

the oriental and patriarchal type. They are liberal-minded and large-hearted. If they speak in a style hyperbolic, they carry something of the same spirit into their actions, especially in the treatment of strangers. "If you can eat hog and hominy, and chicken fixings," you are welcome, and are pretty sure to fare well at the humblest farm house on the prairie, and the door of the best house you come to will seldom be found closed against you. They don't like tramps, their houses are too far apart, and their women have been too often insulted and annoyed by them to make disreputable people welcome. But a respectable stranger will meet with nothing but the most profuse and exuberant kindness from them.

Changes, I am told, have taken place during the twenty years that have elapsed since I got this peep at the prairie. Many of the first generation of the settlers—the real pioneers—have died. Most of them are now gone. Their sons, too, have as a rule betaken themselves to the cities. The taste of city life has made the patriarchal simplicity of life on the prairie too quiet and dull for them. The land is gradually passing into the hands of strangers—Germans and Poles and Swedes and Bohemians, in a word, foreigners from all parts of Europe are taking the place of the people who twenty years ago were the occupants of the land and gave character to that part of the American continent. The result is that the homogeneous people of whom I have been writing is farther off to day than it was twenty years ago; and the process of evolution which seemed to have so nearly reached its consummation has, in a great measure, to begin again,

and scarcely, I fear, under quite as favourable circumstances as it began before.

There is one thing about the people of the prairie which one could heartily wish were otherwise: the family is not, I fear, as sacred an institution as it should be. The hasty and inconsiderate way in which people are mated, and the ease with which the tie between husband and wife is sundered, is a disgrace and a menace to society. There is no kind of judicial business that is despatched with such reprehensible carelessness and indecent haste as this matter of granting decrees of divorce.

One more observation about the people of the prairie. The part of the prairie to which this paper refers does not appear, so far, to be particularly favorable to personal beauty. The people generally are bony and muscular enough, but they lack color. They are bleached and bloodless. Two things contribute, doubtless, to that result: the presence of more or less malaria, and the bleaching wind of this region. I suspect that a really sound liver is the exception rather than the rule; and in the presence of malarial poison one can hardly have the delicacy and purity of skin which is generally regarded as one of the elements of personal beauty, and the evil is aggravated by the wind and dust. How far these influences may be modified by the more perfect drainage and general cultivation of the soil, the growth of trees, and other incidents of the transformation which is taking place in this region, it is impossible to say, but the impression which one gets is not that the prairie is destined to become the home of a handsome people.