

## First Woman to Cross Continent On Horseback



Miss Alberta Clark, of Sheridan, Wyoming, with her pony "Bud," and her dog "Mickey," photographed just after they rode into the surf at Atlantic City, N. J., where Miss Clark completed her cross-continent horseback ride. She began the jaunt at San Francisco and is the first woman to make an ocean-to-ocean trip on horseback.

## VIVID GLIMPSES OF THE LONDON UNDERWORLD

Continued from Page Thirteen

had returned to school without even that insult to their craving stomachs. But "natural causes" is the euphemistic name given by intelligent juries to starvation when inquests are held in the underworld.

Herein is a mystery, in the land of plenty, where granaries, depots, warehouses are full to repletion, and where countless ships are traversing every ocean, bringing the food and fruits of the earth to its shores, starvation is held to be a natural cause of death. The more I know of these women and their circumstances the more and still more I am amazed. How they manage to live at all is a puzzle, but they do live and hang on to life like grim death itself. I believe I should long for death were I placed under similar conditions to those my underworld friends sustain without much complaining.

Look again; here is a shabby gentleman who lives by his wits. He is educated and can write a plausible letter. He is dangerous; his stock in trade composes local directories, "Who's Who," annual reports of charitable societies, clergyman's lists, etc. He is a beggar letter writer and moves from lodging house to lodging house; he writes letters for any of the inmates who have some particular tale of woe to unfold or some urgent appeal to make, and he receives the major part of the resultant charity. He is drunken and bestial; he is a parasite of the worst description, for he preys alike on the benevolent and upon the poor wretches whose cause he espouses.

He assumes many names, he changes carefully the names and addresses of people he has defrauded. In fact he is so clever and slippery that the police and the Charitable Organization Society cannot locate him. So he thrives, a type of many, for every one of London's common lodging houses can provide us with one or more such cunning rogues. I am told that there are 400 large common lodging houses in London, many of them capable of holding several hundred lodgers, which night after night are filled with a weird collection of humanity, and they cast a fatal spell upon all who get accustomed to them.

Few, very few, who have become acclimatized ever go back to settled home life; for the deceptions, amenities and restraints of civilization are hateful. And truly, there is much excitement in the life, for excitement at any rate abounds in common lodging houses.

I am an Englishman, I love liberty. I must be free or die; I want to order my own life, to control my own acts, to run on my own lines; I would that all men should have similar rights. But alas! if you case becomes weak at times I could hardly walk. I am advised me to try your friend, which I did, and soon found great relief. They are the best medicine I have ever taken for heart trouble.

The women of the underworld may be divided into three great classes: those who by reason of their habits or mental peculiarities prefer to live homeless lives. Secondly, those whom misfortune has deprived of settled home life. Thirdly, those who, having

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characteristic of that unclean street. As we entered the house from which no letter had been received we heard a woman call to her neighbor, "They are going to see the old shoemaker." She was correct in her surmise and right glad we were to make the old man's acquaintance; not that he was very old, but then 59 in a London slum may be considered old age. He sat in a Windsor armchair in a very small kitchen; a window at his back revealed that abomination of desolation, a Bethnal Green back yard. He sat as he had sat for years, bent and doubled up, for some kind of paralysis had overtaken him.

He had a fine head and a pointed beard, his thin and weak neck seemed hardly able to bear his heavy burden. He was not over clean and his clothes were, to say the least, shabby. But there he sat, his wife at work to maintain him. We stood, for there was no sitting room for us. Grime, misery and poverty were in evidence.

He told us that his forefathers were Huguenots who fled from France and settled as silk weavers in Spitalfields. He had been apprenticed to boot and shoe making, his particular branch of work having been boots and shoes for actresses and operatic singers; that formerly he had earned good money, but the trade declined as he had grown older and now for some years he had been crippled and unable to work and dependent upon his wife, who was a machinist.

There did not seem much room for imagination and poetry in his home and life, but the following conversation took place:

"It is a very hard life for you sitting month after month on that chair, unable to do anything!"

"It is hard; I do not know what I should do if I were not sitting here."

"Oh, you think, do you? Well, thinking is hard work."

"Not to me; it is my pleasure and occupation."

"All sorts of things; what I have read mostly."

"What have you read?"

"Everything that I could get hold of—novels, poetry, history and travel."

"What novelist do you like best?"

The answer came, prompt and decisive, "Dickens."

"Why?"

"He loved the poor; he shows a greater belief in humanity than Thackeray."

"How do you prove that?"

"Well, take Thackeray's 'Vanity Fair'; it is clever and satirical, but there is only one good character, and he was a fool; but in Dickens, you come across character after character that you can't help loving."

"Which of his books do you like best?"

"A tale of Two Cities."

"Why?"

"Well, because the French Revolution always appeals to me, and secondly, because I think the best bit of writing in all his books is the description of Sidney Carton's ride on the tumbril to the guillotine."

"Have you ever read Carlyle's 'French Revolution'?"

"I will lend it to you."

"If you do I will read it."

"How about poetry; what poets do you like?"

"The minor poets of 200 years ago, Herrick, Churchill, Shenstone and others."

"Why do you like them?"

"They are so pretty, so easy to understand; you know what they mean; they speak of beauty and flowers and love; their language is tuneful and sweet."

Thus the grumpy old shoemaker spoke, but I continued: "What about the present day poets?"

"Swift was the reply: 'We have got none.'"

"What about Keats?"

"Austin?"

"What of Wordsworth, Tennyson and Browning?"

"Well, Wordsworth is too prosy; you have to read such a lot to get a little. Tennyson is a bit sickly and too sentimental. I mean with washy sentiment; Browning I cannot understand; he is too hard for me."

"Now let us talk about dramatists; you have read Shakespeare?"

"Yes, every play again and again."

"Which do you like best?"

"Like them all, the histories and the imaginative; I have never seen one acted, but to me 'King Lear' is his masterpiece."

So we left him doubled up in his chair, in his grime and poverty, lighting up his poor room with great creations, bearing his heavy burdens, never repining, thinking great thoughts and re-enacting great events, for his mind to him was a kingdom.

Only a few doors away we happened on a slum tragedy. We stood in a queer little house of one room up and one down stairs. Let me picture the scene!

A widow was seated at her machine sewing children's clothes. FOUR FIVE GLIMPSES. b m f hg Time, five o'clock in the afternoon; she had sat there for many hours and would continue to sit till night was far advanced.

Suddenly a girl of 12 burst in and threw herself into her mother's arms, crying, "Oh, mother, mother, I have lost the scholarship! Oh, mother, the French was too hard for me!" To our surprise the mother seemed intensely relieved and said, "Thank God for that!"

But the girl wept! After a time we inquired and found that the girl, having passed the elementary standard at an elementary school, had been attending

a higher grade school, where she had been entered for competitive examination at a good class secondary school. If she obtained it the widow would have to sign an agreement for the girl to remain at school for at least three years, but the widow was practically starving, although working fourteen hours daily.

Verily the conflict of duties forms the tragedy of everyday life. The widow was saved by the advanced French; poor mother and poor girl!

Here and there one and another rise superior to their environment and with splendid perseverance and with their lights to honor, played in a slum gutter and climbed a lamppost that he might get a furtive look into a school of art.

All honor and good wishes to the rising young, but all glory to the half-starved widows who shape their characters and form their tastes. To the old shoemaker good wishes; may the small passion that a friend of mine has said to him add to his comfort and his health, may his beloved minor poets with Dickens and Shakespeare long be dear to him, and may his poor little home long continue to be peopled with bright creations and the almost omnipotent power of the underworld.

I am now pleading for the gifted boys and girls of the underworld, not the weaklings, for of them I speak elsewhere. But I will say that while the weaklings are the more hopeless it is the talented that are the most dangerous.

Let me see to it that their powers have some chance of developing in a right direction. When by some extraordinary concurrence of circumstances a council school boy passes on to a university and takes a good degree it is chronicled all over the world; the school, the teacher, the boy and his parents are all held up for show and admiration. I declare it makes me ill.

"What novelist do you like best?"

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