HOW WE MADE A HOME

[Maud Meredith in Western Plowman.]

If there is any one thing I am thankful for above another it is the adaptability of the human organism to its surroundings. For to come right down to the exact facts, it makes so little difference to us what those surroundings are, so we are accustomed to and are content with them.

There, I did not intend to read you a homily, but the idea would pop up when I thought of the changes John and I have gone through, and the happy home we really have made, out here alone on the prairie.

I must tell you first that John was the son of a farmer, and never spent but one winter of his life in the city, and that one, the winter that he first met me.

I was the daughter of a merchant in a small way, and I now know that it was the extravagance of his family, and our desperate struggle to "show off" as well as our wealthier acquaintances that kept my father pressed for money and unable to enlarge his business.

A little music, a trifle of embroidery, (I first doted on South Kensington stitch) and a fair dab at paints was a list of my accomplishments, and the sum moreover, of all my desires.

This is not a love story so I shall not tell how it came about, but we were married, John and I, early in the next summer, and went onto the farm to live.

But, alas, for our plans, John's father had also led a bride, his second wife, to the altar only a week after our marriage, and—well, you know the old saying that "no house was ever big enough for two women," so possibly it was all the fault of the sire of the house, but be that as it may, we did not work happily together, my husband's step-mother and me.

When it came on winter John said I had better go in town to father's and board, and he would take a contract of hauling, and so run in and see me every day. I was too proud to do this, and so I said I would live in the little Aldyce house, where the farm hands family had been living. John protested, but I was firm, and down I went. John and his father brought a load of things, some beds and bedding, and a set of quaint pink old dishes that had belonged to John's mother when she was married.

There was a new kitchen stove that, before our coming the housekeeper had discarded, declaring it would not "draw worth a cent." I had always had a "nack" of making wheels go in old clocks and disabled sewing machines, and so I applied my genius to the stove, and after a half hour of prying and peeping I drew out a wedge of iron, and "presto," the stove was perfection.

But the worn paint on the uncarpeted floor was an abomination to me, and as there were quantities of old garments up at the house, I determined to make the thing that I had heard of, but always despised—a rag carpet.

How I cut rags, and sewed rags, and wound them into balls, counting them over and over to see how nearly I was done; meanwhile glancing longingly at the painted nicknacks on the mantle, and my box of paints on the little stand in the corner.

But I finished the carpet, and the very day that John brought it home from the weavers, and first after we had got through admiring its bright stripes, he looked up and said to me: "Jenny, I'm going out into Nebraska to take up land. Do you suppose you could be happy there?"

Now I was very happy with John, but it did mortify me whenever I met any of my old society friends, that I had not an elegant home to which I could invite them, and so I said eagerly:

"O, yes, John, let's go, and go this spring, too,"

John was so pleased that he first caught me up in his arms and swung me clear around the kitchen, and then I knew how he had been dreading to ask me the question.

And with the early spring we started.

There were four families of us, all John's young acquaintances, and we made preparations together, but I was so silly that I let them start with the wagons first, and I stayed all night at mother's and bade good bye to all my acquaintances, and went down and took the train. Fifty miles out I stopped, and John's cheery face never looked better to me than when he came to the platform and met me, and took me out where the teams were. Regular "prairie schooners" they were, more because of my coaxing than anything else, for I could not hear or think of leaving the handsome grey horses, nor even the two Holstein cows behind, and I declared I must have my stove, and rag-carpet, and pretty pink dishes. So I had my own way, and here we were, four "prairie schooners," and quite a small drove of cattle that the men took turns in driving.

Such a ride as that was! How the boys shot ducks, and prairie hens, and rabbits, and we cooked them around little fires, in genuine gypsy fashion.

But we reached our destination at last, healthy and hungry, and brown, and the very first thing we did was to make "sod" houses. As our claims were taken near together, we could see the smoke from each of our four chimneys at the same time. The velvety green prairies sweeping away in soft undulating waves on all sides, until the very sky came down and tucked us all into our cosy green nest.

And I, who had lived in a rented house all my life, could stand in the low door of our sod mansion, and gazing away toward the rising sun, realize that all that vast extent, even further than the eye could see, belonged to John and me.

And the house? You would be surprised to see how tidy and comfortable it was. The floor was hard and clean, and as John said, "required no scrubbing." We had two large windows, to admit the light, and a warmer house in winter, and a cooler in summer, was never invented.

John said: "Now that we've got all out of doors, lets raise something on it." So he planted his tree claim to mulberry and osage-orange, and all kinds of fruits; and almost before we knew it we had our farm fenced in with osage orange hedges.

Now when I had tucked my box of paints away in the corner of the new home, and lost my patterns for South Kensington embroideries, I had to have something to do, so I raised fowls, and when John bought a colony of bees I had lots of fun helping him with them, and I could do most anything with them. And one day when John said he planted those mulberry because he did not know but we might raise silk worms some time, why an idea struck me, and I sent $1.00 for some silk worm eggs that very day.

I had to read up about silk worms and it cost me about another dollar for small pamphlets on silk culture, but I was in earnest, and everything went fairly well, and it was not a great while before I was far more interested in silk culture, and poultry raising, and the care of bees than I ever thought of being in anything in the old days when we tried to keep up an appearance "in the best society." There's something so different in real living things. They don't stand stock still where you left them, but keep changing, and they seem to know you, and are grateful for your care and kindness. I don't exactly mean to say that the worms exhibited gratitude in any way save that of well rounded cocoons, but the hens talked back to me, and the cows would call to me from the farthest corner of the wide basin where they used to pasture together.

When John brought me home a butter worker and a couple of print dresses, and told me as he handed them to me that my butter brought the highest market price, and another day when he brought me a honey extractor with an order for all the honey I could make, and a pair of shoes, I felt as merry as a child with a bright new toy.

I could tell you long stories of my wise little bantam, that are really of more interest to me than were Nell Drew's flirtations, in the old home, and I found and botanized more strange, new flowers, the day I searched for the guinea hen's nest, than I had seen in all my girl life. Ah, but the flowers; the billowy paradise of blossoming flowers all about us.

And long before, I had planted vines around our house, which grew each summer and covered every particle of it except the chimney pot, so that it looked like a great mound of bloom, and the house, for all the world could see, might have been made of Carrara marble.

There is a big brick house now, a little in front of the dear old "sod," and that very rag carpet, that I cut and sewed is spread on two of the back chamber floors, but the pink dishes, with but one or two missing numbers, adorn the shelves of a plain sideboard in the dining-room.

At this very moment I can hear the voices of the children at their play out in the old adobe, for it is Toddle's birthday and all the children of three neighbors are here on a birthday party.

There is a stout girl in the kitchen, now that there are floors to scrub, and a small one to look after Pet and Toddles and run errands but—oh a declares it has all come about because of my adapting myself to my surrounding—"and making $500 a year raising silk," he adds slyly.

You needn't believe a word that John says when his eyes twinkle that way, but I'll admit we have been very happy, much happier than we could have been if I had pined for society and South Kensington embroideries.

Perverse Nature.

[New York Graphic.]

"It is curious," remarked a "drummer" the other day, "how perverse is nature at times, and particularly in the case of sleep. When I am on the road it. I have a short distance to go, say thirty or forty miles, I am asleep before we pull out of the station, and more than once I have awakened twenty miles beyond my stopping place, but if I am in for a ride of three or four hours and anxious to spend the time in slumber, it is impossible to even doze. On my last trip I took a train about 9 o'clock one evening for a town twenty-five miles further on. Knowing my weakness, I strove to keep awake, but it was no use, and I slept right through, although with an ever-present consciousness that I must soon be awake. We reached my station; I heard it called and knew I ought to get off, but sleep chained me heavily. During the brief halt I fought desperately to waken, making a final effort as I felt the little jerk of the train which betokened a start, but it was useless; and as the cars settled down to the regular movement I sank back into deep unconsciousness, feeling somehow that my duty was done. When I finally awoke it was near daylight and we were 150 miles beyond my town."

The Ungraceful Curtsy.

["Uncle Bill" in Chicago Herald.]

But let us not destroy the illusions of art. Things of the most graceful aspect become awkward if the interior is exposed by removing the covering. Have you ever considered the old-fashioned curtsy, how willowy, billowy and beautiful an act it is? You see it nowadays only on the stage, in the old comedies, where actresses in long skirts sink in it so low that is seems impossible they should rise without help. Well, a certain actress in the role of a lady in lad's clothes is ruining the poetry of the curtsy to every spectator by transforming it into the prose of trousers. Anything more ungainly than the contortion which she discloses as the secret of the curtsy's draped grace has never been my misfortune to see.

Saving It for the Old Flag.

[Hartford Courant.]

Capt. Nathaniel Palmer, of Stonington, the original discoverer of Palmer's land, furthest south of all known land, tells the following story of the way he saved the discovery: He was getting ready to leave it, when a Russian frigate hove in sight. Capt. Palmer was ambitious to claim the land for the United States. How to contend with the ship of the czar he did not know at first. He waited till the frigate ran to the leeward of him and hove to, and then he put up his sheet and squared away for her, running under her stern and calling out as he shot past: "Ahoy, there! ship ahoy! do you want a pilot in?" The ruse succeeded, for the Russian at once filled away, and left the dominion free to stars and stripes.

The Dying Captain.

[Chicago Tribune.]

The old Captain is dying inch by inch, but he is Grant. There is the same definite plan of something to be done, the same fixedness of purpose, the same unswerving devotion to a single object, the same grim disregard of cost. With one of the monsters of disease gnawing at his life, he carries on his work calmly, not blindly, changing his plans to meet the exigency, but steadfastly. The brave old man dying so is the same Grant who led with set teeth from Donelson to Appomattox. It is the same mind. He is Grant.

Luminous Stair Carpet.

[Carpet Trade and Review.]

A new invention is a composition which when applied to textile fabrics renders them luminous at night. It would be a useful addition to the stair carpet in houses where the masters or male inmates thereof come home very late at night or early in the morning.

Something the Matter.

[New York Mail.]

There must be something the matter with the French rats, because all ladies are now complaining of the poor quality of their kid gloves. A pair that does not burst or split on the first wearing is the exception nowadays.

Affected the Compasses.

[Inter-Ocean.]

The Boston shipmasters report that their compasses were affected by tin cases containing refined petroleum as much as they would have been by the same quantity of iron or steel.

Spinal diseases, superinduced by bicycle riding, are becoming alarmingly numerous, according to a Philadelphia physician.

A PROPHECY.

["M. V. D." in Courier-Journal.]

It may be late in after years,
When sadden'd by a world's deceit,
You turn again with bitter tears,
To the olden love so sweet;
Then shall memory serve you well,
And silent justice give,
Tho' no remorseful words may tell
What in the heart must live.

I know that many a weary mile
Shall stretch between we two!
Yet I could almost happy smile,
In prophecy so true;
For retribution overtakes
The careless and the gay.
And oftentimes love reawakes
When we are far away.

A Strange Arabian Sect.

[Foreign Cor. Cincinnati Enquirer.]

A court was filled with the forms of Arab men and women squatting on sacred mats, and facing a platform where eight Arabs engaged in a fantastic and fascinating dance. As the musicians began to play slowly they moved the upper parts of their bodies forward and backward and from side to side. Gradually the music became faster, and faster and faster they went, throwing their limbs and bodies about in almost inconceivable positions, until I could scarcely believe that the rapidly whirling mass before me were human beings.

Several hundred years ago there lived in a pashalik of Arabia, a learned marabout (priest) who gathered about him many disciples, but as his teachings were not consistent with the koran he drew upon himself the enmity of the reigning pacha, who banished him and his disciples to the desert of Sahara, whither they were taken and left without food or water. Then the marabout arose, declaring he had received a revelation from heaven telling him that nothing they would eat would injure them. Accordingly they feasted upon scorpions, snakes, and prickly-pear leaves. When this miracle came to the ears of the pasha he enticed them by offers of pardon to his palace. He threw them into a dungeon filled with scorpions, bits of crockery, glass, and other similar tonics, and told them they would not be released until they ate everything. It was no difficult task, as they had been growing fat on the same sort of food. The pasha, having seen them eat, granted them all a full pardon and made Ali Ben his vizier. The descendants of Ali and his disciples formed a sect called Alssaouas, who every year, on the anniversary of the trial in the dungeon, celebrate the event in the manner I have described. I am told that in some places the sect still eat scorpions and chew glass.

Cutting Glass With Scissors.

[New York Mail and Express.]

Many persons may not be aware that glass can be cut under water, with greatest ease, to almost any shape, by simply using a pair of shears or strong scissors. In order to insure success, two points must be attended to—first, and most important, the glass must be kept quite level in the water while the scissors are applied; and, secondly, to avoid risk it is better to begin the cutting by taking off small pieces at the corners and along the edges, and to reduce the shape gradually to that required, for if any attempt is made to cut the glass to the shape, as we would cut a piece of cardboard, it will be most likely to break just where it is not wanted.

Some kinds of glass cut much better than others; the softer glass is the best for this purpose. The scissors need not depend on the state of the edge presented to the glass. When the operation goes on well, the glass breaks away from the scissors in small pieces in a straight line with the blade. This method of cutting glass has often been of service, when a diamond has not been at hand, for cutting ovals and segments, and though the edges are not as smooth as might be desired for some purposes, it will answer in many cases. The two hints given above, if strictly followed, will always insure success.

Cats in Ancient Egypt.

[Exchange.]

Those who regard themselves as victims of caterwauling here may take consolation in the thought that they would have had a worse time in ancient Egypt. A recent writer says that cat-worship was carried to its greatest extent by the ancient Egyptians, whose devotion to their pets was such that, according to Herodotus, when a fire broke out they cared for nothing but the safety of their cats, and were terribly afflicted if one of them fell a victim of the flames. On the death of a cat the inhabitants of the house shaved off their eyebrows, and the deceased cat was embalmed and buried with great solemnity in a sacred spot. Many cat-mummies have been found in the Egyptian tombs, and some are to be seen in the British museum, together with similarly preserved specimens of human beings and of sacred calves. Their movements and their cries were consulted as oracles; and the murderer or even the accidental felicide of one of them was punished by death.

Victor Hugo's Health.

[Paris Letter.]

Victor Hugo, in spite of his years, is still hale and hearty; he eats and drinks well, and his only infirmity is deafness. Hugo himself will tell you that he is only hard of hearing. Thursdays and Sundays, which are reception days, the poet goes to bed about 10 o'clock; other days he retires at 9:30, and in the morning he works in bed, and rises about 10. He breakfasts lightly, walks, and in spite of the supplications of his family he occasionally indulges in an old distraction of riding on the knifeboard of a bus. Whatever the weather, Victor Hugo still obstinately refuses to wear an overcoat, and, old as he is, persists in abundant cold water ablutions; but he no longer takes his "tub" as he used to do during the seige of Paris, when he was staying with his old friend Paul Meurice, after his return from exile, and when he used to break the ice with his heel cold mornings.

Prescott's Peculiar Dread.

[Boston Gazette.]

From accidental circumstances Prescott, the historian, had always entertained a peculiar dread of being buried alive, and he had, therefore, often required that measures should be taken to prevent all possibility of the horrors that might follow such an occurrence. His injunctions were obeyed. A principal vein was severed so that, if life should again be awakened, it might ebb silently away without any possible return of consciousness.

Wanted to Be Disremoved.

[Exchange.]

Civil service examiner (to colored applicant for the situation of letter-carrier)—State the distance from London, England, to Calcutta, India, via Suez canal.

Colored applicant—Say, boss, ef yo'se gwine ter put me on dat route, you kin disremove my applicashun offen de book.

Whitehall Times: Wild cats that are sown in the heydays of life are often reaped in the hades of eternity.

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As THE POST has labored unceasingly for twenty-five years for these glorious results, so it will extend to the new administration a hearty greeting and a cordial support in the re-establishment of principles and policies vital to the public welfare, by reforming abuses, righting wrongs and asserting the supremacy of the Democratic faith. We are on the threshhold of important events and great changes. To a Democrat who aided in Cleveland's election, the future is full of interest and hope.

THE WEEKLY POST will aim to keep abreast of the times in everything relating to the incoming administration. Its policy at home and abroad will be intelligently discussed, generously supported or candidly criticised. No year in the history of this journal promises to be so replete with matters of interest to Democrats as the one which we are about to enter. The meeting of Congress, the declaration of the Presidential vote, the inauguration, the new Cabinet, the changes in the public service, the *opening up of the books*, all are of great concern. THE WEEKLY POST will furnish the earliest intelligence, with judicious comment from the old Democratic standpoint. Success will not hamper it any more than a quarter of a century of defeat impaired its energies.

The session of the Legislature, with a Reform Governor opposed by a Republican majority; promises to be fruitful of important issues and exciting incident. The coming session of congress will be even more interesting in its broader field.

In all its varied departments, THE WEEKLY POST will aim at excellence and reliability. Its literary, miscellaneous, news and local departments will be maintained in their utmost efficiency, while its market reports will be prepared with greater care and precision than ever before and made absolutely reliable.

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5-5 HENRY KELLER, Auditor.

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