



THE WESTERN HOME MONTHLY

Vol. IX. No. 6.

WINNIPEG, CANADA, JUNE, 1908.

PRICE { 5c. per copy.
50c. per year.

JOEL HUTT'S NEW HOUSE

By RACHEL B. HAMILTON.

I AM a district school teacher in West Virginia. The life is quiet and monotonous, if one is willing it should be so; but a little observation, aided by human sympathy, may give it interest and even romance. Some teachers might be able to write narratives of their own experiences; but it has not fallen to my lot to be a heroine, and having no story of my own I prize more highly those of my neighbors. I have many a nice budget stored away in head, heart and portfolio.

Three years ago I found myself without an engagement. After many inquiries I heard of a school, which I was told was such hard work and poor pay nobody wanted it. Having no other choice I concluded to apply. It was five miles from home by the road, and three across the hills. The former way was so impassable with mud that I preferred walking, my sister Mary going with me. A warm rain had fallen the day before, and the sky was still cloudy, but betokening nothing worse than spring showers. Those that had already fallen had set the birds crazy with delight, filled the air with the smell of the soil, and made the ferns and mosses brighten out among the old dead leaves.

We had been directed to Joel Hutt, who lived "just beyond that hill where you kin see the clearin'." Woods and deep hollows lay between, and we were not sure that upon emerging we would find the "clearin'" whose unsightliness was plainly visible in the distance. Over logs and

across rocky brooks, through underbrush, and up the hill-sides, where the yielding loam sent us back when we pressed most earnestly forward, until we came out in an open field about a quarter of a mile to the right of the stump and log-covered hill. In the center of the field before us stood a house and barn.

"How glad I am," said Mary, as she climbed the fence, "that we found the place so easily. I am quite tired enough to stop!"

"Don't be too well pleased with ap-

pearances. I don't believe that is the house."

"Oh, it must be! There is no other house in sight but that one away over on the next ridge, and it can't be so far off as that, I know."

"But that is beyond the hill we were directed to, while this is nearer than the hill itself."

"I wonder if it wouldn't be best to inquire, instead of talking the matter over here," said my active sister, as she started in the direction of the house. It was a two-story frame,

for the protection of some fruit trees that had been planted around; they might have had some ten years' growth. There had been some attempt at ornament, for a cedar and an arbor vitae grew at what seemed intended for the front of the house. The bricks of the chimney were not discolored by smoke, and the paint was weather-beaten, but not worn from the doors and frames. The fine big barn, standing a little way off, had been well used. Wagon-wheels had cut deep ruts around it,

straight and stiff in every outline—such a house as you may see anywhere and everywhere. This was all we observed as we passed through the field toward it. Half a dozen wild-looking cattle were trying to pick the young grass from among the dry timothy stubble. As we approached they raised their heads, sniffed the air, and ran off at full gallop.

"Not much used to company!" said Mary. "And only look at the house. I wonder where the people live!"

"This is the front, I suppose, and they stay in the back kitchen."

"But there is no road here, and neither gate nor foot-path."

"Little need of gate with only this fragment of rail-fence. But let us go round to the other side."

The other side was just the same. The same rectangle, containing the same number of windows, and a door painted red. All the windows were hung with blue paper blinds which closely fitted the frames. The thresholds were some feet away from the ground, but there were no steps. No paths in the yard, which was only a small enclosure

SHE STARED AT HIM AND AT THE POOR WOMAN, WHO WAS HIDING HER FACE AND CRYING AUDIBLY."

