

A PICTURE.

Two little souls, a boy and a girl,
Wandering on to the foot of the hill.
Bushes of green and blossoms of pearl,
Laugh at themselves in the road-side rill.
Crossing the lane a gorgeous jay,
Bathed in the light of a flattering ray,
Jauntily chatters, "Some day, some day!"

Two sweet souls, a man and a maid,
(Beechen branches twisted above),
Picking the daisies which sprinkle a glade,
And trying their luck at a game of love.
"This year!" "Next year!" "What do you say?"
And out of the beeches the curious jay,
Peeps and chuckles, "Some day, some day!"

Two old souls, and the end of the day,
Follows them home to the foot of the hill:
One late gleam which has wandered astray,
Breaks from a copse and dimples the rill.
Autumn leaves are strewn the way,
And hoarse from the larch the hungry jay
Shouts out to the night, "Some day, some day!"

Two poor souls, in the dead of the night,
Side by side, lie stiffened and still.
And the winter's moon just softens her light,
As it solemnly rests at the foot of the hill.
Remembering the bees and the buds and the May,
The summer gold and the autumn gray,
And the warm, green lane where the beetles play,
In the crisp cold night the shivering jay
Croaks out of his dream, "Some day, some day!"

HORNSWOGGLED.

A WESTERN PLANT.

There were four of us in the party—a bank-manager from St. Paul, two Englishmen going out on the plains to hunt, and myself—and we occupied a section in a car on the train bound for Glyndon, in the Red River Valley. That was as far as the train went in those days. We had been discussing the strange things that happened occasionally out in this western world, and our conversation received the silent attention of two other people besides ourselves. One listener was a tall man, in ordinary dress, with a clean-shaven face, excepting in so far as that he wore what the Americans sometimes call "a chin whisker," and over one eye he had a green shade. The other was a small elderly man, whose dress and general appearance stamped him as being a frontiersman. The tall man sat in the section ahead of us, on the seat next to us, as if for the purpose of better hearing our conversation. Not in an offensive way, but as men listen to a general conversation in a public place. The little man sat on the opposite side of the car, leaning out of his seat across the passage in our direction.

"Well, yes," said the bank-manager, in answer to a question put by one of the hunters, "once I was. It was during the week of the State fair at St. Paul. At that time, all the farmers, or grangers, as we call them sometimes, are in the city. The State fair is a good deal like your agricultural shows; I guess it's the same thing under another name; anyhow, it fills the city with agriculturists of every kind, and every kind of business man that has to do with them. On the Thursday afternoon, just before the bank was going to close, I was standing inside the counter, near the teller's drawer, when I walked a regular old prairie hay-seed. The town was half-full of them, and this fellow was a type of a certain class of them. He had on an old pair of trousers tucked into a pair of boots that probably had never seen blacking since they were bought, and a buffalo coat thrown back, exposing a flannel shirt without any collar, but set off with a brand-new green-satin tie. He had, I supposed, bought this, and the new hat he wore, to fix himself up a little for the fair. He wanted polishing up badly enough. He wore also a pair of large spectacles with broad horn rims. To look at him, you could see at once that he was one of those everlasting bores, that talk you to death about crops, and argue all night about the merits of rival mowers. He lounged up to the teller, and said, in a voice that sounded like a clap of thunder in a vinegar-jar, 'Say, mister, I are you running this yere bank?'

"What is't you want?" asked the teller curtly, who was about to check his cash and get away.

"Waal, I'll tell you how it is; and then he turned and addressed his conversation to me. 'You see, squire, I've got some animals down to the fair here. There's two on 'em is the finest steers out of the hull crowd, and they han't given me no prize for 'em neither; but I'll be goldoned if you or any square man won't say as my two steers—mind you, I'm speaking of the two red steers—ain't the best in the hull lot. They are, squire, and you'd better believe it.'

"Well, I haven't got anything to do with awarding the prizes," I said impatiently; "and we're going to close the bank now, office hours are about up."

"You ain't got nothing to do with them, I know, squire, I know that well enough; but don't crowd a man. Look here, I've sold them steers, and six more, to a Chicago buyer, for a matter of five hundred and fifty dollars. It's dirt cheap, squire, and you'd say it if you saw them steers of mine. Mebbe you've been down to the fair?"

"Yen, yes," I said anxious to get rid of him, "I saw the steers, and the cows, too."

"Why, them ain't cows; them's Durham calves," he began, when I struck in, and said,

"Look here, I don't know anything about your steers or your animals anyhow; what's your business with me?"

"Waal, squire, I learn you was the handiest chap at your business on the hull street, and I

want you to go slow a bit, for I ain't much up to your business-folks' ways, and I'll tell you what I'm a-runin' for.' He pulled a long greasy-looking pocket-book from the depths of an inside pocket, and began to untie the twine that fastened it up. 'This yere Chicago man has given me this yere cheque. Now I ain't much on the count myself, and I want to know if this is a square deal. He says that's the same thing as five hundred and fifty dollars in green-backs. Now I want to know if that's so, for no man ain't going to take away them steers if there's any shenanaghin about this yere cheque; you can bet your sweet life on that, squire.'

"I examined the cheque, which was drawn on the first National Bank, Chicago, and signed W. R. Chitty. It appeared to be in due form; but though I had heard the drawer's name I did not know him, and so I told my granger friend.

"Waal, I don't know a heap about him, myself," he said. 'I sold him some cattle last fair-time, and he paid me part in cash and part in one of them cheques, and I got the money all right; but the cheque worn't the same colour as this yere one, and didn't say nothing about no National Bank on it. It had two men's names on it, and one of their pictures in the corner, so as folks could know him, I guess, if he didn't act square up to the handle with them.'

"A different bank, that's all. You say the cheque he gave you was paid?"

"Yen; yes, it were paid O K; and if you say this yere's all right, why, I guess I'll let him take them steers away on Monday."

"I don't know that it is all right; I only suppose so. I can't cash it for you, if that's what you're after."

"No, no; go slow, squire. I ain't asking you to do nothing that ain't reg'lar; but mebbe you could do something with this yere thing, in a day or so, if I leave it with you, as would fetch the dollars and cents out of it, eh, squire? How's that?"

"I'll send it to Chicago for collection, if you like; and I couldn't help laughing at the scared look he put on at the proposition.

"Send it to Chicago? Hold up there, squire. I don't suppose but you know your business; but I have heard they're a mighty slick lot down to Chicago."

"O, that will be all right, you needn't be afraid," I said; for he evidently thought the people of Chicago were on the look-out for greenhorns.

"Waal, squire, if you're satisfied, I am; but he mighty keeful them Beats down to Chicago don't hornswoogle us both out of them five hundred and fifty dollars. It would come mighty hard on me just now, for I'm going to put up a new house on my place down to Kandiyohi County, and the old woman's on the build too for her cheese fixings."

"Then he invited me to come down to the fair next day, to look at his two red steers, and offered to stand the drinks there and then, if I would come out; and then he went off. I may tell you that, when I told him to indorse his cheque, he first wanted me to do it because it wasn't much in his way, and he'd had to get a neighbour to do it last year; but finally he wrote 'Sel Bird, Kandiyohi County, Minnesota,' across the back of the cheque, making one line of each small word, and two of Kandiyohi and Minnesota, in letters of about a quarter of an inch long.

"Next day he was in again to ask how that affair was getting along, and to show me a shawl he'd bought for his old woman. 'Married her twenty-three year ago down to Wisconsin, squire,' he said; 'and she can hitch up a span of horses quick'r'n than any woman, and most men, round the place.' He had to tell me too that a neighbour of his had also sold a steer to this same buyer, and had been paid in cash, and he wanted to know whether I didn't think this suspicious. I told him it was not, but rather the contrary, as I supposed the amount being small, the Chicago buyer preferred settling in cash. No doubt, I said, his own cheque would be paid in a few days by return of mail. He said that was all right, he worn't in no hurry. Then he offered to introduce me to his friend who had sold the steer, but I promptly declined. One of that crowd was enough for me.

"Soon after the bank opened on Saturday, he was in again, to tell me that he had met another neighbour from Kandiyohi at the hotel, who had sold to another Chicago man, for a cheque; and that he had advised its being brought to me to be fixed. I thanked him, and again declined an invitation to come right along and see them steers. He left, saying he had got to get a few fixings for the old woman right away, as he calculated upon getting up the line home that evening. Just before the bank was going to close, however, he was back again.

"He had bought a span of horses from a man who was exhibiting in the fair, and had agreed to give two hundred and fifty dollars for them. The man wanted his money down, because he had to take his animals out of the fair-ground; and my granger also wished to get home for Sunday, the fair being over. Had I got the money from Chicago yet? No, there wasn't time. I couldn't receive it till Monday morning.

"Well, he'd heard at the hotel, he said, that the Chicago buyer was a square man and did regular business round the State; but his fear was, that the Chicago bank might hornswoogle me about the money. I told him there was no danger of that; and he then asked whether I couldn't pay the man for the horses, and deduct it out of the amount of his cheque. This was

not usual, of course, and there was no time to make inquiries about him, as the bank was just going to close for the day, it being Saturday; but there seemed to be no danger about doing so. He was evidently one of the granger crowd that filled the town; he had pressed me on several occasions to accompany him down to his stalls at the fair; and his story generally hung so well together that, after a little hesitation, I said I would do so.

"I knew the Chicago men were in town buying, and I had old hay-seed's indorsement; so I handed him a cheque, and told him to make it out for two hundred and fifty dollars. It ended in my having to fill up the body of the cheque, and he signed it. He counted his money, held out his hand to shake hands, and, inviting me to call in whenever I came down to Kandiyohi, departed. I never saw him again. The cheque was returned from Chicago marked, 'Not W. R. Chitty's usual signature;' and as I read it I knew that a confidence-man had gone through me for two hundred and fifty dollars."

"One of that crowd was enough for you, then, evidently," said one of the Englishmen.

"Good enough!" said the manager, smiling; "the worst of it was that, thinking over the matter that evening, it all of a sudden flashed across me that the hand I had shaken was not that of a regular granger. It wasn't rough enough. That shaking hands was the only weak part of the cuss's whole game. It was too late, however, then, to do anything, even if I had been sure."

"Pretty rough on you, sir," said the car-conductor, who had stood by to hear the end of the story.

"Yen," said the manager, "I used to get mad about it for a long time; but I've got over that now."

"Couldn't play it on you again, sir?"

"No, not worth a cent."

"There's some fellow playing the confidence-game along the line now," the conductor said; "scooped a granger out of a hundred dollars yesterday, and went through a Canadian emigrant, on his way to Garry, for all he was worth. I guess he'll get away, though, before we strike him. He'll have a rough time of it if any of the boys about Glyndon lay hands on him. I'm told there's an old prairie-crusher along here somewhere, that he went through last fall, that swears he'll raise his hair if he catches him."

I had noticed that both the fellow-travellers near us had listened attentively to the story, the long man smiling as the manager related the way he had been taken in, and the old frontiersman leaning further and further over the arm of his seat, till his head almost reached across the passage of the car. When the conductor had ceased speaking, the old man broke into the conversation with a burst that was almost a yell, "And by the Eternal, I'll do it!" We all turned to look at the old fellow, who had worked himself into a great state of excitement, though we had not paid much attention to him. "Jumping Judas!" he continued, "if ever I sot eyes on that all-fired skunk again; see here, mister," he said, pointing at the bank-manager, and getting off his seat the better to ask his question, "did you take note of that white-livered hound's eyes?"

"Not particularly," said the manager. "He wore spectacles, but I noticed a scar running back from one eye almost to his ear."

"It's him!" said the old man, and forthwith he delivered himself of a string of ingeniously blasphemous invectives. Indeed, it struck me at the time that in this particular he was quite equal to any Western stage-driver I had ever met.

"Went through you too, did he?"

"Did he? see here, I'll tell you."

"Wire in, old man," said the manager; "but look here, there's a parson and a lady at the other end of the car, so let up a little on those ornaments of speech of yours."

"I ain't going to say nothing to hurt the minister, nor yet the lady, but I'll raise that slab-faced galoot's hair, sure as you're born, if ever I strikes his trail again. You can bet your bottom dollar on that, Colonel. I'd been out for a couple of year on the Yellow Stone, tradin' along with a half-breed from Pembina, and I'd made a matter of six hundred dollars or thereabouts. I come in last fall making for Chicago. I'd put a one side a few dollars for a bit of a bend at St. Paul, me and that half-breed Joe Bourinet, and the rest was a-going to my gal at Chicago; she was to school there along of a convent, and a-going to be married to a young chap. They was a-going to move West a piece, and set up store, and the old man was a-going to do it for them. I hankered after this all the time I was out tradin' with them Sioux, for I han't seen her better'n an six year; and I was almighty fixed on this here idee of mine. I was a-going to whoop it up lively for them, you'd better bet, and the old man was to be the big toad in the puddle too. Well I come along up the river with Joe, and crossed at the forks up here, and come on down till I struck this here railroad. Joe, he got into a muss with a fellow at the Forks, and got hurt; so I had to leave him to be looked after by the man as runs the shanty at the crossing; but I come across a chap who made himself sweet as syrup. He was up the valley buying wheat to ship east to Chicago, he was, and he'd been out a little way on the plains, he had, to see something of the Indians on their native plains, and it give him great satisfaction to meet a man as had lived years with them. There worn't nothing pleased him so much as meeting me, the measly-faced son of Judas Iscariot; and he fooled this here blamed old

idiot as is telling you, till he couldn't keep his blamed old tongue still, but got talking about his trading and what he'd realised. When I thinks of it I gets madder'n a hunted buffalo. Well, colonel, we travelled along together, settin' side by side in one of these here car-seats; and he brings out a small bottle of brandy—what you got at the hotels wasn't good enough for him—and nothin' wouldn't do him but I must tell him all about my life among the Tetons, for he was a-going to make a book, he was, to show up the rascality of them Indian agents. We sot down to dinner together at one of the stations along here, and got to be as friendly as a couple of prairie dogs; and when we got to St. Paul, nothing would do but I must stop along of him at his hotel. He had a small oak box bound with iron with him, and he kep this between his feet all the time, and took it in to dinner with him, and wouldn't let the conductor nor no one handle it. One time he went into the baggage-car to find the boy with the cigars he left the box with me, and told me to be all-fired partic'lar that no one else didn't touch it, for it was filled with money as he was using, buying up wheat for shipment to Chicago. No woman with her fust baby worn't so partic'lar as he were about that box. When we gets to the hotel and slicked ourselves down some, he says, 'My friend, I want you to come along with me to the bank, while I take this box and deposit of it there. I don't know but what, out West here, some evil-disposed person might not attack me in the street, if they saw me carrying it. If you are with me it will be safe.' I waited outside while he took the box in; and after a while he come out and said that was all right, and his mind was easy. Then we went back to the hotel to eat, and he said he was a-going out. 'I've got to see the freight-agent of the railroad,' he says, the lying scoundrel. He didn't want no freight-agent. 'I'm a-going to see him to make arrangements for the shipment of some car-loads of wheat I have down here to the depot, to go through by the freight-train to-night. When I've fixed that I'll come back, and we'll go together to the show up here, to the theatre.' 'Bully for you,' says I for I thought he was a little on the minister side of the trail, and didn't go to no shows, leastways not to that kind, as the pictures was about all over the walls; g's whooping it up, you know, colonel—reg'lar out-and-out show. Waal, I waited about an hour, having a drink or two with the boys round, for they had a fust-rate elegant bar to that hotel, when back come my friend all of a lather, as if he'd been running afore a war party. 'What's the matter?' says I.

"It's real bad," he says. 'I must find that bank cashier somehow; the freight-agent won't let the wheat go on to-night to be paid on delivery. He wants the freight-charges paid in advance or else the wheat can't go; and it's got to go, for it's sold for delivery.'

"And then he stood thinking, a-gathering his brows, and then figuring on a slip of paper, and muttering about dollars and cents and car-loads, and every once in a while saying as it was too provoking he hadn't left his money with the hotel clerk instead of taking it to the bank."

"Why, in thunder, don't you take it out of the bank again?" I asked him.

"I can't," he says; 'the bank's closed, and I can't get it till the morning.' And then he began walking up and down the room again, and muttering all about figures and bushels and such like, and once and again looking over at me. At last he says, 'If you'll wait here for me, I'll go up to that bank cashier's private residence and explain the case. Mebbe he'll come down to the office and let me have that box out again this evening; for get it I must, or I'm clean busted on that wheat.'

"That's all right, pard," I says; 'step right up to the cuss's shanty and bring him right along. I'll come with you; and if he won't come, by thunder, it wouldn't be much of a job for you and I to handle him ourselves.'

"No, no, no; that won't do," he says. 'If he saw another person he might think we meant no good, and might refuse to open the bank till the clerks did it in the morning. I'll go alone, if you'll wait for me here.'

"Waal, I was agreeable, and so I stepped down and set 'em up again with the boys at the bar; and then it come over me, why, in thunder, I didn't lend him the money till the morning instead of fooling away the time arter that cashier, when we might have been having a high old time at the show. So when he come back in half an hour, looking as if he'd seen all his relations clean scalped before his eyes, and said that the bank cashier had gone into the country for the night and that if he couldn't get that wheat on he was a ruined man, cos wheat had risen ten cents a bushel owing to some scoundrel cornering it, I says right off,

"How much does that freight man want?"

"Let me see," says he, looking as bright as a new dollar; 'six car-loads, sack-freight, to Chicago.' And then he got to figuring again, and says at last, 'With what I have in my pocket-book I guess I can fix it with four hundred and eighty dollars. It's a new proprietor to this hotel, or I guess I could have borrowed it at the office till the morning. I've best part of a thousand dollars left in that box up at the bank.'

"Four hundred and eighty," says I; 'well, I'll let you have it till the morning; for I know'd he'd got the money, for I'd handled that iron-bound box my self; and then we'll git right away and see that show.'

"I took out a bear-skin pouch I had, and