

SOCIAL LIFE OUT WEST.



Mrs. J. Secord.

THE title of this prairie sketch will strike Eastern ears with doubtful visions of tomahawks, scalped wigs, and a wild swirl of ghost dancers gyrating to the sound of the tom-tom, while the savoury sniff of "dog-soup" will be wafted across the breezy downs. These things *we have*, but as the echo of a song that is sung, or the twilight dreams of a day forever fled.

Long ago, "in the early days," when everybody rubbed elbows, when no "imaginary line" separated Jack from his master in the small social world out west, we may have known more real happiness than has been ours since. Who doesn't remember the delight of finding—stuck in a crack of the door—an envelope (sometimes white, sometimes yellow), containing a "notice" that "a dance will be given in ——'s Hall to-night" to which you were—"respectfully invited" by "the committee;" and down in one corner—heavily underscored—the suggestive hint "*ladies free, gents one dollar?*" The scarcity of femininity enhancing its value to a "prize package" sort of arrangement, while the tax levied upon the more numerous "gents," was supposed to act as a check upon the superabundance of that article, thereby keeping matters terpsichorean *in equilibrio*. Who doesn't remember the de-

light of a hurried scramble between breakfast hour and tea-time, in the effort to "do up" a spot muslin? of the after enjoyment of being "escorted" across lots, wrapped up from the biting north wind in woolen shawls, of stamping ones' self out of wraps and over-alls, to be swept into twenty candle-power illumination where the "Circassian Circle" was being wrought out rhythmically, where you "traded" partners without the formality of an introduction! dancing with everybody: now *vis a vis* with the milkman who supplied the cream for the coffee (so industriously boiling over on a stove in one corner of the ball-room),



Mrs. Dewdney.