

father quavered out the old familiar blessing which, although long unuttered, rose so readily to his lips. After dinner when all were assembled in the "front room," the young people sang grandfather's favorite hymns, and before they left every voice, even that of the old man, weak and trembling, joined in singing "Praise God, from Whom all Blessing Flow." The minister and his wife stayed until late, and as they drove away in the dusk and grandfather turned to enter his little room, Mrs. Willard said with a new kindness of tone:

"Grandpa, it's gettin' chilly these nights, an' to-morrow I'm goin' to fix you up a bed in the front room, so you can have a fire to set by."

"Thank you, daughter," said the old man. "Old folks do like to set an' look at the fire; but I don't want to be sech a sight of trouble."

"Pshaw, father," said Mr. Willard, "I reckon we can go to a little trouble fer you, when you've done so much for us in times past. I've been a-thinkin' all day about how we used to be at home with you an' mother ever 'Thanksgivin', an' how happy we was."

"An' so have I," said his wife, with tears in her eyes.

The old man laid his hand on his son's shoulder, and said, tremulously:

"Yes, my son, an' so have I. She has been mighty near me to-day—so near it seemed like I could almost hear her voice. An' I've been a-thinkin', too, about it bein' your birthday, an' I could-jest see you like when you was a little feller hangin' on to mother's dress and follerin' me about the place. I didn't know I could be so happy in this world as I've been to-day, nor that I had so much to be thankful for."

He opened the door, hesitated, then said, "Good-night." But after a while, when Mr. Willard was singing, he came out

and stood there listening until she finished. Over his favorite pine the evening star shone clear and full, and the old face that was lifted toward it glowed with a light of love and thanksgiving.

No Partiality

The workings of justice, as recorded by Major E. C. Johnson in his "Track of the Crescent," were a trifle erratic. An Englishman was travelling in a wild part of Hungary, and anxious to see the institutions of the country, he made an application to a town magistrate, asking to hear how justice was conducted.

The magistrate, gorgeous in a magnificent Magyar costume, received him cordially, and sent for any case which might be awaiting trial. A gigantic gendarme, in an immense cocked hat, ushered in a prisoner, a plaintiff, and a witness. The prisoner was accused of stealing the plaintiff's goose.

"Well, sir," said the magistrate to the accuser, "what have you to say?"

"Please, your high mightiness, the prisoner stole my goose."

"What have you to say?"

"Please, your high mightiness, I saw the prisoner steal the goose."

"Prisoner, what have you to say?"

"Please, your high mightiness, I did not steal the goose."

The magistrate then delivered the sentence.

"I give you a fortnight in prison," he said to the accused, "for stealing the goose." To the plaintiff he said, "I give you a fortnight in prison for not looking after your goose," and turning to the witness, "You shall have a fortnight in prison for not minding your own business."

If this method were adopted generally there would be fewer cases in the law courts.—Onward.

On the Trail with the Ox

Humors of the Great Land Seeking Trek in the Early Eighties, when the Ox was King of the Travelled Ways

By A. C. Wood

IN these days of fast travel along the country highways, with the auto pushing jagged-edged tunnels through the air, and leaving unholy smells by the way, I am minded to recall, by contrast, days on the trail with the old ox team.

"Uninteresting lot, are they not?" said a Western friend to me recently, as we sat on his verandah and regarded the passing of an apparently endless stream of automobiles. My friend had been with me on the ox transport in the Northwest Rebellion of '85, and was also a pioneer on the trails over the prairie when the old ox team and covered wagon were about the only means of travel. "These things," he continued, waving his hand toward the auto procession, "are not so interesting as ox teams. There's no individuality about them—they all look alike to me. And the drivers, you can hardly tell one from another. It wasn't that way with ox teams and their drivers. Oh, no! There was great variety in those slow old ox teams—both in character, appearance, picturesqueness and 'cussedness.' You remember, on the transport, we had white faced oxen, long-horned oxen, spotted oxen, black oxen, tame oxen, wild oxen and 'cussed' oxen, and all sorts and conditions of oxen, and every team of them had peculiarities that made them interesting, very."

And the drivers were about as picturesque, original and resourceful a bunch of men as ever hit the trail. They just breathed romance and their lan-

guage was full of dynamic energy and, well—had lots of kick to it.

"This travelling by auto is mostly departing and arriving, anyway," he continued; "with the old ox team it was full of adventure and incident."

A Poetical Occasion with the Ox Transport

I recall that one evening while sitting about our camp fire, on the trail between Troy, Qu'Appelle and Batoche, during our little affair with the half-breeds and Indians in the spring of '85, some one suggested that we make limericks—this was a not unusual form of recreation in the early days on the lone prairie. Qu'Appelle station, in those historic days, was known as Troy, Fort Qu'Appelle being a few miles to the north. Two young "bull-punchers" were tied as winners in the rhyming contest. They spilled out the following "alleged" limericks:

There was a young man of Qu'Appelle,
Failed in love and then fell in a well;
He was fished from the water,
Given thanks he had oughter,
Instead, he just raised merry h—l.

There was a young maiden of Troy,
Who dressed up in clothes like a boy;
Mamma looked at the stocking,
Then she said, Oh, how shocking!
Piped the maid, Well, who cares to be coy!

A tall, broad-browed young home-steader, who would likely have been a college professor if he had not chosen the better part, and become a prairie farmer, contributed these lines, which he termed:

An Apostrophe to the Ox

Here's to our friend the Ox,
Stolid Ox!
He's the boy to stand hard knocks,
Tough old Ox!
He's rarely known to fail,
He'll jerk you o'er the trail
Up the hill and through the swale,
Useful Ox.

Hook him to the breaking plow,
Slow old Ox!
Brother to the dairy cow
Is the Ox.
Fore he steps he always thinks,
All he needs is grass and drinks;
And he's h—l on breaking links,
Strong old Ox!

Best Poems in the World, Because Shortest

"Talking about poetry," said a non-poetical but highly practical "bull-puncher," "the two best poems in the world, 'cause they're the shortest, are these spring and fall poems that I learned out of the almanac. The spring one goes:

"Smell o' woods afire,
Creakin' garden gate,
Poet with a lyre,
Liar diggin' bait."

"And this here one about fall, there ain't no foolin' about startin' or hifalutin' words. It goes bang like this:

"The naked hills lie wanton to the breeze,
The fields are bare, the groves unfrocked,
Bare are the shivering limbs of shameless trees—
What wonder is it that the corn is shocked."

His Poetry Wouldn't Stand the Test

The scholar of our outfit—a graduate of Varsity, I believe, produced what he announced as a "Tribute to the Prairie Adventurers," but he got no further than the first verse, for the reason that a warm discussion broke out over an expression he used.

This first verse as I recall it ran:

Into a world of grass, far to the westward lying,
Hardy venturers went—brave, full of hope and gay;
Made camp by creek and swale, nor heeded the coyotes' crying,
Keen of the joy of life on the trail with the sun all day.

"Jim," said the deputy-shepherd, the acknowledged boss and most expert bull-puncher in our party, "you're some word

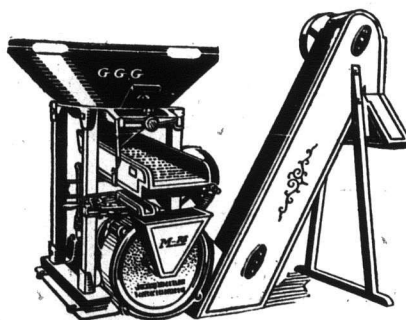
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