

should have overlooked anything of value. That the precaution is worth while is seen from the fact that diamonds worth \$1,400,000 were recovered from these tailings last year.

A London syndicate contracts to take the entire output of the mines; and all cutting is done on the Continent of Europe, chiefly in Amsterdam and Antwerp. The stones vary enormously in quality and fetch in the rough from \$1.50 to \$200 per carat. There is very little "leakage" considering the stupendous scale on which the diamond mining is done. One year, however, a negro sorter was found to have swallowed \$3,700 worth of stones, but a colleague broke this record by swallowing 348 carats of diamonds valued at \$5,300.

The Kaffirs are constantly devising new modes of smuggling. They will load their pipe-bowl with small diamonds under a layer of tobacco and vigorously puff smoke to divert suspicion. Leaves of books have been so cut that no one would think diamonds were concealed between them. Other smugglers have gone so far as to inflict serious cuts upon themselves and stuff valuable stones into these wounds.

It will be news to most people that diamonds are found of every color—yellow, brown, blue, green, black, red and purple. None of them are impressive in the rough; you would take them for scraps of soda or dull glass. The cutting of the stones by the lapidaries of Antwerp and Amsterdam is a most delicate task, handed down from father to son. One diamond is cut with another, and the dust has a high commercial value.

From the cutter the stone passes to the polisher, who goes to work on its sixty-four facets until the diamond as a whole is sufficiently brilliant. Each polisher stands before a solid iron wheel whirling horizontally at two thousand five hundred revolutions a minute. The cleaver can cut in a day what it takes a polisher a month to polish. Altogether the magic caves of South Africa turn out at least \$20,000,000 worth of stones every year; and the De Beers people are naturally the power of the African continent. They have just spent nearly \$7,000,000 on a dynamite factory, so enormous an item is the annual bill for explosives to dislodge the flinty blue ground which holds the precious hoard.

These people are all powerful in the

matter of diamonds; and periodically the dictum goes forth from the palatial offices in St. Swithin's Lane, London, that a five or ten per cent increase is to be made in their price. Last season colored stones were becoming fashionable owing to the increased cost of diamonds; but women the world over revert sooner or later to the most beautiful of all the precious stones.

Careful official calculation has it that fashionable New York alone wears \$150,000,000 in precious stones; and statistics compiled at the custom-house of that city for the first ten months of this year show the assessed imports of precious stones to be more than \$39,280,550, which is eight times greater than the same period in 1896, when pure stones were from twenty-five to thirty-five per cent cheaper.

As to diamonds alone, \$57,000,000 worth of them in the rough were admitted into New York within the last five or six years. It is estimated that the duty on stones brought into America's greatest city during 1906 amounted to more than \$4,000,000, or nearly half the entire appropriation for the expenses of the custom-house.

Prairies from a Train Window

By E. R. Roberts

TO acquire a new object of admiration and enthusiasm is one of the tonic pleasures of life. I think, also, it is an added joy if the admiration is for something which you have not expected to like. Personally—and it is of the very nature of the essay, so those who define it assure us, to be personal—I did not anticipate forming any great attachment for the prairies. True, I had been told of their charm, but I had listened with silent incredulity. Being then (and now, and forever) a lover of trees, I did not see how any region where trees were few and far between or not at all, could be beautiful! But it took just one long look from a train window, coming eastward from the land of mountains, to add one more to the list of prairie-devotees.

A sense of liberation and of boundless possibilities comes to one as the great spaces spread out on every side. There is no likeness but that of vastness, I suppose, between the prairies and the "Marshes of Glynn," but two lines from Lanier's beautiful poem of that name came to me as I gazed:

"As the marsh-hen builds her a nest in the watery sod,
Behold, I will build me a nest in the greatness of God."

and then the feeling of restfulness in the largeness brought to mind Elizabeth Barrett Browning's similar thought:

"And I smiled to think God's greatness
Flows around our incompleteness,
Round our restlessness His rest."

To many, the prairies suggest but monotony, wearisome sameness, a dreary blank of plain. To those whom they attract, they make an appeal that cannot readily be clothed in words. They mean, for such, rest, peace, space, recuperation.

The soul expands to inhabit that great sweep of airy vastness. The horizon is far, far—but thought goes out to it, and vision rejoices in its amplitude of range. There is nothing here to shut us in. The scope of life seems limitless in this great breadth of earth and sky.

Then, there was a sunset seen from that train window, and put away among the not-to-be-forgotten things "in some close corner of the brain." A sunset! Was it a sunset? A sea of fire, a deep of unimaginable splendor; a golden ball descending slowly through it from a dark, bluish-purple band of massive clouds! For pure immensity of color that sky surpasses all that I have ever seen. Miles of it, leagues of it, the clear spirit of gold and rose and amber and shades for which we have not found a name. I remember hearing of a child who had lived always in the mountains, and who was on her first journey to the east. When she went to sleep the train was still among mountains, but during the night the prairies were reached, and when she looked from her window in the morning her eyes met only the open plains. The child was aghast.

"Mother!" she cried; "mother! everything's all gone!"

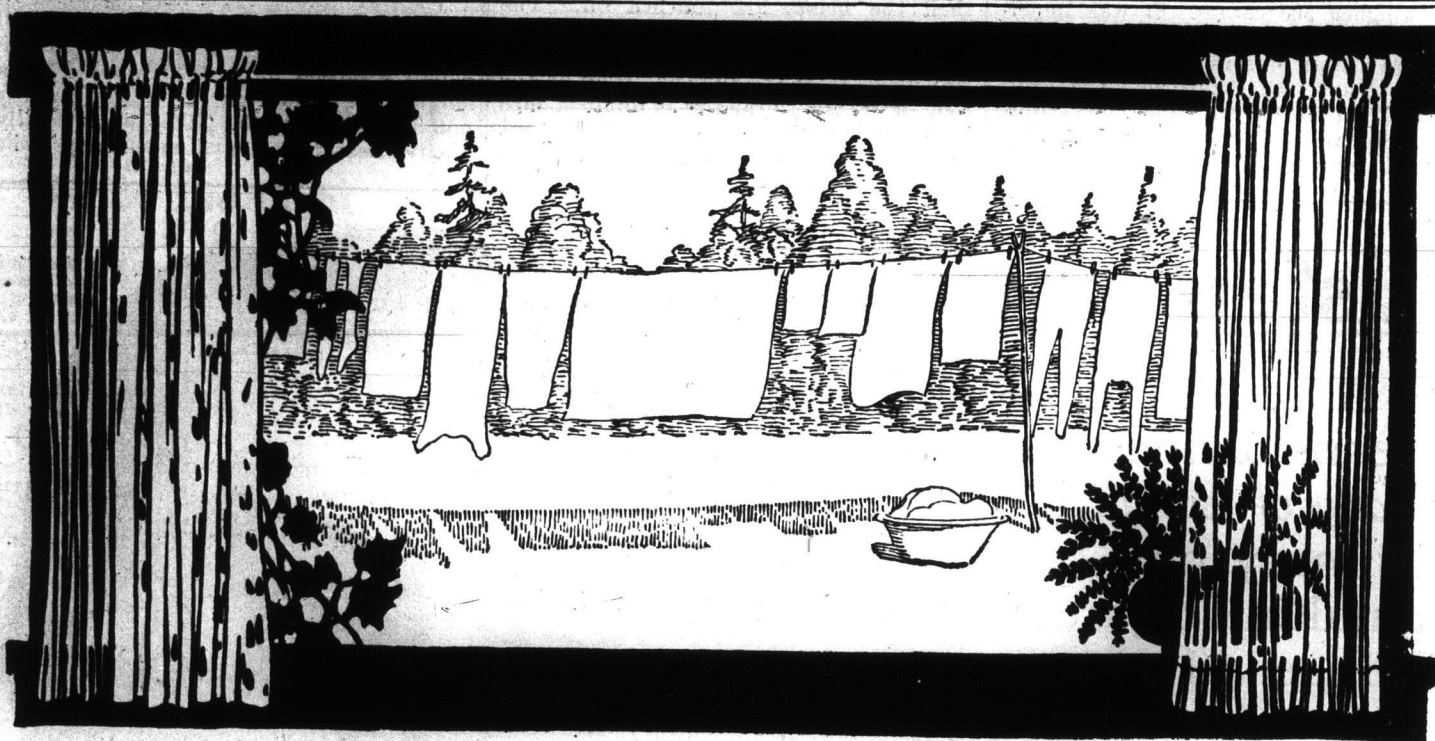
But my feeling, as I looked from the window on the great spaces was very different, and my instinctive exclamation, if I had made one, would have been: "There is room for everything!"

Our Appalling Censorship

To try the patience of the Press to the last limit, to render a collective understanding of the war impossible, to make a people uneasy to the point of apathetic despair seems to have been the ideal of the Press censorship.—H. G. Wells.

The Alchemy of War

No work is nobler or more beneficent than the creation of a national temper at once calm, enduring and resolute; and that is the temper which, again and again, has been wrought in the English people by the dreadful discipline of war.—Rt. Hon. G. W. E. Russell.



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