

HOME CIRCLE.

A DROVER'S STORY.

My name is Anthony Hunt. I am a drover; and I live miles and miles away, upon the Western prairie. There wasn't a house within sight when we moved there, my wife and I; and now we have not many neighbours, though those we have are good ones.

One day, about ten years ago, I went away from home to sell some fifty head of cattle,—fine creatures as ever I saw. I was to buy some groceries and dry goods before I came back, and, above all, a doll for our youngest Dolly. She never had a shop doll of her own, only the rag babies her mother had made her. Dolly could talk of nothing else, and went down to the very gate to call after me "Buy a big one." Nobody but a parent can understand how my mind was on that toy, and how, when the cattle were sold, the first thing I hurried off to buy was Dolly's doll. I found a large one with eyes that would open and shut when you pulled a wire, and had it wrapped in paper and tucked it under my arm, while I had the parcels of calico and delaine, and tea and sugar, put up. It might have been more prudent to stay until morning; but I felt anxious to get back, and eager to hear Dolly's prattle about the doll she was so eagerly expecting.

I mounted on a steady-going old horse of mine, and pretty well loaded. Night set in before I was a mile from town, and settled down dark as pitch while I was in the middle of the wildest bit of road I know of. I could have felt my way through, I remembered it so well; and it was almost that, when the storm that had been brewing broke, and pelted the rain in torrents, five miles, or maybe six miles from home, too. I rode on as fast as I could; but suddenly I heard a little cry, like a child's voice. I stopped short and listened. I heard it again. I called, and it answered me. I couldn't see a thing. All was dark as I got down and felt about in the grass, called again, and again I was answered. Then I began to wonder. I'm not timid; but I was known to be a drover, and to have money about me. I am not superstitious,—not very; but how could a real child be out on the prairie in such a night at such an hour? It might be more than human. The bit of a coward that hides itself in most men showed itself to me then, and I was half-inclined to run away; but once more I heard that piteous cry, and said I, "If any man's child is hereabouts, Anthony Hunt is not the man to let it lie here to die." I searched again. At last, I bethought me of a hollow under the hill, and groped that way. Sure enough, I found a little dripping thing that moaned and sobbed as I took it in my arms. I called my horse, and the beast came to me; and I mounted and tucked the little soaked thing under my coat as well as I could, promising to take it home to mammy. It seemed tired to death, and pretty soon cried itself to sleep against my bosom. It had slept there over an hour, when I saw my own windows. There were lights in them, and I supposed my wife had lit them for my sake; but when I got into the yard, I saw that something was the matter, and stood still with dead fear of heart five minutes, before I could lift the latch. At last, I did it, and saw the room full of neighbours, and my wife amid them weeping. When she saw me, she hid her face.

"Oh, don't tell him!" she cried. "It will kill him."

"What is it, neighbours?" I cried.

And one said: "Nothing now, I hope. What's that in your arm?"

"A poor lost child," said I: "I found it on the road. Take it, will you? I've turned faint." And I lifted the sleeping thing, and saw the face of my own child, my little Dolly.

It was my darling and no other, that I had picked up upon the drenched road. My little child had wandered out to meet "daddy" and the doll, while her mother was at work, and whom they were lamenting as one dead. I thanked God on my knees before them all. It is not much of a story, neighbours; but I think of it often in the night, and wonder how I could bear to live if I had not stopped when I heard the cry for help upon the road,—the little baby-cry hardly louder than a squirrel's chirp.

Ah, friends, the blessings of our work often come nearer to our homes than we ever dare to hope.—*Selected.*

CONDITION OF THE GERMAN PEASANTS.

In many German villages, where the common land has been gradually parcelled in small bits, the farms of the peasants are composed of minute strips of land, scattered over the whole parish. I have seen farms which contained two hundred such strips. Baring-Gould, in his "Germany, Past and Present," writes: "In some places the owner of twenty hectares (about fifty acres) will have some one thousand bits of land distributed over the whole surface of the parish. Such is the case on the Main and the Middle Rhine." The lots of land are too small for pasturage; universal tillage drives the price of grain so low that farming is not profitable; while the extra labour necessitated by having land in so many small lots places the peasants at a great disadvantage. Legal difficulties and conservatism prevent the exchange of lots and the concentration of farms. A poor year commonly forces the peasants into the hands of the Jews. In each village there are Jews, who are continually watching the distresses of the farmer; they induce him in every way to borrow money; and when they once have a hold upon him he seldom escapes. Two successive hard years, combined with ruinous rates of interest, are often sufficient to overwhelm him. The Jews seize his land, and sell it out in small parcels at high prices, as contiguous owners are anxious to enlarge their plots. Some of the meanest specimens of mankind are found among these village Jews, and their severity often causes outbreaks against them. The landed classes sympathize with the peasants in their difficulties; and this explains in a measure the present agitation against the Jews in Germany. Even Bismarck is said to be bitterly opposed to the Jews; his sympathies are with the landed aristocracy, and he dislikes the rise to power of the

mercantile and money-lending classes, of which the Jews are the most conspicuous examples. C. was once so deeply involved in a serious outrage committed on the property of an obnoxious Jew that he was forced to leave the village. He confessed that his acts were foolish, but pleaded in excuse the loss of land and home by the peasant with whom he was staying. The Jew had induced the peasant to enlarge his farm by buying lands on loans at excessive interest. A bad year followed, and the peasant was obliged to borrow more money. The Jew, in lending, forced the peasant to take one-third of the loan in spirits. The natural consequences followed: the peasant drank too much; his crops were poor; his interest was not paid; and his land was seized by the Jew. The Jews are a harsh but effectual instrument for destroying the system of "small-lot-farming;" they bring the owners of "lot farms" into their power, and then sell the lands to those whose farms are in larger lots, and who are therefore prosperous. Historical reasons have caused the small-lot system to exist only among the rich lands of Germany; and it has consequently never been in vogue in Northern Germany. Nevertheless, the poverty of the soil has made the condition of the peasants in the north worse than that of those in the south of Germany.—*December Atlantic.*

THE TWO GATES.

A pilgrim once (so runs an ancient tale),
Old, worn, and spent, crept down a shadowed vale;
On either hand rose mountains bleak and high;
Chill was the gusty air, and dark the sky;
The path was rugged, and his feet were bare;
His faded cheek was seamed by pain and care;
His heavy eyes upon the ground were cast,
And every step seemed feebler than the last.

The valley ended where a naked rock
Rose sheer from earth to heaven, as if to mock
The pilgrim who had crept that toilsome way;
But while his dim and weary eyes essay
To find an outlet, in the mountain side
A ponderous sculptured brazen door he spied,
And tottering toward it with fast-failing breath,
Above the portal read, "THE GATE OF DEATH."

He could not stay his feet, that led thereto;
It yielded to his touch, and passing through,
He came into a world all bright and fair:
Blue were the heavens, and balmy was the air;
And, lo! the blood of youth was in his veins,
And he was clad in robes that held no stains
Of his long pilgrimage. Amazed, he turned:
Behold! a golden door behind him burned
In that fair sunlight, and his wondering eyes,
Now lustreful and clear as those new skies,
Free from the mists of age, of care, and strife,
Above the portal read, "THE GATE OF LIFE."

—*Harper's Magazine for December.*

RESTORING SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

Reuf Pasha, the Turkish Governor of Jerusalem, has recently received imperative orders from Sultan Abdul Hamid to resume the work of restoration of Solomon's Temple, commenced under the reign of Abdul Aziz, but discontinued some five years ago. The Pasha has also been instructed to clear the great square fronting the Temple of all the rubbish and rank vegetation with which it is at present incumbered. In this square stands the famous Mosque of Omar, which derives a revenue of some £15,000 a year from pilgrim contributions and other sources. Hitherto the greater portion of this sum found its way annually to Stamboul. The Sultan, however, has decreed that henceforth it shall be applied to defraying the expenses of the works above alluded to, the present resumption of which, as well as their original inception, is due in reality to suggestions made at different times to the Ottoman authorities by members of the Austrian imperial family. The restoration of the temple ruins was begun at the instance of Francis Joseph during his visit to the Holy Land, shortly after the accession of Abdul Aziz to the throne; and it was the recent pilgrimage of the Archduke Rudolph to Judea that imparted a fresh impulse to the interrupted enterprise. Not only has the Commander of the Faithful signified it to be his sovereign will that the works should be carried out without further delay, but two officials of the Sublime Porte, Serid and Raif Effendi, have already left Constantinople for Jerusalem with instructions to take measures, on their arrival, for insuring the literal fulfilment of his Majesty's decree. The gratitude of Christians and Jews alike is due to Abdul Hamid for lending his high authority to so generous and enlightened an undertaking.—*London Telegraph.*

INTELLECT IN BRUTES.

Mr. A. Petrie writes: "In my own family we had a tabby cat, who, when turned out, would let herself in at another door by climbing up some list nailed around it, then pushing up the click-latch, pushing the door, with herself hanging on it, away from the post, so as to prevent the latch falling back into its place, and then dropping down and walking back to the fire. I knew a Skye terrier, who being told to carry a fishing rod, carefully experimented along its length to find its centre of gravity, then carried it on till his master came to a narrow path through a wood. Here Skye considered, dropped the rod, took it by the end, and dragged it under him lengthwise till the open road was gained, when he took the rod by the centre of gravity again, and went on. This could not be a copy of human actions, but the result of original reasoning."

Mr. Henry Cecil gives the following on the authority of the late Mr. Dawes, the astronomer: "Being busy in his garden, and having a large bunch of keys in his hand, he gave it to a retriever to hold for him till he was at liberty. Going into the house soon after, he forgot to reclaim the

keys. The remembrance of what he had done with them only returned to him when he required to use them in the evening. He then recalled that he had given them to the dog, and forgotten to take them again. Calling him, and looking him impressively in his face, he said, 'My keys! fetch me my keys!' The dog looked wistful and puzzled for a moment, and then bounded off to the garden, his master following. He went straight to the root of an apple-tree, scratched up the keys, and brought them. May we not fairly put into words the dog's train of reasoning thus: 'My master has given me these keys to hold; he has forgotten them; I cannot carry them all day; but I must put them in safety where I can find them again?'"

Mr. R. Howson sends us the story of a terrier-like dog of no particular breed, named Uglymug, who had a poodle for a companion. Whenever Uglymug saw signs of a family meal being laid out, he inveigled the poodle into a labyrinthine shrubbery under pretence of looking for rats, and when the latter was fairly intent on his game, Uglymug sneaked back to enjoy, all by himself, what he could get from the family table.—*N. Y. Evangelist.*

THE HIGHLAND SHEPHERD.

The shepherds of Ross-shire and Sutherland are physically a fine race. Many people have a fixed idea that all Highlanders are tall, strong men; others, judging probably from the fishermen they have seen on the east coast, or from the western islands, imagine them small, stunted, and red-haired. Of course, there are some small, poor-looking men, but as a rule they will compare favourably with any race in these islands, and it would be a strange thing if they did not. Their life is eminently calculated to make them do so. Their food, though simple, is abundant; the oatmeal which, with milk and a little mutton and bacon, forms their diet, is well known for its properties of bone-making. They breathe air than which there is no purer in the world, and their hard out-of-door life insures them sound and healthy sleep. If to most men the life of a shepherd would appear strange and almost appalling in its utter loneliness, to some few it has, for this very reason, a peculiar fascination. (We are speaking here of the genuine hillman, not of one who is connected with a coast arable farm.) Some of the straths and glens are well populated—well populated, that is to say, for that country. There may be on twenty miles of road two or three shooting lodges, with their attendant collection of keepers' houses, a few small crofts, perhaps an inn, and possibly a kirk, though these two latter are unfrequent, and the average distance between inns in Sutherland—always excepting a narrow strip on the east coast—may be set down at from fifteen to thirty miles. Many of the shepherds' houses, however, are a long distance off the main road, and a man, after walking from the nearest railway station twenty or thirty miles, and often much further, may have to turn across the heather for five or six more before he gets home, though there is often a peat track to help him. His most probable neighbour will be a keeper, and keepers and shepherds do not always pull well together, there being knotty questions about heather-burning, and sheep straying over marshes—the latter being especially frequent when the adjoining land is under deer—which have to be settled afresh every year, and which cause no little amount of jealousy and ill-felling between the two. Sometimes, however, they are great friends; and as a rule they get on pretty well together, partly, no doubt, for the sake of companionship, and partly, on the keeper's side at least, from motives of policy, for he knows well, if he is worth anything, how essential it is for the welfare of his game that he and the shepherd should be on good terms, and how great the power is which the latter has over it.—*Macmillan.*

A SENSIBLE MOTHER.

It is really pitiful to see a good, conscientious little mother resolutely shutting herself away from so much that is best and sweetest in her children's lives, for the sake of tucking their dresses and ruffling their petticoats. How surprised and grieved she will be to find that her boys and girls, at sixteen, regard "mother" chiefly as a most excellent person to keep shirts in order and to make new dresses, and not as one to whom they care to go for social companionship.

Yet, before they are snubbed out of it, by repeated rebuffs, such as "Run away, I'm too busy to listen to your nonsense," children naturally go to their mothers with all their sorrows and pleasures; and if "mother" can only enter into all their little plans, how pleased they are! Such a shout of delight as I heard last summer from Mrs. Friendly's croquet ground, where her two little girls were playing. "Oh, goody, goody, mamma is coming to play with us!" She was a busy mother, too, and I know would have much preferred to use what few moments of recreation she could snatch, for something more interesting than playing croquet with little children, not much taller than their mallets. She has often said to me: "I cannot let my children grow away from me; I must keep right along with them all the time; and whether it is croquet with the little ones, or Latin grammar and baseball with the boys, or French dictation and sash ribbons with the girls, I must be 'in it,' as far as I can."

BREAD-MAKING AND CIVILIZATION.

Each stage of society's advance, from lowest to highest, may be broadly characterized by the prevailing manner of handling the staff of life; that is, by the methods pursued in making bread. Whether pre-historic races made bread or not is more than can be certainly determined, but we know that existing tribes of cave-dwellers and burrowers made no bread. They are differentiated from the brutes by ability to light a fire, by the practice of cooking, and by that of wearing clothing, but their diet consists for the most part of reptiles and roots. A striking advance occurs when the seeds of the field come into use as food. Grain bruised on a flat stone with a billet of wood is wet into dough and cast on the embers; bread makes its appearance in the world, and progress begins. Several tribes of the Shoshone family of