

A BACHELOR'S REVERIE.

Oh, a home is a terrible handicap
To a soul that would fain be free;
It has captured many a prisoned chap,
But it never shall shackle me.
Instead of the cares I would have to face,
In the same old rounds every day,
Oh, give me a room in a lodging place
And a lunch at a chance cafe.

I never need hurry to catch my ear,
For I haven't a place to go,
And early or late no meal I mar,
For I'm dining alone, you know.
The hands of the clock I never chase,
For I drift in an easy way,
Since I sleep in a transient lodging place
And lunch at a chance cafe.

A brother of mine—I loved him well—
Went wrong in his early years,
For he married and bought him a place to
dwell,
(Oh, the thought of it brings me tears)
And there he has lived—what a pitiful
case—
And there he will likely stay,
While I still sleep in a lodging place
And lunch at a chance cafe.

I sometimes think of his wife and child
And the vine at his cottage door,
While I dream of the perfect lips that
smiled—
But they smile for me no more.
And I muse: "If the saint with the angel
face
Had answered me 'yes' that day,
Would I sleep in a transient lodging place
Or lunch at a chance cafe?"
—Nixon Waterman, in L. A. W. Bulletin.

AUNT SERENA'S SALT.

BY CHARLES M. HARGER.



HAT makes the trunk so heavy?" asked Paul, as he lifted the old-fashioned leather-covered box from the wagon at the ranch house.

"Gold and precious stones, likely. You know folks are all rich down in New England," replied Theo.

"Aunt Serena wouldn't bring those."

"Of course she wouldn't," put in that lady herself, coming from the dwelling which was to be her home for a year. "I guess I know better than to bring anything like that out here—why don't you have a board walk instead of a dirt path to the house?"

"This isn't Connecticut, aunt; it's Texas, an' mighty near the Panhandle," replied Paul. "If you visit the Texans, do as the Texans do; you know the proverb."

"It is not a proverb, and you did not quote it correctly; but hurry in with the trunk."

So the heavy burden was, with much straining of muscles on the part of the two nephews, carried inside; but the youths' curiosity remained unsatisfied.

"I've brought this 20 miles in a wagon to-day, and I ought to be told what's in it," insisted Paul.

So they waited while Aunt Serena unpacked.

Dresses, aprons, a few keepsakes—out the articles came, all light of weight and furnishing no explanation of the mystery. But before the bottom was reached the lid slammed shut and no more was to be seen.

"Mighty funny she's so particular," commented Paul, as Theo and himself sat on their ponies the following day, a couple of miles from the cabin, watching the big cattle herd. "I'm going to find out, an' right soon, too."

"Make a raid on the trunk?"

"Don't know; but I guess so. Father and mother are going to take her over to the school director's this afternoon. I'll make a hunt then."

And he did. When he came back his face was a study.

"What d'ye find?" asked Theo.

"Couldn't guess it in a thousand years."

"Gold, silver, iron, horseshoes, beans, bullets?"

"Your trail ain't even warm—it's salt."

"What for?"

"How do you suppose I know? I'm goin' to ask her."

But Paul did not need to ask. Aunt Serena suspected that her belongings had been searched, and forestalled any comments by remarking at the breakfast table: "It's the purest, finest salt I could get—a hundred pounds of it. I've lived too long within smelling distance of salt water to risk having things fresh. Even for a visit I wanted to be prepared for emergencies, and besides, I suppose you use stock salt in lumps here."

Paul admitted that she was partly right, and from that time the ranch table was not without the flourlike, refined product of the eastern salt works. The sack was set inside the storeroom door, and was the subject of many a joke in the family as well as among the herders.

Even the sturdy nephews were not above referring to the "freshness" that their aunt expected to see in the south-west.

"But then it's just what you'd allow to find a school-teacher doin'," said Paul. His contempt for school-teachers was, however, largely assumed, and he often wished he were capable of teaching the neighborhood school, as his aunt was doing. He longed for her knowledge of books every time he saw

her crossing the prairie to the sod schoolhouse, a mile or more from the ranch, where all the settlers' children gathered.

But soon something else was of more pressing importance. The grass on the range was becoming short, and the severe drought had prevented the starting of a new growth.

"We must move the stock down nearer the ranchhouse," ordered the chief herder; and the men allowed the cattle to graze closer to the corral.

Five thousand head of Texas cattle! A little sea of horns, thin, nervous faces, sharp backs and switching tails—it was a difficult band to manage, an army that skill alone could control. For man or horse singly they had neither respect nor fear; but a man on a horse could rule them, provided there were enough men on horses.

As the hot summer days merged into autumn no rain came to start the grass—something unexampled in the history of the ranch. Two or three times the herders found it necessary to drive the cattle several miles to water; but the grass near the ranch house was largest, because through the earlier part of the season the stock had been kept at some distance from the home headquarters.

"It seems like being outside of civilization," said Aunt Serena, coming home from her school one day and looking out over the vast level plains, on which were feeding the excitable "long-horns."

"Never mind," said Paul, who came in just then, clad in his herder costume; "if we don't have any bad luck, and get the stock to market all right, it'll take me into civilization. I've a share in the herd, and I'm going to college."

Paul, indeed, was growing exceedingly nervous over the cattle's condition. A few weeks longer of short feed would, he feared, make them unsalable at the high prices on which he had counted.

The next day there was another drive to water, and a tiresome one it was. Twice the herd broke into an awkward trot, and it required all the herders' ingenuity and efforts to restrain it.

The crackling of a stick, the call of a quail, the sudden starting of a jack-rabbit—nothing seemed too trivial for the cattle in their present condition.

"Watch 'em mighty close, boys," was the chief herder's order, when, after much difficulty, all were safely returned to the "house range," as the feeding grounds near home were called.

And they were watched close. All day an endless procession of herders rode round and round the restless creatures, turning back the stragglers.

On the second day the atmosphere seemed more oppressive than in weeks. It was "headache weather," according to Aunt Serena, and she found the mile walk to the schoolhouse a wearisome one.

"I shall dismiss school early this afternoon," she remarked, on leaving home. "The children can't stand it to keep such long hours. I've invited the First reader class to come to tea with me. There are eight of them."

Theo and Paul saw their aunt as she walked slowly through the close-pastured bunch grass, far on the opposite side of the ranch house.

"I wish," said the latter, anxiously, "that aunt wouldn't carry that bright yellow parasol. I'm afraid it will make us trouble some day."

"Nonsense!" was the reply; "we always have the herd on this side of the range while she goes and comes. She can't be hurt."

"But the critters might stampede on us."

"What's going to make 'em? Besides, it ain't likely they'll go in that direction, anyhow."

But Theo did not know as much about the ways of cattle as did his older brother; nor was he animated by the same personal interest in the herd's welfare.

It was three o'clock when the brothers met again.

"Say, Theo," were Paul's words as he rode closely to his companion. "I'm awful thirsty. I wish you'd ride over to the house and bring out a can of water. The cattle are a little quieter now, and I'll watch for both of us."

Without a word Theo was off, glad of a respite, and enjoying the brisk canter to which he spurred his willing pony.

Nor did he lessen his pace on his return. Racing swiftly along he approached Paul and the herd, carrying the can of water and thrilled by the exercise of the half-mile ride.

As he drew near the pony braced itself for the sudden stopping; but before the halt came there was an accident. Into one of the numerous gopher holes, which dot the prairies of the west, went one of his horse's forefeet.

In an instant Theo was hurled headlong from the deep-seated saddle and went, as did the pony, rolling on the sod. The water can broke as it fell, and the clink of its smashing could be heard for a long way.

Paul heard it, and pressing the spur to his pony's flank, hurried toward the victims of the mishap. But that was not all. Before Theo and his horse had regained their feet, each bruised and limping, every grazing steer had lifted its branching-horned head and was staring at the unwonted spectacle. Then, as if moved by a common impulse, every animal took a few steps away. A loud bellow from some of the more powerful ones followed, and the walk of the herd became a trot. The alarm increased as they moved—the

trot was a canter—the canter a run; and by the time Paul had turned from inspecting the fallen boy and horse the dreaded stampede was in progress.

The young man's face grew white, even through the generous coat of sunburn, as he fiercely urged his pony forward. Other herders were likewise riding fast; but the mass of horns and hairy backs was like an avalanche, plunging ahead, regardless of what was before, blind to any danger, to all intents an unreasoning, insane mob.

The herd was headed toward the ranch house and would go near it, then on across the path leading to the school. It all passed through Paul's mind in an instant, and, mingling with the thought of injury to the cattle, was that of danger to the school children or their teacher. The ranch house hid his view of the familiar path at first; but as he pushed ahead in a frantic hope of being able to turn the leaders, on whom he was rapidly gaining, it was fully revealed.

Midway between house and school, directly in the course of the now infuriated beasts, was a group, the very sight of which thrilled the hurrying rider. In its midst was a woman carrying a yellow parasol, and around her were some little folks—not many; but to Paul's alarmed gaze it seemed a multitude.

Aunt Serena and her tiny party of tea guests had just become aware of what was occurring a half mile away. They could hear and almost feel the thousands of heavy hoofs beating on the dry prairie. The shouting cowboys, the bellowing steers, the dust—it was all a frightful menace. Uncertain which way to turn, and deeming it impossible to escape from the wide sweep on which the cattle were coming, they simply stood silent and terrified. But as they waited they saw one rider leave the group of half dozen herders whose ponies had carried them near the leaders of the herd.

"Paul is deserting us!" passed through Aunt Serena's mind, and her heart sank as she spoke the words more to herself than to the children.

It seemed so. Reining his pony aside he was riding like mad toward the ranch house, which was but a little out of the herd's course. Theo saw it, as he stood helpless beside his lamed



DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF THE ONCOMING HERD.

pony, and wondered. The other herders saw it and yelled frantically to him to return. But Paul heeded them not. Like a flash into his mind had come the words of an old cattleman who had given him advice in the art of managing a herd.

"Yeh kin do more with a bunch of cattle by their likes than their dislikes," had been a part of his philosophy; "an I 'spect they're a good bit like humans in that."

Already Paul was near the ranch house, and the anxious watchers saw him stop his horse with a severity which nearly brought the faithful creature to its knees, dismount, dash in through the open door, reappear with something in his arms, leap to the saddle and race pell-mell, fast as the pony's feet could carry him, toward the head of the herd again.

The cattle were running no faster than at the start, but neither had the cowboy's efforts been able to check them. Moreover, the angry eyes of the leaders appeared to have been fascinated by the yellow parasol which shone brightly in the sunlight, and were taking their way, followed by the whole frantic mass, directly toward it. In the air was an odor of bruised horns, and in the track of the herd was more than one struggling beast which had fallen in the race and been trampled into death by its companions.

But Paul was well in advance of even the foremost, and a gap of many rods intervened between even himself and the school party.

"Git! Prince—Git!" he was saying, as he leaned low on his pony's neck and pressed the spurs harder and harder on the steaming flanks.

Then suddenly the watchers saw Paul turn sharply and ride directly in front of the oncoming herd, scarce a dozen yards away.

But they saw something more. As he rode a fine, white stream poured from his saddlebow, and a flour-like trail was left behind him, showing clearly on the brown grass and barren spots of earth.

"What crazy thing!" began the chief herder, who had been far in the rear but was now near the front.

The cowboy riding next him did not wait for the conclusion of the sentence.

His quick mind had solved the problem, and above the roar the chief caught the single word, "Salt!"

Before the first of the cattle had reached the white line Paul was across the herd's track and was trimming to come back further on. But it was unnecessary. As the first rank reached the seemingly slight barrier a familiar and appetizing odor reached the distended nostrils. Forgetting their impatience, the strong beaves slackened their pace. The crowding hundreds behind pushed them forward, but these, too, caught the scent and in a moment the whole herd was hooking and striving for a taste of the animals' greatest luxury. Paul, seeing what would happen rode on, still doling out the salt until he had a line long enough to engage the greater part of the herd and prevent any being crushed in the throng. As he looked back and saw the lately stampeded brutes, sinking here and there to their knees to lick up the feast he had spread, he laughed aloud.

"The old cattleman," he thought, "was right. It was their 'likes' that caught 'em."

"Hope you won't feel sorry for the loss of your fine salt, Aunt Serena," remarked Theo, roguishly, the following day.

"No! at all," was the reply; "but I shall send for some more at once, and Paul can't pour it out as he did the other. This kind of weather will settle that," looking from the window at the driving rain which had come at last. "Perhaps it was lucky that we had a dry spell, after all—so that the salt was not damp."—N. Y. Independent.

ISLAND BEING WASHED AWAY.

Famous Summer Resort Off Virginia Coast Doomed.

Cobb's Island, a famous summer resort and life-saving station, six miles off the Virginia coast in the Atlantic ocean, seems to be doomed to annihilation by the action of the sea. A terrific storm swept the island last October, wrecking the main hotel and flooding the island, making a trench across its center. Since then the disintegration has been steady, until recently, when the high tides submerged the island and washed nearly all the buildings into the surf. The hotel, church and a number of cottages have been destroyed and the life-saving station and a few cottages are all that is left. The captain of the life-saving station, from whom this information comes, says there is no longer any doubt that the island is doomed and only a phenomenal action of the wind and waves could possibly restore it. The life-saving station, which was recently moved back from the encroaching sea, is now less than 200 feet from the waves.

American Brevity.

A rich American presented himself one day at the studio of Sir John Millais, and without preamble began at once to speak.

"Sir," he said, "I wish to take a present back to my wife. She says she would like to have my portrait painted by the very best artist in the country. I have been told that you are the man. When can I have a sitting?"

"I am at present very busy," said Millais.

"So am I," was the reply.

"But I am a very expensive artist."

"How much do you charge?"

A large price was named.

"Shall I give you a check now?"

"Not at all," said Millais, "I merely mentioned it to prevent misunderstandings."

"How many sittings do you require?"

"Five or six, at the least."

"If you can do it in fewer so much the better, for I am a very busy man and my time is valuable."

Millais enjoyed the manner in which his own plea of being busy had been met, and agreed to paint him.—Good Words.

A Burst of Activity.

The Turk, as a rule, is not energetic, but he is capable of sudden bursts of activity. A writer gives an illustration:

He was going home late one night in Constantinople, when a man ran by him pursued by four zaptiehs. Directly they caught the man, they belabored him vigorously with the butt ends of their guns. The Englishman interfered:

"If he is a thief, why not take him to prison, and let him be tried properly? Don't half kill the man without a trial."

"O effendi," said the spokesman of the party, "we don't mind his being a thief. We're only hitting him because of the trouble he gave us to run after him!" And that is an offense which the average Turk never forgives.—Cassell's Magazine.

The End of Grief.

A young woman, according to a contemporary, was describing to one of her friends a great chagrin which she had undergone. "I was just almost killed by it," she said; "I could have cried myself to death." "Did you cry?" asked the other. "No; I was just getting ready to when the dinner bell rang."—Youth's Companion.

For Herself Alone.

She—Do you love me for myself alone, dearest?
He—Of course I do. You don't suppose I want your mother about all the time, do you?—Judy.

—A West Palm Beach note says, soberly, that a Chicago man caught a 62 3/4-pound Jewish on the ocean pier.

FINE WHITE UNDERWEAR.

Some of the Pretty Things Noted in the Dry Goods Shops.

The finest articles of underwear are made of batiste, nainsook, linen lawn, dimity and silk, and are so daintily trimmed and tucked and hemstitched, so elaborately ornamented with fine laces, embroidery and satin ribbon as to be well-nigh irresistible to the feminine observer. These command extravagant prices, but they can be imitated at home at comparatively small expense. The cambric and muslin garments with trimmings of Hamburg embroidery can be obtained at such reasonable prices as to make it hardly worth while to fashion them at home.

The latest fancy is to have a set composed of old pieces instead of having the trimming match, but some beautiful sets are still shown.

In night robes there is almost as much elegance at the present time as in evening dresses, with the exception that none of them open much below the neck. The common style is the medieval, which is cut low and square across just below the collar, fastened by a single flat pearl button on the left shoulder, and then falls to the ground. The sleeves are rather balloon and are gathered in snugly at the wrist, from which they break into a full of lace. They are also made high-necked, with elbow sleeves, lace ruffles, collars and epaulets of all descriptions, banded with lace insertion and edged with lace ruffles.

One design in the high-necked gown was developed in nainsook and valenciennes lace. The shallow, round yoke was composed entirely of the insertion, the standing collar being formed of a band of pink satin ribbon overlaid with the lace. A deep flounce of rows of insertion and lawn edged with lace finished the yoke, and there were elbow sleeves ending in a lace frill. Another design was cut with a low, round neck, finished with the new slashed collar, which was edged all about with a deep lace frill and tied with blue satin ribbons. An exquisitely dainty gown in dimity was cut a l'empire, the square neck edged with open eyelet embroidery and ruffles of embroidered dimity.

White skirts for evening wear are made of fine lawn in umbrella fashion, with one or two wide lace-trimmed flounces yet one over the other. More serviceable ones are developed in cambric and Hamburg embroidery, which will survive frequent visits to the laundry. The short skirt often comes in combination with chemises or corset cover. The empire chemise is worn over the corset and answers the purpose of both corset cover and skirt. An extremely dainty affair in this style was made of the finest nainsook and valenciennes. The little empire waist was formed of several rows of insertion and lawn, gathered into a band of insertion over cloth. Instead of sleeves this filmy affair was fastened over the shoulders and white satin ribbons tied in a bow-knot. The skirt portion was trimmed about the bottom with a flounce of lawn and lace.

The latest design in corset covers is cut low and round, and trimmed about the neck with points of the lawn, edged with lace, simple but dainty. An elaborately trimmed waist would ruin the fit of a dress. The drawers are fashioned in umbrella style, or simply made very wide, and come in all grades.—N. Y. Sun.

WOMAN'S IMPULSIVENESS.

It Often Proves to Be Responsible for Her Mistakes.

If a thoughtful woman were asked: "What is the greater curse of your sex?" she might well answer: "Impulse." It is responsible for almost all the mistakes made by the good-hearted among us. May it not be safely said that a few minutes' thought before speech or action would prevent most fatal blunders? Many of us are in positive bondage to our bird-like quickness to feel, to show our feeling, to retort, or to respond. If we are hurt we must immediately "give ourselves away," as the phrase runs, if not by bitter speech, at least by look and manner; yet reflection frequently brings the keenest regret for the lost dignity, the betrayed secret. Many a one has wrecked her own happiness for the want of the patient stoicism which would have led her to stand aside for awhile watching events until they brought with them her opportunities. Even when we are happy it is not always well to let the bright stream bear us away rudderless. The impulsive manifestations of affection, the hasty proposal of marriage, the hastier acceptance—have they never proved the beginnings of misery? Or has a rash word never sundered true lovers, true friends? If these things are true it is likewise true that the fault in the commencement has been that of feminine impulsiveness. The defect is a generous one, and, therefore, commoner with us than it is with men, so that it handicaps us unfairly in the struggle of life. And truly it is a weary task to be always "with a host of pretty maxims preaching down" one's heart. But we must do it; either we must rule feeling or feeling will rule us. It is a good servant, but a bad master. Our loving women's hearts are like the fire of the domestic hearth—the light of the home when duly controlled warming the whole house, but if the fire be not kept in its subordinate place what a conflagration ensues!—N. Y. Commercial Advertiser.