

DUAL HOMESICKNESS.

Whilst I in old-world capitals sojourned,—
 In storied cities, rich with Time's acquiescent,
 A pilgrim from our wide, unstoried west,
 Forever homeward I in spirit turned:
 For me through each Atlantic sunset burned
 My homeland dawn in braver splendor
 dressed.
 The bird divine that sang from bosky
 nest,
 Beside my brown thrush scanty tribute
 earned.
 But now when I once more sit down at
 home,
 What fond perversity my soul pursues!
 She roves afar, beyond her native pale,
 And slips Manhattan Isle to pace through
 Rome;
 Or leaves the brown thrush for the winged
 Muse—
 For moonlit Cadenabbia's nightingale.
 —Edith M. Thomas in June Century.

THE SHADOW OF ROMANCE.

The little old farmhouse stood close to the post road. Its weather-beaten sides were covered with the same rounded shingles they wore in the days when the stages passed this way between New York and Boston. Vines and climbing roses twisted caressingly over the low second story and clung to the broken edges of the ancient shingles. In summer with the roses in bloom the house was a thing of beauty, at all times it was the delight of artists. The low porch admitted to dark, uneven rooms, whose timbers were rotten and sunken. For fifty years the farmer had lived there and when he came the house was old. In those long years no hand had marred its picturesqueness or hindered the slow decay which brought to the occupants a heritage of ill-health and malaria. All else had changed. Trains now sped through the farm's length in the meadows past the brook, and the velvet lawns and tennis grounds of the summer homes of city folks, touched the boundaries of its pasture lands. In a region of wealth and luxury this one home kept the traditions and primitive methods of an earlier age. The stern old man who had forced the rocky soil to yield its increase, had no pity or tenderness for his daughter's isolation. The nearest house, long vacant, had been bought by a New York family.

The farmhouse door opened and down the winding dusty road, bordered by uneven stone fences half-hidden beneath clinging vines and luxuriant underbrush, came a little brown figure. Past the curve where the great willows stretched their long arms protectingly across the road, inviting the wayfarer to the shelter of their shade, she paused with a nervous pull at her fiele thread gloves and a glance at the house just seen in the distance. She attempted to brush the dust from her ill-fitting shoes, which disguised a pair of tiny feet. If pretty, she would have been dainty; but sallow and plain with a dress colorless as the dust itself, she was sim-

ply insignificant. At the window two bright girls watched the slight form move slowly up the long driveway. "Our neighbor, the farmer's daughter, is coming to call," said Lucy. "we have not yet met."

Both girls endeavored to put at ease the shy, little creature, who had nothing to say and was too nervous to leave. Youth she seemed never to have known, yet from her short dress, clearing her boot tops, she might have been a child. In reality she was about thirty. "Where can we find thistles?" asked Lucy. "We want them to make fluffy balls, and also for fortune telling." A gleam of interest arose in the brown eyes. The girl continued: "You take four thistles, cut off the red tops and name them: three as men you know, and the fourth call a stranger. Put the stems in water, and in the morning the one of the four whom you are to marry will have bloomed forth with new red petals, while the others are brown and dead. You might try it too."

The visitor took her departure. Later came a basket of fine thistles with an ill-spelled little note. The girls prepared for their fortunes and commiserated the lonely life of the neighbor up the road.

In the dusk of the evening in the quaint shingled farmhouse, a slight figure crept up the old stairs with her hand hidden beneath her brown calico apron. In the quiet of her chamber four thistles were surreptitiously prepared with paper slips about their stems. Once her mother passed the door—the jar with its shorn blossoms was slipped under the bed. Then her father's heavy tread was heard and she was safe from interruption. Dreams of romance troubled her sleep.

At the first break of dawn, as the light glimmered through the vines across the window, she sprang to look at her thistles. They were all dead. One more disappointment to a life destitute

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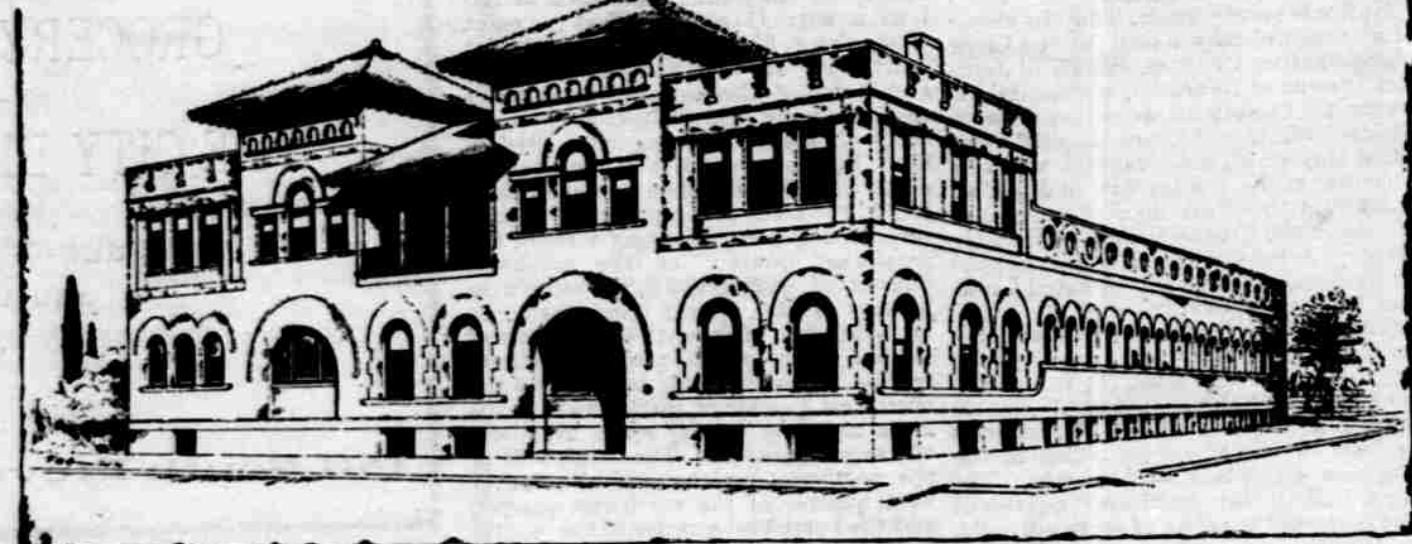
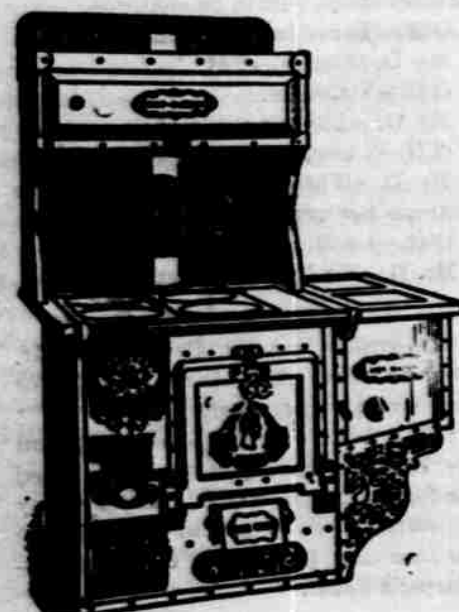
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of hope or pleasures; it seemed but an omen of future monotony. The little mouth had relaxed in its eagerness, the little feet trembled on the floor. Passionately through the open window she flung afar the dead blossoms, the symbols of a different life—not love and marriage, but ideal happiness in any form. The fates had been questioned, lo! the answer.
 The girls on the hill still slept, unconscious and careless of life's future blossoms, but silent and uncomplaining the farmer's daughter lighted the kitchen fire.
 "You are up early, Eliza!"
 "Yes, mother, there is so much to do."
 —Annie L. Miller.

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