

The Homesteaders

THE FIRST FURROW

By C. W. JEFFERYS

See pages 16 and 17

AFTER securing temporary accommodation for his family in the town, the intending settler, accompanied by the government land guide, sets out to locate his homestead. He looks over the country for a few days and having inspected the sections open for settlement throughout the township, at last makes his choice. Being a shrewd man, with an eye to the future, he selects a quarter-section on the long rolling slope of the river valley up which the new railway is pushing. He makes his entry at the land agency, gathers his family and prepares for the journey to their new home.

He has a team, and a covered wagon of the prairie schooner type, a tent, some household furniture, bedding, provisions, and a plough. Perhaps he has an extra horse or a couple of head of cattle. The pace is slow, for they carry all they can, so as to save a second trip. At night, he pitches his tent and builds his fire and camps beside the trail. That first night upon the prairie will doubtless never be forgotten; and, to the children at any rate, the whole journey will have the character of a story book adventure. Sometimes they may see an Indian loping along the ridges on his pony: they may even see a stray coyote skulking through the silver willow underbrush. Here and there they come across their future neighbours, some of them old inhabitants of a year or more, with land under cultivation, and cattle pasturing and real houses already built. Farther on they find the more recent arrivals, still in the canvas and tar-paper state of their prairie life. From all of these the newcomers gather scraps of information, and by the time they reach the end of the journey, they have become quite widely acquainted with the people among whom their lot is to be cast.

At length the home-seeker halts his wagon under the crest of the low hill that slopes up from the river, and pitches his tent in the shelter of a poplar bush—on his own land. Wide, unfenced, with no landmark save the surveyor's posts, his hundred and sixty acres lie spread out before him. Far down the valley he can see the white tent of his nearest neighbour, and crawling along the trail behind him, already comes the wagon of the next new settler.

The household goods are soon unpacked, and with a few familiar things—bits of furniture, photographs and a picture or two, brought all the way from the old land, the good wife soon transforms the camp into a home. The man looks to his team and his plough, and lays out the plot of ground which he intends to clear and cultivate this year. At the corners he plants a tall stick of poplar with a red handkerchief tied to the top. In the early morning he hitches his horses to the plough, and with his eye on the distant pole as a guide, strikes into the first furrow. The black soil curls over the gleaming plough-share: the prairie-dog scuttles away through the wild rose bushes. The home-seeker is at last a homesteader.

Compensations of School Life

WHAT a delightful institution school would be—if one could go just when one felt like it. How nice if one could go only on the days when one knew one's lessons thoroughly or was not afraid of getting a pounding by some bigger boy—which would be about one day in the week.

Going to school with the average boy seems to resolve itself into a problem of how not to soak in too much instruction. How curious it is that the things which stand out most prominently in our school career as we review it afterwards, are not the things we learned, but the thrashings we received with the strap or the fun we had with Bill Jones.

I have a vivid recollection of my school days. I think I liked the Latin class the most—not that I cared a red cent about Latin, but because I always stood near the bottom of the class where the most of the fun was going on. The teacher was a dear old soul who really tried to teach us Latin—and succeeded fairly well when we at the back of the room would let him. But what I remember more than the Latin was the ingenuity of one Tomkins, who always sat away back in the corner. I don't think Tomkins ever studied his Latin at all—he studied deviltry instead. He used to take the frame off his slate

and extend the four sides in one straight piece. Then he would insert a pin into one end of this, and reaching cautiously forward, would jab it into a chap about three seats in front of him. For a long time it did not occur to the prodded one that Tomkins could have done it, he sat too far behind—and besides he was always studying his book intently when the prodded one turned. But the prodded one did not stop to investigate. The pin was sharp and it hurt. So he promptly whaled the boy behind him, and then the row started. The lesson was suspended, a searching enquiry was made and resulted, as usual—in nothing. Of course one could not always have Tomkins and his tricks beside him, and so school seemed a dull and dreary affair.

There is such a thing as studying too hard at school and missing all the fun. I remember one fellow who never seemed to trouble his head about any of the lessons. He spent his entire time humming or whistling tunes in school and many were the reprimands he received in consequence. But when the singing lesson came round, he was easily head and shoulders above the rest of the class, and some of us had a superstitious idea that he knew as much about music as the teacher did. According to all the most commonly accepted traditions, this boy should have paid for his general lack of application by being now engaged in the healthy pastime of throwing dirt out of a trench or carrying mortar up a ladder all day long.

Who was he? He is—and he was then—Bert Clarke, the famous cornet soloist, who toured this country and the United States for many years, first with Gilmore's and then with Sousa's band. So boys, do not study too hard, but study the things in which you are interested as hard as you like.

I knew another boy, but that is another story, and I am reminded that space is not elastic.

The Boats

By J. W. BENGOUGH

The Boats are swarming in the Bay,
Glancing and dancing there at play,
In the fair summer morning;
Joyous' shouts of boys and girls,
Defiant eyes and blowing curls
Mock all our solemn warning.

Later, beyond the harbour bar,
Out on the sunlit sea afar,
Beneath the moonlit beam;
Still, gay with jest and bandied speech,
Holding within companion-reach,
The busy oars now gleam.

The quiet eve comes on apace,
And the high ardour of the race
Sinks, and the tumults cease;
The oars are moving faint and slow,
The Boats are scattered wide, and go
On, one by one, in peace.

Mysterious twilight's coming on;
Comrades are lost to sight and gone,
In lone and silent lot.
Each child, now strangely bent and gray,
Drifts on his solitary way,
Forgetting and forgot.

Night,—and the noiseless billows roll
Onward toward the unknown goal,
And each lone boat drifts on;
Morning and harbour out of mind,
The voyager, infirm and blind,
Alone with God—alone!

But as th' unconscious little child
Is with its mother sweet and mild,
So sure God's mercies are;
And we believe the glimmering light,
Now breaking through the gloom of night,
Shines from the morning star.

Wages in Great Britain average much higher than on the Continent, and in France and Germany wages are higher than in Italy, Spain, or Austria. The district Court at Carlsbad, Austria, recently fixed the daily wages of labourers of both sexes for the years 1907, 1908, and 1909, as follows: Males, foremen 60 cents per day, others 40 cents, and apprentices and boys 20 cents. Females: women, 28 cents, and juveniles 18 cents. Servants of the state, 48 cents, except servants of the post and telegraph, who receive 44 cents.