

a rough hillock, so as to almost upset the democrat, brought him quickly back to the present. Pulling himself together and the team back to the trail, he said: "You'll find it hard and strenuous, but you will also find there is more in life here than is in the sheltered life of the East."

"I hope you are right—I know you are. But I confess it is only lately that I have come to look on life this way. I have been one of the sheltered ones. I determined to come West only after I was pushed out of my home," she said.

"I can say much the same," he replied. "I was not pushed out, but it was not pleasant for me to stay, so I came away to where everything is new, and I have never regretted it."

The bronchos, now quite tractable, had dropped into that easy long distance trot acquired only by horses that travel long distances, and guided along the winding trail, past clumps of white stemmed poplars, through patches of silver willow, the air heavy with its fragrance, and over open prairie all beautiful in the fresh greenness of spring time. Miss Walters thought she had never seen anything so beautiful, and shut out for the time being any dread she might have of her new position, to enjoy the open free beauty of it all.

After two hours' driving, farmsteads appeared, and the winding trail merged into a straight road with a wire fence on each side.

"There's Lone Lake school," said Mr. Bulwer indicating a lonely little white building a distance away on the left.

Miss Walters looked, and her courage forsook her. What she saw was a demure little building, with regulation porch and three windows like eyes that gazed appealingly over the intervening willow bushes. A meadow-lark sang from a post near it and a friendly robin did its best by its "Cheer-up, Cheer-up" to advance a welcome from the lonely spot.

There was not another building in sight. "Where do the children come from?" enquired the new teacher, blankly gazing around, hopelessly and instinctively drawing closer to the big strong man besides her, who was quick to sense the inarticulate call for sympathy.

Without being mentally aware of it, his life became fuller.

"Oh, all around. You cannot see the houses for the bushes, but there are quite a few in school distance. Mr. Johnston, the Secretary, with who I presume you will stay, lives a half mile straight ahead on this road. He has two children of school age." Then, as they drove on past the lonesome school, Mr. Bulwer, encouraged by that silent appeal, ventured further: "It is very quiet here compared with Hamilton, and you will, no doubt, have attacks of homesickness. If you will allow me, I shall be glad to take you for a drive any time. Bill and Bob are as good a potion for homesickness as anything I know," pointing to his spirited team from which now came wafts of perspiration. "I don't work them; just keep them for running around, and they do not always get enough of that," he added further, to make it easier for the teacher to accept.

"Thank you. That's good of you, and if Bill and Bob are a cure for homesickness I am sure I will have to call on them quite often." This last with a peculiar catch in her voice, as just then they passed a clump of poplars and willow bushes and came in full view of the boarding place to be—a whitewashed log building with a lean-to at the back for a kitchen, a small frame stable of new lumber, and farther back a row of log buildings with straw roofs.

They drove into the yard in spite of the protests of a big collie dog that contested every step. Two children came running out and stood with wide open eyes watching, while Mrs. Johnston in gingham house-dress and long white apron that floated out in the breeze, came questioningly to the democrat.

"How do you do, Mrs. Johnston; I've brought you a teacher—Miss Walters."

"Teacher? I'm glad to see you," shaking hands, "but we never heard there was one coming. I had begun to think we were not going to get one at all. Come right in, though. We are glad to have you. Tie up your team, Mr. Bulwer, and stay for supper."

"Oh, no, thank you, I must get home. I want to drive over and see how the men got on with the tractor over on the Scott quarter."

"It was lucky Mr. Bulwer was in

town," vouched Mrs. Johnston, after she had heard Miss Walter's story of how she had come. "He has the best drivers of any around here. He is better off than the most of us; they say he has lots of money, but he is not one of those stuck-up sort. He has two sections of land, and is running everything as they say in books, and makes a success of it, too. The rest of us are all just beginning; no one has very much, but we are all quite comfortable. A young student preaches every second Sunday in the school house, and now that we have a teacher we will be all right."

"Are there many young folks?" queried the teacher.

"Oh, yes, there are the two Miss McLeans, nice girls, and Sadie Jones over this way, and any amount of nice young men baching it on their homesteads. But I must not tell you about them; I must keep them away," she added, laughingly, "or they'll be stealing our teacher."

"They won't want me," laughed Miss Walters, "they need wives of better stuff than I'm made of."

"No fear of that; they'll be dropping in, you'll see. You needn't think of Mr. Bulwer, though; he is not married, but he is a regular old bachelor, who never looks at a girl. All he thinks of is better improvements on his farm; better cattle and horses. He has a fine herd of Hereford cattle; you must see his place some day."

The first Sunday Miss Walters spent in her new surroundings threatened to be a very lonesome one. There was no service that day. Mr. and Mrs. Johnston slept the most of the forenoon, and the children out in the yard were as quiet as mice. She was glad when the dinner hour came, when Mr. Johnston, well rested from his morning nap, talked glibly of Lone Lake matters.

"That Mr. Bulwer who drove you in, is a fine chap. Some think he is stuck-up, but I don't. Of course, he is different from the most of us; he is a well-educated, cultured man, but he takes to country life like a duck to water. He has a fine farm, and he is making it pay, too. The rest of us are just every-day hard-working people, who come here with just enough money to make a start, no more, and we've got to work pretty hard to get the start. It's hard on the women folks, the houses are so far apart, and not many can afford extra horses for driving; but just wait, we'll soon have our motor cars like the rest."

Dinner over, Helen lingered to help clear away the dishes. The children were at the window discussing a calf in the yard, when one of them exclaimed:

"Oh, here comes Mr. Bulwer. My! can't his team trot!"

"Is he coming in?" enquired Mr. Johnston.

"Yes, he's opening the gate now."

Mr. Johnston reached for an old straw hat, and went out through the kitchen.

"We won't likely see Dad for the rest of the afternoon," commented his wife; "he'll be off with Mr. Bulwer some place."

Miss Walters was disappointed. She had hoped Mr. Bulwer would come in; she had liked his frank good-fellowship on the way in; he had proved a real friend on first acquaintance. Going into the living room, she picked up a book at random from the book-shelf and sat down. Presently Billy came in.

"Has your father gone off with Mr. Bulwer?" asked his mother.

"No-ep; they're coming in. Mr. Bulwer put his horses in the stable."

They came in by the kitchen. "Just hang up your hat and go right in," cordially invited Mr. Johnston, proceeding to do the same himself. "How is that field of wheat you disced in doing?"

"It has come up fine and has the ground well covered."

Miss Walters frankly gave her hand in greeting, and a three-cornered conversation was carried on for some time on matters pertaining to the school, the number of children and their past opportunities.

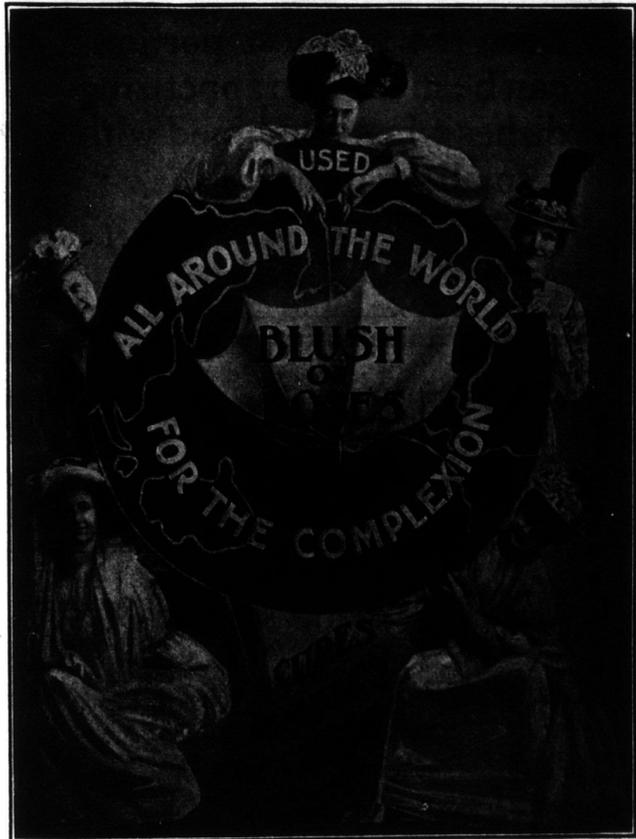
Presently the little girl came bounding breathlessly in. "Oh, papa, the pigs have got out and are in the garden!"

"Oh, my," came from Mrs. Johnston, somewhere in the kitchen. Confound them!" imprecated Mr. Johnston, jumping up and hurrying out.

Mr. Bulwer sat still; so did Miss Walters.

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