

dark-eyed single sunflowers are among the most uncertain of autumn's daughters. One year they are everywhere, the next year hardly to be seen. Then sooner or later comes the inevitable September snowstorm, and after that you may say good-bye to the wild-flowers till next year, and turn your attention to shooting prairie chicken.

August and September are the best months for camping out, first to fish, then to shoot. We like to go up into the mountains then. But camping is such a varied delight, or else such a serious business, that it hardly fits into the space of this article. I mention it because it is one of the chief pleasures of our life here.

"What a primitive life!" some one will say; "all animals, flowers, and open air. No society, no luxury, and no art. It must be stagnation."

Or else—

"What an admirable life!" some one will say; "work without hardship; exercise, and leisure, a civilised yet unconventional life. It must be ideal."

There will always be some people who think that life can be made ideal by its circumstances, and some who think that it can be interesting only by its excitements. *De gustibus*—"the proverb is something musty." However, I am not concerned to prove that there is no life more enviable than this which we lead. I may think so, or I may not. But I am concerned to show that the common belief about a lady's life on a rancho—that it consists necessarily and entirely of self-sacrifice and manual labour—is a delusion. That it does consist of these in hundreds of cases is unfortunately true; and the reason why is not far to seek. Many

people who would think it madness to allow a son or daughter of their own to marry in England without means sufficient to keep a single house-servant, are yet easily persuaded to allow it in the Colonies, because they are told it "doesn't really matter out there." Once convinced that there will be no loss of caste, they are satisfied. They are too inexperienced in the meaning of work, or else too unimaginative to realise that they are sending a son and daughter to live a life of much harder toil than a common labourer and his wife would lead in England, with none of the labourers' alleviations of familiarity and congenial surroundings, but probably under circumstances which cause them to think with envy of the labourers' lot at home, and perhaps in a climate which makes existence a struggle for six months out of the twelve. Every one who has visited an English colony has seen people of gentle birth in this position, and has wondered, more or less superficially, if their life were worth living. I cannot pretend to decide that question. Only those who have had the courage to try the life for themselves can say whether it is a natural and justifiable one or not. There is an obvious difficulty in putting the question to them. But suppose that surmounted, I imagine that their answers would vary in accordance with their conviction of the endurance of love and the dignity of mutual service. Some are but imperfectly convinced. And surely it requires no great exercise of common-sense to realise that life cannot be made easy for people without money anywhere on this globe; also, that however difficult it may appear for a lady to keep house without any servant in

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