

# How the Homestead Operates in Practice

**A**S IT stands today the principal use of the homestead act, says Harper's Weekly, is for the fraudulent acquirement of cattle and sheep ranges and the building up of big land holdings by corporations or individuals who are protecting themselves against the gradual contraction of the free range. It seems incredible that men can be hired so easily to commit perjury. Each and every homesteader who takes up a claim with the idea of selling it to a company, or who takes it up to accommodate his employer, who wants to range his sheep or cattle to the exclusion of others, perjures himself from the time he makes the first application to the moment he accomplishes his final proof and receives his patent. The fraudulent use of the homestead law is due to the fact that five years' residence is no longer required to secure a title, to the utter uselessness of the law to the settler in the arid domain, and to the laxity with which the requirements of the law are administered by the land office. No one familiar with the west will dare assert that there is any opportunity for the taking up of legitimate homesteads to anywhere near the extent manifested in the original filings made during the past twelve months. Thus it is that a law which, in its day, has been a boon of inestimable value to humanity has become a vehicle of fraud and a demoralizing influence upon the people of the newest states.

The desert land act was passed in 1877. Since that time there have been 36,951 original desert filings in the arid states, these filings covering an area of 9,140,517 acres of public land. Of all these filings but 10,912 have been proved up on and conveyed by the government to the individual, these final proofs covering 2,674,000 acres. During each year there have been between 2,500 and 3,000 desert land claims made, and between 500 and 900 final proofs accomplished. It is a conservative estimate to say that fully 95 per cent of the final proofs made on desert lands are entirely fraudulent.

### Irrigation Rights.

As the law now stands any citizen of the United States can take up 320 acres of arid land, making a deposit of 25 cents per acre at the time of filing and paying \$1 an acre more when title is secured from the government. The law requires that before securing title the settler shall prove the ownership of sufficient water to irrigate this entire tract of land, shall prove that he has expended at least \$1 per acre each year in improving the land and that he has actually irrigated, within three years from the time of filing, every legal subdivision of his claim.

To honestly carry out the requirements imposed by this law a man must have an unquestioned water right of sufficient volume, and, as experience has proved, make an expenditure of at least \$10 an acre to put this water upon the land in sufficient quantities to raise a crop of some kind which would not otherwise have grown upon this claim.

The manner in which many of the final proofs are made upon these desert claims is almost incredible. In numerous instances no attempt is made to water the land at all, the principal effort being expended in the securing of witnesses who will swear to a statement of alleged facts required by the land office before patent issues. Some individuals make a practice of furnishing testimony for those who desire to prove up fraudulently upon their government claims. To ease the conscience of others, instances are recorded where water has been poured upon the land from a pail, so the statement can be made by the witnesses that they have seen water upon the claim.

### Turning a Trick.

In well-known and now populous valleys of many of the arid states there are hundreds of authentic cases where enough water to irrigate forty acres has been used to obtain title to thousands of acres. Each claim has been proved up on by the use of any stream, the stream being diverted to the claim to another in succession, as sworn to by the witnesses who were sworn as to the reclamation of the land. It may be stated without exaggeration that nearly all of the large landholdings or ranches of the west have been built up by fraudulent use of the land laws, and notably by the fraudulent use of the homestead and desert land acts. In the first few years of the operation of the latter law each claimant was allowed 640 acres, and under this law great valleys and plains were absorbed en bloc by individuals and corporations, who employed people to use their desert land rights all for the benefit of a single establishment. The amount of land which can be taken under the desert land act has since been reduced to 320 acres, but the same method is still being pursued in monopolizing the ranges and fraudulently acquiring title to the public domain. A prominent western senator recently said: "The desert land act is the most iniquitous piece of legislation ever placed upon the statute books. In ninety cases out of 100 the provisions of the law are not complied with in securing title. In fact, the law is flagrantly violated and title secured by the grossest perjury. How long, let me ask, can this work of acquiring land largely for

the benefit of companies and corporations continue before our rich arid domain will pass beyond the reach of settlers and homesteaders?"

Many of those who have availed themselves of the possibilities presented under the present code of land laws are men of high standing, who would indignantly resent the idea that they were dishonest in any particular. It has become the custom for a man who desires to secure a lot of land to let it be understood that such land is worth so much per acre to him as soon as title can be conveyed. The result of such an announcement is to bring in a lot of irresponsible people, who file upon the tract which the rancher desires to secure, borrow from him the money to prove up, assist each other in the necessary perjury to secure title and then convey the land for a small consideration above the indebtedness to the individual or company instigating the proceedings.

### Action Delayed.

Every secretary of the interior for twenty-five years past has urged the repeal of all land laws, except one, by which a man can secure title to land by five years' residence upon it. In 1883 Secretary Teller said: "Not another acre should be sold for cash or scrip." The schemes proposed by which the public domain is to be ceded to the various states are simply the plans of the land grabbers to secure what is left of the vacant land by one grand coup, instead of piecemeal, as it is now done. The purpose and intention of the government from its foundation have been to retain control of its own estate, regardless of state lines. The supreme court, recognizing this purpose, has held that "no state formed out of the territory of the United States has a right to the public lands within its limits or can exercise any power whatsoever over them." Fortunately congress, within the past two years, has adopted this view with considerable emphasis and the energies of those who desire to secure the public land for purposes other than home-making have been transferred to the effort to prevent such legislation as would check their operation.

It needs but a most casual investigation of the operation of the present system of laws governing the disposal of the public domain to bring conviction that a clean sweep and a new start are absolutely necessary to meet peculiar conditions brought about by rapid settlement. There is not a land law in effect which applies intelligently to the public agricultural domain as it is now to be found and each and every law which is in force is used daily as a means for the fraudulent segregation of land from the public domain by those whom the law did not contemplate as possible beneficiaries.

### A Lesson for Women

House cleaning is the dread of most women, but by consulting the Pantorium you can save yourself a great deal of hard work, and at the same time have your lace and chenille curtains, tapestry, draperies, rugs and carpets look like new when put back in their usual places. Instead of being half-cleaned, as they often are when you do them yourself. By having all cleaned at one time we can make you a very low rate.

Telephone 963 and our representative will call and give you estimates.

### THE PANTORIUM.

407 S. 15th St.

P. S.—We are headquarters for all kinds of cleaning and dyeing. Ask for price list.

### Colonial Costume

When the young man appeared on the floor of the ballroom clad in a flour sack and a smile, reports the Baltimore American, the host rushed up to him with an angry countenance and exclaimed:

"What does this mean, sir? How dare you appear before my guests in such a costume, when our invitations expressly stated that it was to be a colonial cotillion?"

"Well," asserted the young man, "this is colonial all right. It is a costume that came direct from the Philippines."



**Soft Harness**

You can make your harness as soft as a glove and as tough as wire by using **EUREKA Harness Oil**. You can lengthen its life—make it last twice as long as it ordinarily would.

**EUREKA Harness Oil**

makes a poor looking harness like new. Made of pure, heavy bodied oil, especially prepared to withstand the weather.

Sold everywhere in cans—all sizes.

Made by **STANDARD OIL CO.**

# THE ALFRED BLOOM CO.



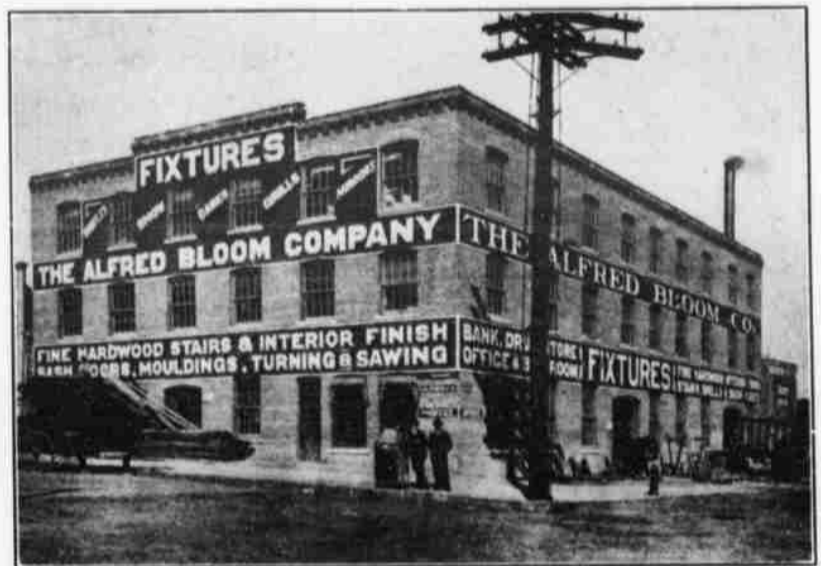
WORK DONE BY THE ALFRED BLOOM CO.



ALFRED BLOOM, PRESIDENT, IN HIS PRIVATE OFFICE.



T. H. WEIRICH, SECRETARY OF THE ALFRED BLOOM CO.



THE ALFRED BLOOM CO. MILL AT 1502-4-6-8 CALIFORNIA ST., OMAHA.

The Alfred Bloom Co. are manufacturers of bank, store and office fixtures, fine hardwood interior finish, stairs, show cases and grill work. A visit to their mill at 1502-4-6-8 California street will convince anyone that they have one of the most complete establishments in the state.

The Best is Good Enough for  
the American People  
.. That Means ..  
**GREEN RIVER**  
The Whiskey Without a Headache.



### Try It and You'll Know Why

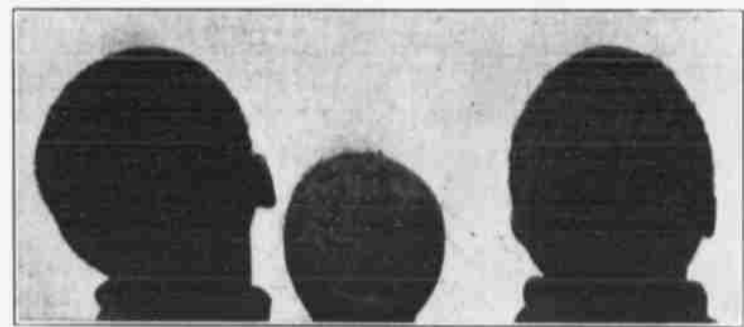
Adopted and used exclusively in all U. S. Marine Hospitals. AWARDED GOLD MEDAL AT PARIS EXPOSITION. At all first-class bars and hotels. Family trade supplied by

### CHICAGO LIQUOR HOUSE,

402 N. 16th St., Omaha. 2610 N. St., South Omaha.

535 Broadway, Council Bluffs, Iowa.

**M. WOLLSTEIN & CO., Distributors,**  
522-524 S. 13th Street, Omaha.



BLACK IS BACK—BACK IS BLACK.

### SPRING YOUR NEW SPRING HAT

RIGHT NOW.

Always \$2.50—No More, No Less.

... **BLACK** ...  
The "Up-to-the-Minute" Hatter and Furnisher.  
107 South 16th Street.



### THE HIBBARD-RODMAN-ELY SAFE

is a new design and make. It consists of a solid piece of round-cornered manganese steel, mounted on a carriage. It is an absolutely burglar-proof safe. The storage space is a cavity in the center of a steel block. The door and its locking mechanism is an important feature. The door fits in, the fitting being so close that the joining is barely visible, it being ground down so finely. There is no possibility of air or liquid being forced into any cracks, for there are none. The combinations slip off and leave only a surface as tightly fitting as the door itself. These safes are manufactured by the Hibbard-Rodman-Ely Safe company of New York, for which J. J. Deright & Co., 1119 Farnam street, are the agents. The manufacturers claim that nitroglycerine by the quart can be employed against them and no material damage done. Numerous tests have been made by incredulous purchasers and never has the safe been opened by the explosion process. Prominent banks in Chicago, New York, Pittsburg, Albany, Cleveland, Toledo, Philadelphia, Seattle, Los Angeles, in fact nearly all the leading banks in the United States are now using these safes. Mr. Deright secured the agency for these wonderful burglar-proof safes last August and since then has sold over fifty to bankers in this territory.

New Studio  
of  
*Sandberg & Allen*  
107 SOUTH 16TH ST.  
OMAHA, NEBR.  
PHOTOGRAPHERS TAKE ELEVATOR

The Best International Dentifrice  
**ARNICA TOOTH SOAP**  
Hardens the gums—cleanses, preserves and beautifies the teeth—sweetens the breath. No powder or liquid to spit—best non-staining package to carry of use. At all Druggists &c.  
**C. H. STRONG & CO., Chicago, U. S. A.**

**Bellamy & Hornung.....**  
Fine Plumbing, Gas Fitting,  
Steam and Hot Water,  
Complete line of plumbing goods  
TELEPHONE 1051.  
.....1614 Capitol Avenue, Omaha