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POETRY.

The Mother's Inspiration.

Had I no little feet to guide
Along life's toilsome way,
My own more frequently might slide,
More often go astray.
But when I meet my baby's eyes,
At God's own bar I stand,
And angels draw me toward the skies
While baby holds my hand.

SELECT STORY.

Aunt Serena's Salt Bag.

"What makes the trunk so heavy?" asked Paul, as he lifted the old-fashioned leather covered box from the ranch house.
"Gold and precious stones, likely. You know folks are all rich down in New England, reputedly."
"Aunt Serena wouldn't bring those."
"Of course she wouldn't," put in that lady herself, coming from the dwelling which was to be her home for a year. "I guess I know better than to bring anything like that out here—why don't you have a board walk instead of a dirt path to your house?"
"This isn't Connecticut, Aunt; it's Texas, as 'nighly near the Panhandle," replied Paul. "If you visit the Texas do as the Texans do; you know the proverb."
"It is not a proverb, and you did not quote it correctly; but hurry in with the trunk."
"The heavy burden was, with much straining of muscles on the part of the two nephews, carried inside; but the youths' curiosity remained unsatisfied. "I've brought this twenty miles in a wagon to-day, and I ought to be told what's in it," insisted Paul.
So they waited while Aunt Serena unpacked.
Dresses, aprons, a few keepsakes—the articles came, all light of weight and furnishing no explanation of the mystery. But before the bottom was reached the lid slammed shut and no more was to be seen.
"Mighty funny she's so particular," commented Paul, as Theo and himself sat on their ponies the following day, a couple of miles from the cabin, watching the big cattle-herd. "I'm going to find out, and right soon, too."
"Make a raid on the trunk?"
"Don't know; but I guess so. Father and mother are going to take her over to the school director's this afternoon. I'll make a hunt then."
And he did. When he came back his face was a study.
"What'd ye find?" asked Theo.
"Couldn't guess it in a thousand years."
"Gold, silver, iron, horseshoes, beans, bullets?"
"Your trail ain't even warm—its end."
"What for?"
"How do you suppose I know? I'm goin' to ask her."
But Paul did not need to ask. Aunt Serena suspected that her belongings had been searched, and forestalled any comments by remarking at the breakfast table: "It's the purest finest salt I could get—a hundred pounds of it. I've lived too long with in smelling distance of salt water to risk having things fresh. Even for a visit I wanted to be prepared for emergencies, and besides, I suppose you

use stock salt in lamps here."

Paul admitted that she was partly right, and from that time the ranch table was not without the flour-like refined product of the eastern salt works. The sack was set inside the storeroom door, and was the subject of many a joke in the family as well as among the herders.

Next the sturdy nephews were not about referring to the "Panhandle" that their aunt expected to see in the south-west.

"But then it's just what you'd allow to find a school teacher doing," said Paul. His contempt for school teachers was, however, largely assumed, and he often wished he were capable of teaching the neighborhood school, as his aunt was doing. He longed for her knowledge of books, every time he saw her crossing the prairie to the school house, a mile or more from the ranch, where all the settlers' children gathered.

But something else was of more pressing importance. The grass on the ranch was becoming short, and the drought had prevented the starting of a new growth.

"We must move the stock down nearer the ranch house," ordered the chief herder; and the men allowed the cattle to graze closer to the corral.

Five thousand head of Texas cattle, a little sea of horns, thin, nervous faces, sharp backs and switching tails—it was a difficult thing to manage an army that skill alone could control. For man nor horse singly they had neither respect nor fear; but a man or a horse could rule them, provided there were enough men on horses.

As the hot summer days merged into autumn, no rain came to start the grass—something unexpected in the history of the ranch. Two or three drive the cattle several miles necessary to but the grass near the ranch house was largest because through the earlier part of the season the stock had been kept at some distance from the home headquarters.

"It seems like being outside of civilization," said Aunt Serena, coming home from her school one day, and looking out over the vast plains on which were feeding the excitable "long-horns."
"Never mind," said Paul, who came in just then clad in his herder costume; "if we don't have any bad luck, and get the stock to market all right, it'll take me into civilization. I've got a share in the herd, and am going to college."

Paul, indeed was growing exceedingly nervous over the cattle's condition. A few weeks longer of short feed would, he feared, make them unsaleable at the high price on which he counted.

The next day there was another drive to water, and a tireless one it was. Twice the herd broke into an awkward trot, and it required all the herders' ingenuity and efforts to restrain it.

The cracking of a stick, the call of a quail, the sudden starting of a jack rabbit—nothing seemed too trivial for the cattle in their present condition.

"Watch 'em mighty close, boys," was the chief herder's order, when, after much difficulty, all were safely returned to the house range, as the feeding grounds near the house were called.

And they were watched close. All day an endless procession of herders rode round and round the restless creatures, turning back the stragglers.

On the second day the atmosphere seemed more oppressive than in weeks. It was "headache weather," according to Aunt Serena, and she found the mile walk to the school house a wearisome one.

"I shall dismiss school early this afternoon," she remarked, on leaving home. "The children can't stand to keep such long hours. I've invited the first reader class to come to tea with me. There are eight of them."

Theo and Paul saw their aunt as she walked slowly through the close pastured bunch grass, far on the opposite side of the ranch house.

"I wish," spoke the latter anxiously, "that aunt wouldn't carry that bright yellow parasol. I'm afraid it will make us trouble some day."

"Nonsense!" was the reply; "we always have the herd on this side of the range while she goes and comes. She can't be hurt."

"But the critters might stampede on us."
"What's coming to make 'em? Besides, it ain't likely they'll go in that direction, anyhow."

But Theo did not know as much about the ways of cattle as did his older brother; nor was he animated by the same personal interest in the herd's welfare.

It was three o'clock when the brothers met again.
"Say, Theo," were Paul's words as he rode close to his companion, "I'm awful thirsty. I wish you'd ride over to the house and bring out a can of water. The cattle are a little quieter now, and I'll watch for both of us."

Without a word Theo was off, glad of a respite, and enjoying the brisk canter to which he spurred his willing pony.

Nor did he lessen his pace on his return. Pacing swiftly along he approached Paul and the herd, carrying the can of water and thrilled by the exercise of the half mile ride.

As he drew near, the pony braced itself for the sudden stopping; but before the halt came there was an accident. Into one of the numerous gopher holes, which dot the prairies of the west, went one of the horse's feet.

In an instant Theo was hurled headlong from the deep saddle and went, as did his pony, rolling on the sod. The water can broke as it fell, and the clink of its smashing could be heard a long way.

"I landed it and missing the spur to his pony's flank, hurried toward the victims of the mishap. But that was not all. Before Theo and his horse had regained their feet, each braced and limping, every grazing steer had lifted its branching horned head and was staring at the unwanted spectacle. Then as if moved by a common impulse, every animal took a few steps away. A loud bellow from some of the more powerful ones followed, and the walk of the herd became a trot. The alarm increased as they moved—the trot was a canter—the canter a run; and by the time Paul had returned from inspecting the fallen boy and horse the dreadful stampede was in progress.

The young man's face grew white, even through the generous coat of sunburn, as he fiercely urged his pony forward. Other herders were likewise riding fast; but the mass of horns and hairy backs was like an avalanche, plunging ahead regardless of what was before, blind to any danger, to all intents an unreasoning, insane mob.

The herd was headed toward the ranch house and would go near it, then on across the path leading to the school. It all passed through Paul's mind in an instant, and, mingling with the thought of injury to the cattle was that of danger to the school children or their teacher. The ranch house hid his view of the familiar path at first; but as he pushed ahead in a frantic hope of being able to turn the leaders, on whom he was rapidly gaining, it was fully revealed.

Midway between house and school, directly in the course of the now infuriated beasts, was a group, the very sight of which thrilled the hurrying rider. In its midst was a woman carrying a yellow parasol, and around her were some little folk—not many; but to Paul's alarmed gaze it seemed a multitude.

Aunt Serena and her little party of tea guests had just become aware of what was occurring a half-mile away. They could hear and almost feel the thousands of heavy hoofs beating on the dry prairie. The shouting cowboys, the bellowing steers, the dot—it was a frightful menace. Uncertain which was to turn, and deeming it impossible to escape from the wide sweep on which the cattle were coming they simply stood still and terrified.

And as they waited they saw one rider leave the group of half dozen herders whose ponies had carried them near the leaders of the herd.

"Paul is deserting us!" passed through Aunt Serena's mind, and her heart sank as she spoke the words more to herself than to the children.

It seemed so. Raining his pony aside he was riding like mad toward the ranch house, which was but a little out of the herd's course. Theo saw it, as he stood helpless beside his lamed pony, and wondered. The other herders saw it and yelled frantically to him to return. But Paul heed of them not. Like a flash into his mind had come the words of an old cattleman who had given him advice in the art of managing a herd.

"Yeh kin do more with a bunch of cattle by their likes and their dislikes," had been a part of his philosophy; "and I expect they're a good bit like humans in that."

Already Paul was near the ranch house, and the anxious watchers saw him stop his horse with a severity which nearly brought the faithful creature to his knees, dismount, dash in through the open door, reappear with something in his arms, leap to the saddle and race pell-mell, fast as the pony's feet would carry him, toward the head of the herd again.

The cattle were running as fast as they could at the start, but neither had the cowboys' efforts been able to check them. Moreover the angry eyes of the leaders appeared to have been fascinated by the yellow parasol which shone brightly in the sunlight, and were taking their way, followed by the whole frantic mass, directly toward it. In the air was an odor of bruised horses and in the track of the herd was more than one struggling beast which had fallen in the face and been trampled to death by its companions.

But Paul was well in advance of even the foremost, and a gap of many and the school party.

"Git! Pines—Git!" he was saying as he leaned low on his pony's neck and pressed the spurs hard and harder on the steaming flanks.

Then suddenly the watchers saw Paul turn sharply and ride directly in front of the oncoming herd, create a dozen yards away.

But they saw nothing more. As he rode a fine, white stream poured from his saddle bow, and a flour-like trail was left behind him, showing clearly on the brown grass and barren spots of earth.

"What crazy thing!" began the chief herder, who had been far in the rear, but was now riding near the front.

The cowboy riding next him did not wait for the conclusion of the sentence. His quick mind solved the problem, and above the roar the chief caught the single word, "Salt."

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Royal makes the food pure, wholesome and delicious.



Before the first of the cattle had reached the white line Paul was across the herd's track and was trimming to come back further on. But it was unnecessary. As the first flank reached the seeming slight barrier a familiar and appetizing odor reached the distended nostrils. Forgetting their impatience, the strong beavers shaken behind pushed forward, but these, too, caught the scent, and in a moment the whole herd was looking and striving for a taste of its animals' greatest luxury. Paul seeing what would happen, rode on, still doling out the salt until he had a line long enough to engage the greater part of the herd and prevent any being crushed in the throng. As he looked back and saw the lately stampeded brutes sinking here and there to their knees to lick up the feast he had spread, he laughed aloud.

"The old cattleman," he thought "was right—'was their likes' that caught 'em."

loss of your fine salt, Aunt Serena, remarked Theo roughly, the following day.

"Not at all," was the reply; "but I shall send for some more at once, and Paul can't pour it out as he did the other. This kind of weather will settle that," looking from the window at the driving rain which had come at last, "Perhaps it was thick that we had a dry spell, after all—so that the salt was not damp."

Many Vacationists Going to Nova Scotia.

A gentleman who returned from Nova Scotia this week by the Plant line tells this story:

"I have travelled all over Europe, as well as the American continent, and in all my travels I never met such hospitable people as I found in Nova Scotia. This was particularly noticeable among the common, everyday people. I have contemplated a trip to the Province for a number of years, and am glad I went! I have had a delightful time."

"She—I didn't expect to see you. Somebody told me you had met with an accident the other day."
"He—Oh, no; that was my brother."
"She—I'm so sorry!"

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And Family Grief That Can Be Avoided.

Paine's Celery Compound Brings Health, Joy and Happiness.

You are willing to confess, poor sufferer, that you have been bitterly disappointed with past efforts, and that in your estimation your future seems dark and gloomy.

You and your friends alone are to blame if disease is tightening its chain around you, making you a sane captive for the dark and dreary grave.

Why keep