well—er—I'm not feeling very well, and need a little cheering up myself."

—Master Bobby's papa is the happy owner of a hatching machine. The other day as the former was watching a chick energetically breaking its way through the shell, he inquired: "I see how he gets out, but how ever did he go to work to get in?"

—She was from Boston. She remarked proudly: "No member of my family was ever known to break his word." "No," replied her husband, "although some of the words were big enough to stand breaking several times."—Washington Star.

—Assistant—"I'm sorry to say, sir, that another genuine poem got in by mistake this month." Magazine Editor—"Heavens! You're mad to say it! Any news from our readers?" Assistant—"One sudden death and six prostrated by the shock."—Atlanta Constitution.

—Lady (meeting little boy who is crying)—"What is the matter, little boy?" Little Boy—"My mother whipped me this morning 'cause I didn't keep my temper, and now my teacher just whipped me 'cause I didn't get rid of it, and I don't know what to do. Brool hoo!"

SAM'S ALTERNATIVE.

How a Father Brought His Recreant Son to Ties.

A prompt action and a few seasonable words at the beginning of a young man's career often produce a lasting effect on his after life. Many years ago, when Samuel Phillips, of Andover, Mass., afterward lieutenant-governor of the state, was a student at Harvard college, owing to some boyish freak he left the college and went home.

His father, a grave man, of sound mind, strict judgment and few words, was greatly disturbed by the seeming lack of stability in his son's character. After learning the facts he deferred expressing any opinion until the next day.

At breakfast he said, addressing his wife: "My dear, have you any cloth in the house that would be suitable for making Sam a frock and trousers?" "Yes, indeed," she replied. "Well, then," said the old gentleman, "you may follow me, my son."

As they approached the common he ventured to ask: "What are you going to do with me, father?" "Oh," replied the old gentleman, apparently roused from a pleasant reverie, speaking in a cheerful tone, "I am going to bind you apprentices to the blacksmith over yonder. You can take your choice," added Mr. Phillips, firmly, as he saw the look of consternation on his son's face. "Return to college and stay there, or you must work." "I'd rather return," replied Samuel, meekly. "Very well," said the old gentleman, turning toward home immediately.

His son did return to college, confessed his fault, applied himself to study, and became a much-respected man. And his father never regretted the day when he offered Samuel such an unpleasant alternative, although he often admitted that he "might have been a little 'pat to it' if Sam had elected to follow the blacksmith's trade."

But he would have held to his word in any case.—Youth's Companion.