



CHAPTER II.

"The present hour repeats upon its strings
Echoes of some vague dream we have forgot ;
Dim voices whisper half remembered things,
And when we pause to listen, answer not."—
A. B. Proctor.

PRAIRIE LIFE.—BROWN KIRWAN.

THE ranche door flung wide open on the following morning, and the bright sunshine flooding the interior of the building shows us Willie Woodhouse busily engaged in brushing some of the dirt and dust from the common sitting room of the ranche.

Then he cleaned the windows, washed up the breakfast things, and sat down with his books before him.

Charley Kirwan and his helpers had left him alone hours ago.

From door and window the sweet scent of prairie flowers crept into the rough building, the sunshine throwing into bold relief the shadows.

The tongues of fire flickered and curled around, and through the crevices of the heavy logs piled upon the hearth, and made beautiful the soft white wood ashes