In the Irrigated Land

AS Mrs. Clawson entered the kitchen, carrying a pan piled high with new potatoes, she threw an impatiently sharp glance toward her husband. He was standing near a chair, his hand resting weakly on its back.

"You kin talk to me forever, Hi Clawson, 'bout that water; but if I had fifty springs 'stead o' fifteen and the dry season lasted twelve months 'stead o' six, not a drop, not a solit'ry drop, would Mary Long git from one o' my trenches. She's no friend o' mine—"

"She wuz back East, mother—" Clawson choked at his own boldness. "Her veg'tables is all dryin' up—her boarders is leavin' on ev'ry downstage—"

A faint red showed itself under Mrs. Clawson's dark, wrinkled skin. She lowered her brows ominously.

"D'yeh happen to mind Mary Long a-prophesyin' that I'd never do better than pick up a crooked stick in the matrimonyel market?"

Clawson had heard the report of Mary Long's speech on the occasion of many family jars; yet the words never failed to make him wince. He sat down, throwing one knee over the other. Then he crossed his wrists and let his head fall forward humbly.

"I wouldn't lift a finger (Mrs. Clawson's voice was as solemn as the tolling of a bell) for Mary Long—I wouldn't give her a cup o' tea if she come a-beggin' at my back door. No; not—not if even Bobbie ast me to."

Bobbie was their son; and to refuse any request of his was the final test and triumph of Mrs. Clawson's will power.

Clawson's eyes followed his wife as she drew up a chair and began to scrape the skins from the small, pink-brown potatoes. A look of incredulity came into his patient stare and rested there.

After a little while he said, still observing his wife keenly: "I never knew yeh to refuse Bobbie anything yet. I bet if he'd want 'o marry Mary Long's guril you'd—"

But he stopped speaking, silenced by the glare from his wife's dark eyes.

The hand folding the knife began to tremble.

"You ought 'o be ashamed o' yourself suggestin' sech a thing. Our Bobbie to marry into that fam'ly! I'd rather he'd marry an Injun from up the valley. Don't set there with that look on your face, as if you b'lieved sech a thing could happen."

She threw her head up stiffly, keeping her eyes on her husband, meaning to look him out of countenance.

His glance dropped. "Don't let's quarr'l, mother. Got anything for me to do? Got plenty o' wood in?"

For a moment she was silent. Her husband must not be permitted to imagine that her indignation could be appeased by any such trifling overtures.

"Yes," she said, cutting off the word fiercely. "I have got something fer you to do. Strengthen up that trench where it makes the sharp turn nex' Mary Long's field. We'll be irrigatin' her corn patch the firs' thing you know." She spoke contemptuously; then she laughed low and maliciously. "That dry trench o' hers with only a foot or two of solid ground between it and that fine little stream of ours! And some time, father, between this an' bedtime, I want you to take a stick and scratch two or three little channels down tow-wards the tomatoes. The other garden stuff is fairly growin' up out of a swamp; but, somehow, the tomatoes has been forgot."

Clawson rose and slowly left the room.

While Mrs. Clawson prepared the noon-hour dinner she frequently peered up the long slope leading from the kitchen porch. It was planted in methodical patches of garden truck. Some of the green clumps had outgrown their strength and could be seen to sprawl, as if for support, over smaller, stockier growths. Mrs. Clawson's gaze was bounded by a hedge of manzanita, whose small trunks and twisted limbs showed a soft red, like dressed cedar. A wide ditch ran along the hedge, the water turning near the group of pines and hurrying down through the southwestern corner of the Clawson ranch to the creek.

When Mrs. Clawson saw her husband bend to pick up an armful of broken rock she sat down contentedly near the open door; she braced the small, square coffee mill firmly between her knees, and turned the handle with a fierce, spirited movement.

"Clawson, dinner's ready," she called, half an hour later.

As she went along the path she pulled off the withered roses from the bushes. When she came to the barbed wire fence she stood looking out critically across her neighbor's blighted corn field. Not a healthy stalk to be seen anywhere among those sickly plants; each one thirsting for water.

The ditch flowed rather noisily at her feet as it ran along the steepest part of the hill. Three hundred feet west the creek sang musically in a muffled roar.

Mrs. Clawson's thin lips curved in [illegible] crescent.

"[illegible]," she called again. But he [illegible] and followed her [illegible] the plank laid across the

of ours?" she said, affectionately. "Took his rods and fly-book out with him early this morning. Said he'd be back at dinner time, sure. Well, Clawson, how'd you git along with the work?" She turned a suspicious eye on her husband.

"I tightened the wall," he replied, meekly.

They walked along silently to the kitchen door. Mrs. Clawson went on, going round to the front of the house. She looked about in every direction, shading her eyes with her brown, knotty hands. She tried to decipher the spaces of shadow among the thickets and trees near the creek. She thought she saw a splotch of dark red and gold color.

"Must be the sun strikin' on the back o' wild cattle. They been a-strayin' round here lately."

She started toward the creek. Then, with a wavering movement, turned and hurried back to the kitchen.

"You better start eatin'," she called to Clawson. "I'm goin' down to see if I can't see somethin' o' Bobbie. Don't touch that light pinkish piece of ham in the skillet; that's fer Bobbie."

Mrs. Clawson walked with long strides through the young orchard. When she came to the bank, where the footpath descended precipitately to the creek, she stopped, looking up, down, across. The water dashed, foaming, from among a tumbled mass of bowlders.

She went down the path, brushing against the willows. At the opening, where the bushes had been cut away, she could see the bend. The water ran swiftly around the low, opposite bank; broke into a stretch of little, metallic waves. Over there the trout might be caught by the hundred in an hour or two.

Mrs. Clawson thought she heard a laugh, shrill and happy, above the bubbling and chatter and roar of the creek.

Then she saw a young girl throw up a line, on which dangled a frantic fish. Near by, her son stood, his hands in his pockets, laughing.

Mary Long's girl!

The same golden-red hair; the same vivid coloring in the cheeks and lips; the same dark, luminous eyes.

Bobbie was now tearing the fish off the hook—not taking his gaze, which she knew was tender, from the face of Mary Long's girl.

Mrs. Clawson watched the young girl as she scrambled onto the bank, trying to catch the writhing and leaping trout. She noted the soft, pretty outlines of the girl's figure as she swayed forward to throw the fish out into the middle of the stream. She saw the coquetry of Miss Long's demure return to her son's side; the challenge in her glance up to his. But when he put his arms around her she turned deliberately and stamped firmly up the path.

* * * * * * *

Mr. and Mrs. Clawson sat on the back porch. It was growing dark. Mt. Sahnedrim was a mere blur against the dusky sky; the entrance to the little arbor, over which the wild hop vine rioted, was fading into the general dimness.

For a half hour no word had been spoken. At last Clawson, summoning up courage, said: "I didn't think you'd let him git so far, mother, as to be upstairs there alone packin' his things."

"I didn't know you ever did any thinkin' on any subject, Hi Clawson," she replied. A tear, of which she took no notice, coursed its way down her thin cheek.

Silence reigned for several minutes. Then Mrs. Clawson said, in a sad monotone: "Guess you'd better hitch up the buckboard now; it always takes you s'long to do anything. The stage starts from Long's at eight o'clock; it's about seven now."

"Mother," Clawson said, "you ain't surely goin' to let our boy go away without 'is supper?"

She answered his impertinence with a stony stare.

"You jest hitch up now, Hi. I'll cook you up a bite after—after he—some time to-night."

To be misunderstood always made Clawson flinch, embarrassed, as from a blow. He rose slowly, moving off the porch with uncertain step.

Tears began to rain down Mrs. Clawson's face.

Presently she heard her son coming down the stairs. Her attention followed his step as he strode into the parlor, then crossed the hall into the spare room. Her heart's pulse began to quicken as he came, hesitatingly, towards the door at her elbow. The door opened with a jerk, scraping over the floor noisily.

Her son sprang past her to the edge of the porch, where he crouched down, bracing his head against a small, upright post.

"Mother," he said, "I'm going away. But I'm not going away angry. I love Hattie Long—I can't stay where there's so much bitterness against my future wife's folks."

Mrs. Clawson muttered, as if to herself: "Of all people in the world! An' fer us, in a State a thousand miles long, to set ourselves right down nex' to 'em! On a piece of mortgaged property, too! Never caring a thing about us, until they needed our water—"

She sniffed contemptuously, then fell into a brooding silence.

The sound of wheels presently [illegible] Mrs. Clawson's acute ears.

She noted the grating noise as the wheels scraped along over the broken stone; and she recalled how her son, only yesterday, had spent the morning filling in the ruts near the broken-limbed pear tree.

Mrs. Clawson's hands were icy; her body shivered as with the cold.

Her son scrambled to his feet. He came and laid a strong hand on her shoulder.

"Remember, mother, I don't bear any ill will."

She caught hold of his hand. She cried out, in broken tones: "Don't go on to-night's stage, Bobbie. Oh, Bobbie, mebbe your mother kin learn to swallow her hard feelin's."

* * * * * * *

Mrs. Clawson set the lighted lantern under the tall pines where the irrigating ditch made its abrupt turn.

With a long-handled hoe she quickly scraped a shallow channel through the weedy ground dividing the water and her neighbor's empty trench.

Then she bent stiffly over the stones her husband had patched into the wall in the morning. One of the stones stood up large and angular above the others. Mrs. Clawson tugged at it with awkward, outstretched arms. At last she succeeded in loosening it; and pushed it forward into the ditch.

The water gurgled and sped through the opening to form itself into a slender little stream.

Mrs. Clawson now seizing the lantern, held it at arm's length for a careful survey of the top of the wall. A larger, heavier stone hung near the newly made opening. This she succeedid in dislodging also. And when the water flowed down into Mary Long's trench, Mrs. Clawson chuckled grimly.

Certainly it would surprise no one that through a loose wall water should find for itself an opening, nor that afterward the refreshing stream should be allowed to pursue its own beneficent way.

Mrs. Clawson continued to laugh as she slung the lantern over her arm and picked her steps across to the toolshed, where she had found the hoe a half an hour earlier.

It had grown dark. When she started down the hill she could hardly see three feet before her.

'I come after yeh Sue," her husband's voice said out of the shadow of an apple-tree. "Is there anything the matter with yeh?"

"Nothin' that I'm aware of," she replied, in a non-committal tone.

"Yeh ain't sick, are ye, Sue? Well people don't wander around after dark."

"People should mind their own affairs, father," she replied.

"Would yeh mind my takin' the lantern, Sue?"

She thought she heard a note of covert triumph in his voice.

"Take it if yeh want," she spoke, indifferently. "I'm cold. I want 'o git back to the house."

He took the lantern from off her arm. She watched him curiously as his dark figure stumbled up the hill and stooped over the broken wall.

When he returned to her side he said: "Why didn't yeh tell me? I'd done 'a' for yeh."

"Done what?" she asked.

He burst into a laugh. It was the first laugh of unalloyed satisfaction he had enjoyed for years.

She clutched his arm.

"I expect yeh'll hold that over my head like the sword o' Damocles all the rest o' my life. That wall broke itself. Dunce!"

They hurried down the hill. He was in the lead to-night, holding the lantern down close to her feet.—San Francisco Argonaut.

Launching a Nile Boat.

An important function in Rhoda, a town on the Nile, is the launching of a large river boat, such as is used for the river traffic. It is considered by the natives as a sort of fete, and they attend with banners, dancing girls and music, and cheer the efforts of the workmen as, in true old Egyptian style, they launch the boat by the appliance of human force alone. In "The Land of the Khemi" a launching is described as follows:

The superintendent of the workmen was evidently of the opinion that backs were made before levers, and that the true way to launch a boat was not to allow her to glide into the water stern first, but to push her down the ways sideways by the sheer force of a united shove.

In order to get her to move at all, however, he began operations by rocking her to an extent that made her seams crack and the whole boat bend and crack ominously. When she was sufficiently loosened and her hold on the ways weakened by this operation, the music struck up, the flags waved, the dancing girls danced and the whole two hundred men, placing their backs beneath the boat, lifted up their voices in a loud groan of concentrated effort; then she moved an inch, and everybody rested.

The launching of the craft, diversified by numerous slips of the stern, which would go down more rapidly than the bow; by sundry hitches, in which neither bow nor stern would move at all, and then by unexpected slides, when she threatened to topple over prematurely into the river, lasted just ten hours. It was accomplished, however, with great triumph and beating of drums, and then the procession marched back to the village.

We suppose that saying about misfortunes never coming singly originated with some man who noticed that he began to drop what he was eating on his vest, at the time that his eyesight grew poor.

Science and Invention

The milky sea, as it is now known to mariners, is not yet fully understood. It seems to be most common in the tropical waters of the Indian Ocean, and is described as weird, ghastly and awe-inspiring, and as giving the observer on shipboard the sensation of passing through a sort of luminous fog in which sea and sky seemed to join and all sense of distance is lost. The phenomenon is probably due to some form of phosphorescence.

The volatile oils that give plants their odors are usually regarded as waste products which play no part in the vegetable economy. Dr. George Henderson suggests that they may serve the useful purpose of preventing damage by night frost during the flowering period. It is well known that moisture in the air prevents radiation and loss of heat, and Tyndall showed that if the heat-absorbing power of dry air be represented by 1, that of air saturated with moisture would be 72, which would be increased to 74 by traces of the essential oil of rosemary, to 109 by that of cassia, and to 372 by that of aniseed.

Count Zeppelin, whose experiments with a gigantic air-ship over the Lake of Constance attracted world-wide attention a few years ago, has devised a novel form of propellers intended to drive light-draft boats and launches. Instead of operating in the water, Zeppelin's propellers, like those used to drive balloons, rotate in the atmosphere. They are specially intended for use in very shallow waters, and in tropical rivers which contain so many aquatic plants that the propeller of an ordinary boat becomes clogged with them. Boats having very slight draft can be skimmed along with such propellers at the rate of several miles an hour.

Professor Curie, of Paris, who, aided by his wife, discovered and extracted from pitchblende the strange substance called radium, recently remarked that he would not venture into a room containing one kilogram of radium because it would probably destroy his eyesight, burn off his skin, and even kill him. Radium gives off more abundantly than any other known substance the mysterious emanations named Becquerel rays, which are supposed to consist of almost infinitely minute particles. They are driven off with a velocity as high as 100,000 miles per second, and cause serious inflammations upon the hands of persons working with the substance. They also give rise to luminous effects.

The Fata Morgana, a beautiful atmospheric phenomenon, which takes its name from one of the fairies of medieval legend, and is specially prevalent at the Strait of Messina, between Italy and Sicily, has lately been critically studied by Dr. Boccara, of the technical college at Reggio. He has seen the apparitions under three different forms—aerial, marine and multiple. In the first case, buildings on the Italian coast were seen projected on the Sicilian coast beyond. In the second case, arches on a railway above Messina were visible, magnified, and more brilliant than the real arches, standing below the sea-line, with no apparent support. In the multiple Morgana, aerial and marine apparitions are visible simultaneously. All these appearances are ascribed to variations in atmospheric density, producing abnormal refraction.

SHOT BY A SODA BOTTLE.

Innkeeper's Imagination Was Lively and He Thought He Was Killed.

The serious effects that hallucination may produce on a timid person are amusingly illustrated by an incident from "Across Coveted Lands," by A. H. S. Landor. Mr. Landor was traveling through Persia, and stopped at an inn for a glass of tea. On entering he took with him his revolver in its leather case, and his camera, and placed them beside him.

I ordered tea, he says, and the attendant, with many salaams, explained that his fire had gone out, but that if I would wait for a few minutes he would make me some fresh tea. I consented. He inquired whether the revolver was loaded, and I said it was. He proceeded to the farther end of the room, where, turning his back to me, he began to blow upon the fire, and I, being very thirsty, sent another man to my luggage to bring me a bottle of soda-water.

The imprisoned gases of the soda, which had been lying for the whole day in the hot sun, had so expanded that when I removed the wire the cork went off with a loud report, and unfortunately hit the man in the shoulder-blade.

By association of ideas he made so certain in his mind that it was the revolver that had gone off that he absolutely collapsed in a semifaint, under the belief that he had been badly shot. He moaned and groaned, trying to reach with his hand what he thought was the wounded spot, and called for his son, as he felt he was about to die.

We supported him, and gave him some water and reassured him, but he had turned as pale as death.

"What have I done to you that you kill me?" he moaned, pitifully.

"But, my good man, there is no blood flowing. Look!"

A languid, hopeless glance at the ground, where he had fallen, and sure enough, he could find no blood. He tried to see the wound, but his head would not turn in a sufficiently wide arc of a circle to see his shoulder-blade, so in due haste we removed his coat and waistcoat and shirt, and after very [illegible] examination, he discovered that not only were there no marks of flowing blood, but no trace whatever of a bullet-hole in any of his garments. Even then he was not certain, and two small mirrors were sent for, which, by the aid of a sympathizing friend, he got at proper angles minutely to survey his whole back.

He eventually recovered, and was able to proceed with the brewing of the tea, which he served with a terribly trembling hand on the rattling saucer under the tiny little glass.

"It was a very narrow escape from death, sahib," he said, in a wavering voice, "for it might have been the revolver."

There is nothing like bakshish in Persia to heal all wounds, whether real of imaginary, and an extra handsome "tip" left the man much improved in spirit.

LINCOLN'S WAY ROUND.

War President's Exercise of Diplomacy with Members of His Cabinet.

Many stories of Abraham Lincoln turn upon his tact. One was told recently before the Middlesex Club and repeated in the Boston Herald. During the Civil War a Bridgeport boy, returning from school, was taken by a bounty agent and hurried to the front without his parents' knowledge. His father, the late Judge Beardsley, had sought in vain for his release, and a delegation of citizens, who appealed to the Secretary of War, met with a gruff refusal.

In the hope of being able to accomplish something, Congressman Brandegee and Senator Dixon, of Connecticut, determined to use their influence in behalf of the afflicted mother. They visited the Secretary of War and asked for the boy's release. Mr. Stanton instantly roared out an absolute refusal. He had decided that case before. The boy had taken his money and enlisted. If he should discharge all the minors whose mothers wanted them at home there would soon be no soldiers at the front.

Leaving the War Office, the Congressman and Senator went to the White House and appealed to the President. Mr. Lincoln heard the case with sympathetic interest, and at once wrote on an envelope:

"Let young Beardsley, of Connecticut, a minor enlisted by fraud in the 75th New York regiment, be discharged and sent immediately to Washington.

A. LINCOLN."

The two men returned to the War Office and showed this order to the Secretary. He glanced at it, crumpled it in his fingers, threw it on the floor and said, "I won't do it!"

"Shall I report that to the President?" Congressman Brandegee asked.

"Yes!" roared the Secretary. "And you may add that I'll resign my portfolio before I'll adopt such a precedent as that!"

The men reported to the President everything that had occurred.

"Did Stanton say that after reading my order?" asked Mr. Lincoln.

"Yes," Mr. Brandegee replied, expecting an explosion.

"Well," Mr. Lincoln said, with his slow smile, "I guess he would do it. We must find some other way to get that boy back to his mother."

He took a piece of paper and wrote to the commanding officer of the regiment: "Discharge young Beardsley and send him to Washington.

A. LINCOLN."

In a week the boy was in his mother's arms at Bridgeport.

Native Justice.

A comical vindication of the rights of property among the savages of New Guinea was witnessed by a missionary, the Rev. James Chalmers. Service was just beginning in the little church when a native boy came in, dressed, with what he considered great magnificence, in a shirt. As the savages were accustomed to go nearly naked, this garment made the boy very conspicuous.

The shirt had once belonged to some white man, and the importance it gave the present wearer was tremendous. But when his glory was at its height a bigger boy appeared, hot with rage and carrying a jacket. He fell upon the first lad and began stripping off the shirt. The rest of the congregation, understanding at once that the rightful owner had arrived, gave him not only sympathy but practical aid. They rose to their feet, and those who were near by took part in the stripping process. Presently the true owner was invested in shirt and jacket, the congregation cooled and the service went on.

Not Too Lifelike.

"You just let me have that photograph for two weeks and I'll send you a life-size portrait of Mrs. Herlihy that'll be a really speaking likeness," said the agent for a new "crayon process" in his most persuasive tone.

An expression strongly akin to apprehension appeared in Mr. Herlihy's dim blue eyes, and he passed his hand twice across his mouth with a nervous gesture.

"Well, now, Oi don't know as that 'd be annyways nicessary," he whispered. "She was wid me in this loife thirty-foive years, and that gives tolme for a good dale of talkin'. Of'll jist have a picture that shows her looks, without anny mechanical contrivance to reproduce her voice."

Not the Answer She Expected.

"But you are not really ashamed of me, are you, dear?"

"Certainly not. That would be too severe a reflection on my good taste in selecting you." —Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Why do young men affect a sweetness of tone when asking girls over the telephone to go to parties? Don't they know the girls are dying to go?

LITERARY LITTLE BITS

"Two Centuries of American Costume in America" will be Mrs. Alice Morse Earle's next book.

Josephine Dodge Daskam has signified her desire to be known in the future as Josephine Daskam, without the Dodge.

Ernest Thompson Seton, the well-known writer on nature subjects, is writing a long story for boys. This will be his first in that field.

The publication of Mark Twain's new book, "Christian Science," which was announced by the North American Review, has been postponed for the present.

Miss Susan B. Anthony will give all her books and documents relating to the woman question to the Congressional Library, where they will be placed in a special alcove and catalogued separately.

Another Western woman has written a first novel, and Harper Bros. are to publish it. Mary Holland Kinkaid has written a love story dealing with the life actually led to-day by a religious community in the West, and has called her novel "Walda."

A diary kept by John Quincy Adams while a law student in the office of Theophilus Parsons at Newburyport has come to light. Charles Francis Adams has edited it and Little, Brown & Co. will soon issue it under the title "Life in a New England Town, 1787-1788."

Small, Maynard & Co. announce the immediate publication of a remarkable addition to their distinguished list of American humor, a list which began with the masterpieces of Mr. Dooley and which has recently included Mr. Lorimer's "Letters from a Self-Made Merchant to His Son," now in its one hundredth thousand.

Edith Wyatt has defined her admirable little story, "True Love," as a comedy of the affections, and in her modesty seems to disclaim any attempt at satire. However, it remains for the reader to experience a delightful surprise in reading the book. The title is so suggestive of the milk-and-honey variety of novel that her absurdly natural observations on the lives of her subjects comes with a delicious and totally unexpected shock.

Lavater says: "Read the best books which wise and sensible persons advise, and study them with reflection and examination; that is, ask yourselves, 'Do I understand what I read? Do I benefit by it? Do I become wiser and better thereby?' Read with the firm determination to make use of all you read. Do not by reading neglect a more immediate or more important duty. Do not read with a view of making a display of your reading. Do not read too much at a time. Reflect on what you have read, and let it be a nourishment of the heart and soul, moderately enjoyed and well digested."

FIFTY HATS AT $50 EACH.

An American Girl's Order a Godsend to a Parisian Milliner.

The American woman abroad is constantly doing things that are sensational. This is what makes them so popular, for their extraordinary acts

MISS MAY GOELET.

are generally of the money-spending kind. For instance, May Goelet has recently proven a veritable silver mine to a Parisian milliner in the Rue dela Paix, having recently bought fifty hats at as many dollars apiece. The hats represent all the prevailing modes, and Miss Goelet never wears less than five in the course of a day.

A Preposterous Proposition.

"Come, now, Maud," said Mr. Apesiegh, "we've got to buy tickets for this concert, you know. It's for charity."

"But you said you hated concerts of this kind."

"I do. Still, when their purpose is a noble one like this I feel that we ought to go."

"Why not give the money the tickets would cost to some institution that needs——"

"What! I haven't got any money to toss to the wind just for the purpose of seeing the stuff flutter, confound it."

A Prize.

The editor of a weekly newspaper in Australia offers himself as a prize to the woman who writes the best essay on the duties of a wife.