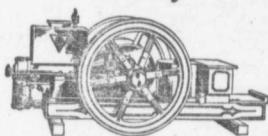


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Winning the Wilderness

(Continued from page 16.)

would rule the land where now they must fight for the bare necessities of existence, picturing life not as it was then with its many hardships, but as it would be in a future day when the real world whose last outpost they had left almost fifty miles to the eastward, should move toward them and help to people the prairies.

All the week days were full of duties, but every Sabbath morning found the three settlers of the valley making a prairie sanctuary of the Aydelot cabin. The elder Aydelots had not united with any church, but Asher and Jim, when they were only boys, had been converted at a Methodist revival in Cloverdale. It was an old-fashioned kind of religious leading, but it was strong enough to hold the two for all the years that followed. Virginia had been reared an Episcopalian, but the men out-voted her and declared that the Aydelot home was the Sunflower Inn for six days in the week, but on the seventh it was the "First Methodist Church of the Conference of the Prairies."

There was no levity in its service, however, and He who dwelleth not in temples made with men's hands blessed with His own benediction of peace and trust and courage the three who set up their altar in this far-away place.

On Sabbath afternoons they explored the "wand dunes" and the grassy level up and down the river. Sometimes they rode northward to the main trail in hope of sighting some prairie schooners coming southward, but not once that season did the trail hold a human being for them.

October slipped into November with a gradual sharpening of the frosty air. Everything had been made as snug as possible for the winter. The corrals were enlarged for the stock. The houses and stables were thatched against the cold and storms; and fuel and food were carefully stored. But November was almost passed before the end of the bright and sometimes even balmy days.

"We must have Jim up to the Sunflower Inn for Thanksgiving dinner. Might as well invite the whole neighborhood," Asher said one evening, as he helped Virginia with the supper dishes.

"I'm planning a real dinner, too," his wife declared, "just like old Mammy Dixie used to cook. You couldn't tell it from hers if you'd ever eaten one of her spreads."

"I suppose it will taste about as near like one of Diane's meals as you will look like the cook that made her meals," Asher answered.

"Well, I'm getting along that way. Look at my tanned arms now. There's a regular desert of perfect fire-guard at the elbow. And my muscles, Mammy Dixie would say, 'is jus' monstrous.'"

Virginia pushed back her sleeve to show the well-marked line where white above met tan below.

"Jim will think anything is better than eating alone out of his own grub box, and your dinner will be a feast," Asher said, opening the door to carry out the dish water. "What do you think of this?"

A gust of cold rain swished in as the door fell open.

"Our rain is here, at last. Maybe it will bring snow for Thanksgiving, and we could have a touch of New England here," Virginia said.

(To be continued.)

A tourist was driving along a dusty road in the west of Ireland one hot summer day, and stopped at a small inn for refreshment. On asking the jockey if he was dry, that worthy replied: "Throy—Did yer honor say dhroy? I'm so dhroy that if yee slapped me back y'd see the dust flyin' out of me mouth!"



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