

ably below zero, our trip was anything but pleasant. The driver fastened a cloth up in front so the man and I were shut in from everything and had nothing to do but talk about the drouth.

He had lived in Missouri, but the doctors thought he had consumption and told him he must come here. First he located in Nebraska, and, though he regained his health, he found with laborious and unceasing work it was impossible to earn a living. Owing to the continual drouth he could not raise a crop, and after seven years he gave it up as hopeless and moved to South Dakota, because he heard it was better there.

He lives in a sod house and has worked hard, but it is no good; crops will not grow without rain.

The man is thoroughly disheartened with his nine years' unrewarded toil. If he can get money enough he will go away with a thorough knowledge of what western life means.

It is the desire to own a home that brings people into such God-forsaken countries," he told me. "We listen to the stories land agents and roads circulate, and filled with a desire to own our own home, a thing that is scarcely possible to the working man in the east, we move here. And what do we get? Our labor goes for nothing. Crop after crop fails. We borrow money to help us out and two per cent a month soon eats up everything. We have no schools for our children, who are raised in ignorance, and if they have no liking to be farmers there is no other avenue open to them. We have no public works. In fact, this life out here is simply hell. We cease to be human, and all we ever knew we forget, and life simply becomes a struggle for enough to eat. Why, our children are growing up in such ignorance that we forgot our pride and have sent in a petition to the government to allow our children to be educated in the Indian schools." At 11 we stopped at the "Half Way House" to leave the mail and warm up. An hour later we stopped again to throw off some mail bags. At 1 we stopped at a house called "The Rapids" for dinner.

There I learned that a woman had received supplies for the destitute and that she had sold the supplies instead of giving them. A dozen persons were willing to swear to her selling the food she received. One man has promised to take me to the sufferers who borrowed money to buy from this woman. At least she sold cheap—75 cents for a pair of shoes and 50 cents for 100-weight flour.

The woman defended her actions by saying she had to sell the goods to pay the freight on them, and the mail carrier with whom I traveled said she had paid him \$7 for freight, but another man says all she has to do is to return the freight bills and the relief committee will refund her money. However, I shall see this woman as well as those who bought from her in a day or so. At 8 o'clock tonight, having traveled since 4 this morning, I reached Fairfax, S. Dak. I have only seen the people in the house where I am staying. It is called a hotel and consists of three rooms. They tell me that people are suffering dreadfully about here and I have made arrangements to drive about tomorrow and see for myself. No relief has been sent here yet, but everybody, even the village people are destitute.

NELLIE BLY.

## ALONG THE STREETS.

[Written for THE COURIER.]

HERE goes a lumbering, heavy cab. It is black and clumsy. Day after day it paces thro' our own busy streets, and we always gaze after it with interest. Wherever there is a cab out, there is certainly something of interest going on. Some times it will go dashing by. The horses will have white favors on their harness, and the driver's lap-robe will be covered with rice, and perhaps there will lie upon the top of the cab, a soiled white satin shoe with its bow partly torn from the instep. Through the window we may catch a glimpse of a bride's happy face. Roses and lilies and smilax. A handsome bridegroom will be bending over tenderly caring for his newly found treasure.

At another time the cab will go slowly by. The horses will step solemnly and slowly and their heavy black nets will sway continually. Through the windows we see a mother with a black veil hiding a face pale with sorrow. A man deep dejected sits on the other side and in his arms he carries a little white coffin. On the coffin lid are the roses, the lilies and the smilax, but they look pitiful now. They are not in the bravery of smiles and blushes and happy glances but are heavy with tears of sorrow.

Again the cab goes by and this time some pale invalid is going for a drive. The windows are closed tightly and the horses go along slowly and easily. Once in a while the invalid looks languidly from the window and notices but feebly the outer world; he is wrapped in a world of his own, where his aches and pains are all. And so the heavy cabs go by, rumbling through the busy streets.

We have all seen the little undertaking establishment with its gruesome sign. On the window is a yellowed velvet coffin and a wreath of faded sun-stained flowers. If one is curious he may peer through the dingy windows and see a glass case with shrouds and silver handles for coffins and other lugubrious things. But we always hurry by the little place. If it is at night we shiver and sigh even if it is a summer night. When the sun shines we turn away and look at the sky or talk to some one, and never notice the mute reminder of death that stands on our busy streets.

But some day we come to the little store. Our eyes so blinded that we can hardly read the sign, but we know the place. We go in and sit down on the black hair-cloth sofa and wait for the shop-keeper to come in. We gaze at the long rows of stiff lace-trimmed shrouds. We stare at the coffin plates displayed on the walls with a new interest. Now the shop-keeper enters and we talk with him in a low voice and select that which we came after. We go out through the little door but we never shun the place again. In that little shop we suffered the bitterest anguish for a few moments alone with the shrouds and the coffin plates, and where we have suffered, there we like to go, even almost as well as where we have been happy.

The old clock up in the tower goes steadily on day after day. Men come and go. Are born and are buried, wed and divorced but still the old clock ticks on and on. Its inexorable hands point out the hours that are swiftly passing into eternity. The gay school children look up at its face and hurry along to school. The clerk sees that is time he was at the store and the professional man hurries as he glances up at the tower. It points out the hour for weddings and for funerals. For the festival and dance and for the surgeon's chair with its tortures.

The condemned man gazes from his cell window and watches its great hands swiftly creep around to his fated hour and as the hands rest upon the mark the door grates and he is hurried away. The last thing he sees before the hideous black cap is drawn down over his face is the solemn old face of the clock that stops forever with him at that moment.

From his sick chamber the invalid sees its wearisome hands drag day after day. Each minute an eternity as suffering racks his body. When sleep comes he falls asleep and dreams that he sees the old clock in the tower and awakens to find that he has slept but a moment and the whole long day still lies before him. And at last when he falls into that dreamless sleep where his glassy eyes stare up and see nothing, then the old clock ticks on and on and never stops.

I love to sit by the busy street  
And hear the tramp of hurrying feet,  
As to and fro with careless tread  
The army of men is driven and led.  
Tramp of millions, now fast, now slow,  
As in work and pleasure they come and go,  
Like muffled drums they beat to me  
A solemn and soothing melody.  
And when at night in bed I lie  
As I list to the steps of passersby  
My pulse keeps time with measured beat  
To the hollow sound of the restless feet.  
And when are done life's hopes and fears  
Tho' no sound may reach my senseless ears  
I would like it best if I might lie  
Where millions of feet are passing by.

WILLIAM REED DUNROY.