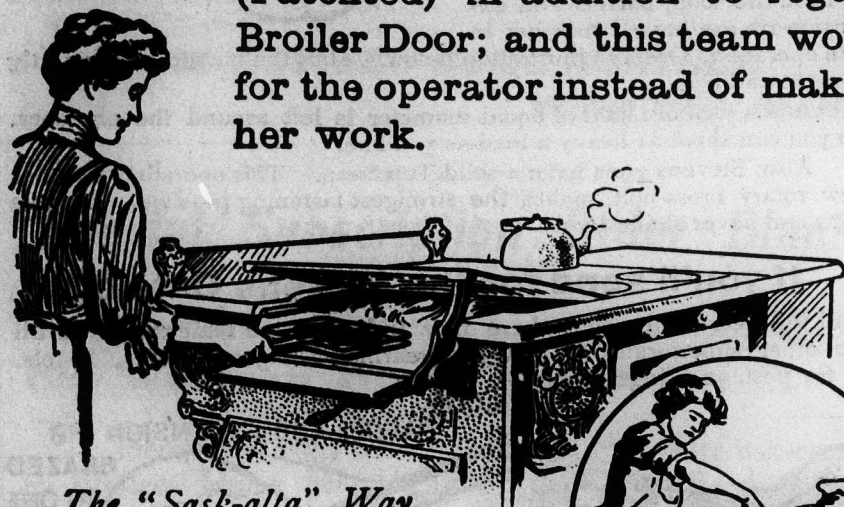


Sask-alta Steel Range

BROILING MEAT & TOASTING BREAD.

One way produces evenly broiled meat and evenly toasted bread without taxing the patience of the housewife. This way is represented by "Sask-alta" Range. The reason: "Sask-alta" Range has an Automatic Lift Top (Patented) in addition to regular Broiler Door; and this team works for the operator instead of making her work.

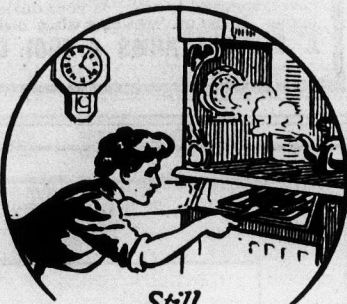


The "Sask-alta" Way

Another way produces unevenly broiled meat and unevenly toasted bread and taxes the patience of the housewife. This way is represented by most Ranges. The reason: Some Ranges have "only" a Broiler Door, others have a contrivance like that illustrated in top small drawing; both of which enjoy the distinction of tiring the arm that holds the broiler and tiring the eye that directs the arm.



Another Way

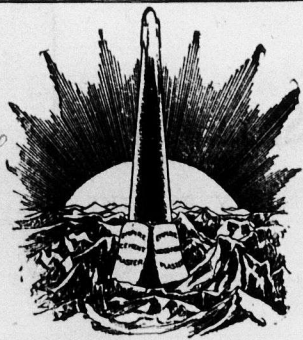


Still Another Way

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A Departmental Case.

By O. HENRY.



IN Texas you may travel a thousand miles in a straight line. If your course is a crooked one, it is likely that both the distance and your rate of speed may be vastly increased. Clouds there sail serenely against the wind. The whippoorwill delivers its disconsolate cry with the notes exactly reversed from those of its Northern brother. Given a drought and a subsequently lively rain, and lol from a glazed and stony soil will spring in a single night blossomed lilies, miraculously fair. Tom Green County was once the standard of measurement. I have forgotten how many New Jerseys and Rhode Islands it was that could have been stowed away and lost in its chaparral. But the legislative ax has slashed Tom Green into a handful of counties hardly larger than European kingdoms. The legislature convenes at Austin, near the centre of the State; and, while the representative from the Rio Grande country is gathering his palm-leaf fan and his linen duster to set out for the capital, the Panhandle solon winds his muffler above well-buttoned overcoat and kicks the snow from his well-greased boots ready for the same journey. All this merely to hint that the big ex-republic of the Southwest forms a sizable star on the flag, and to prepare for the corollary that things sometimes happen there uncut to pattern and unfettered by the metes and bounds.

The Commissioner of Insurance, Statistics and History of the State of Texas was an official of no very great or very small importance. The past tense is used, for now he is a Commissioner of Insurance alone. Statistics and history are no longer proper nouns in the government records.

In the year 188— the governor appointed Luke Coonrod Standifer to be head of this department. Standifer was then fifty-five years of age, and a Texan to the core. His father had been one of the State's earliest settlers and pioneers. Standifer himself had served the commonwealth as Indian fighter, soldier, ranger and legislator. Much learning he did not claim, but he had drank pretty deep of the spring of experience.

If other grounds were less abundant, Texas should be well up in the lists of glory as the grateful republic. For both as Republic and State, it has busily heaped honors and solid rewards upon its sons who rescued it from the wilderness.

Wherefore and therefore, Luke Coonrod Standifer, son of Ezra Standifer, ex-Terry ranger, simon-pure Democrat and lucky dweller in an unrepresented portion of the politico-geographical map was appointed Commissioner of Insurance, Statistics and History.

Standifer accepted the honor with some doubt as to the nature of the office he was to fill and his capacity for filling it—but he accepted, and by wire. He immediately set out from the little country town where he maintained (and was scarcely maintained by) a somnolent and unfruitful office of surveying and map-drawing. Before departing he had looked up under the I's S's and H's in the "Encyclopædia Britannica" what information and preparation towards his official duties those weighty volumes afforded. A few weeks of incumbency diminished the new commissioner's awe of the great and important office he had been called upon to conduct. An increasing familiarity with its workings soon restored him to his accustomed placid course of life. In his office was an old, spectacled clerk—a consecrated, informed, able machine, who held his desk regardless of changes of administrative heads. Old Kauffman instructed his new chief gradually in the knowledge of the department without seeming to do so, and kept the wheels revolving without a slip of a cog.

Indeed, the Department of Insurance,

Statistics and History carried no great heft of the burden of state. Its main work was the regulating of the business done in the State by foreign insurance companies, and the letter of the law was its guide. As for statistics—well you wrote letters to county officers, and scissored other people's reports, and each year you got out a report of your own about the corn crop and the cotton crop and pecans and pigs and black and white population, and a great many columns of figures headed "bushels" and "acres" and "square miles," etc.—and there you were. History? The branch was purely a receptive one. Old ladies interested in the science bothered you some with long reports of proceedings of their historical societies. Some twenty or thirty people would write you each year that they had secured Sam Houston's pocket knife or Santa Anna's whisky-flask or Davy Crockett's rifle—all absolutely authenticated—and demanded legislative appropriation to purchase. Most of the work in the history branch went into pigeon-holes.

One sizzling August afternoon the commissioner reclined in his office chair, with his feet upon the long, official table covered with green billiard cloth. The commissioner was smoking a cigar, and dreamily regarding the quivering landscape framed by the window that looked upon the treeless capitol grounds. Perhaps he was thinking of the rough and ready life he had led, of the old days of breathless adventure and movement, of the comrades who now trod other paths or had ceased to tread any, of the changes civilization and peace had brought, and, maybe, complacently, of the snug and comfortable camp pitched for him under the dome of the capitol of the State that had not forgotten his services.

The business of the department was lax. Insurance was easy. Statistics were not in demand. History was dead. Old Kauffman, the efficient and perpetual clerk, had requested an infrequent half-holiday, incited to the unusual dissipation by the joy of having successfully twisted the tail of a Connecticut insurance company that was trying to do business contrary to the edicts of the great Lone Star State.

The office was very still. A few subdued noises trickled in through the open door from the other departments—a dull, tinkling crash from the treasurer's office adjoining, as a clerk tossed a bag of silver to the floor of the vault—the vague, intermittent clatter of a dilatory typewriter—a dull tapping from the state geologist's quarters as if some woodpecker had flown in to bore for its prey in the cool of the massive building—and then a faint rustle and the light shuffling of the well-worn shoes along the hall, the sounds ceasing at the door toward which the commissioner's lethargic back was presented. Following this, the sound of a gentle voice speaking words unintelligible to the commissioner's somewhat dormant comprehension, but giving evidence of bewilderment and hesitation.

The voice was feminine; the commissioner was of the race of cavaliers who make salaam before the trail of a skirt without considering the quality of its cloth.

There stood in the door a faded woman, one of the numerous sisterhood of the unhappy. She was dressed all in black—poverty's perpetual mourning for lost joys. Her face had the contours of twenty and the lines of forty. She may have lived that intervening score of years in a twelve-month. There was about her yet an aurum of indignant unappeased, protesting youth that shone faintly through the premature veil of unearned decline.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am," said the commissioner, gaining his feet to the accompaniment of a great creaking and sliding of his chair.

"Are you the governor, sir?" asked the vision of melancholy.