

Hills and Home

BY LULU JOHNSON.

Copyrighted, 1908, by Homer Sprague.

The porter smiled cheerfully as Miriam emerged from her berth and made her way down the aisle toward the dressing room.

"Good mornin'," he observed as he sprang to take her bag. "This yer's a shore bad day. Th' dinin' cah 'll be on in ha'f an hour."

He surrendered her bag at the door of the dressing room and returned to his work. There were few berths left to make up, and Miriam had been the last to rise.

Another woman and half a dozen men constituted the passenger list on the through car, so when Miriam returned to her berth it was all in order. The car, too, was deserted, as the first call for breakfast had summoned all



"I'M SURE OBLIGED TO THAT CHEAP MEAKER."

her fellow passengers to the diner, glad of any break in the monotony of travel.

Miriam followed the others, rejoicing in the conductor's assurance that in the evening she would eat her supper on firm land, for at nightfall they were due at Schofield, the little station where Miriam Bradley was to change for the slow stagecoach that would carry her to Muddy Bend and her new field of labor.

She was glad that there remained but ten hours of train travel. It had proved a tiresome trip, though back home she had looked forward with eagerness to the journey.

Once she had run down from her Vermont home to Boston, and there had been short visits to nearby smaller cities, but she had never traveled so far and naturally had anticipated much pleasure in the novelty.

But, after all, she had found the long journey disappointing. The long, bare stretches of prairie were a novelty at first to this girl brought up in the heart of the Green mountains, but they became interminable, and now her eyes hungered for the sight of her native hills.

Under the driving rain the sodden plain looked more dreary than it had the day before. She tried to fix her thoughts on a book, but the letters danced before her eyes, and she caught herself looking through the car window and wondering if there were no hills at all in this dreary expanse.

Back home there must be snow on the ground, and the boys and girls were doubtless enjoying the coasting, while the evenings would call out the big bobs, and her own crowd would take their part in the fun. Vaguely she wondered if these children of the plains ever knew the delights of the long, swift journey down the glittering white incline, and she sighed for the little valley she had always known as home.

Yet she thought sternly that she had done the one possible thing. The field in the east was already overcrowded with teachers, and she had heard that only in the great and growing west did a newcomer have a chance for advancement. And teaching it must be or marriage with Jimmy Meeker. Even now, with hundreds of miles between them, she could feel her face flush as she recalled how he had asked her to marry him that she might have a home and his protection.

He had meant well, no doubt, and ever since they had gone to school together he had shown his manly preference for her, but he had put it rawly that evening, to say the least. With her nerves still stinging from the shock of discovering that her entire heritage had gone down with the local bank, his proposal, so awkwardly worded, had been the final straw. Indignantly she reminded him that he had not spoken until her need of support made his offer ring with pity, and she wanted not pity, but love, from the man she married.

It had all seemed very dignified, almost heroic at the time, but now, with the vastness of the unbroken prairies

settling down upon her like a black shadow, her heart somehow had room only for his answering plea that he could not ask her to be his wife while he was a struggling lawyer and she the only heiress of the comfortable Bradley estate.

As the day passed and she was hurried through the flat, dismal country both her reason and her heart rose in rebellion, and when the call for luncheon was sounded nervousness had done its work. She wanted nothing to eat.

The porter had seen just this brand of homesickness before, and he asked permission to bring some tea and toast, at least, to her section. Abashed by the tears that came to her eyes at his friendly suggestion, he sought another car and the conductor. Then this kindly official sat down beside his tired young passenger and tried to make conversation. They were just passing a section house with its few surrounding buildings and tiny schoolhouse. Near the latter was an improvised "slide."

"That's the way the prairie children make hills," he said, little dreaming that he was touching a very raw spot in his companion's heart. "They pile up the snow industriously, pour water on it just before sundown, and in the morning it is a jolly fine slide."

After that Miriam watched for the manufactured hills. The pitiful substitute for the sport of her girlhood somehow made her feel more desperately than ever the mighty chasm she was cutting between her old life and her new.

And when she was not watching for "hills" she was trying to drown the recollection of a certain tender, pleading voice in the incessant, insistent song of the revolving wheels beneath her.

It was an actual relief when Schofield was reached and she stood on the narrow strip of platform in front of the station. She peered through the dusk in a vain search for some break in the level stretch of plain. A man in rough, heavy clothing came forward bashfully.

"You Miss Bradley, for over to Muddy Bend?" he asked, with hat awkwardly uplifted. Miriam merely nodded.

"Well, I'm on the school board," he said in some embarrassment. "I come over a-purpose to see you and maybe save you the long stage ride."

"That was very kind of you," said Miriam, trying to be cordial. "But I was fully resigned to the stage."

"Oh, I don't mean that," said the man, with growing nervousness. "But, you see, there's been some mistake—I don't know as you'd call it that either—but something happened unexpected since we wrote you. Kate Higgins, our old teacher, was all right. We liked her well enough, but our doc said she'd have to go south for her throat. When she got as far as St. Louis a doctor there said it wasn't her throat at all, and he fixed her up. And, being as Kate was all satisfactory and she wants to stay—well, we were wondering if we couldn't make some arrangement with you to get another school round here somewhere, or we'd pay your fare back and give you whatever you thought was right. You see, we don't feel like going back on Kate."

"Certainly not," replied Miriam, with such warmth that the brawny westerner, as he said afterward, was "plum loosed" for a few seconds. "I think you should pay my fare both ways, and then we will call it square. I could not have stayed very long anyhow. You see, I am to be married soon. May I send a telegram before I go to the hotel?"

Her interested host followed her into the station, protesting that the school board must put her up at the hotel until the Overland passed through in the early morning, eastbound. And so he heard the telegram which the operator read aloud for verification:

James Meeker, Wellington, Vt.:
Am returning at once to where there are hills—and homes. MIRIAM.

"I'm sure obliged to that chap Meeker, whoever he may be," the westerner mused as he led the way across the rain-soaked road to the hotel. "I wonder what she meant about the hills?"

But, being courteous, he did not ask, and Miriam did not offer an explanation. She was content to think that within twelve hours the Overland Limited would be scurrying her across the detested plains toward the happiness which she had so foolishly fled.

Prof. H. A. Howell, of Havana, Cuba, Recommends Chamberlain's Cough Remedy.

"As long ago as I can remember my mother was a faithful user and friend of Chamberlain's Cough Remedy, but never in my life have I realized its true value until now," writes Prof. H. A. Howell, of Howell's American School, Havana, Cuba. "On the night of February 3rd our baby was taken sick with a very severe cold, the next day was worse and the following night his condition was desperate. He could not lie down and it was necessary to have him in the arms every moment. Even then his breathing was difficult. I did not think he would live until morning. I did not think he would live until morning. At last I thought of my mother's remedy, Chamberlain's Cough Remedy, which we gave, and it afforded prompt relief, and now, three days later, he has fully recovered. Under the circumstances I would not hesitate a moment in saying that Chamberlain's Cough Remedy, and that only, saved the life of our dear little boy." For sale by Frank Hart and leading druggists.

Hans, the Coachman.

(Original.)

April 2.

I have won my bet and am now domiciliated in the house of the old Countess von Bertheim as governess for her orphan grandchildren. The bet was this: Half a dozen of us girls, all daughters of nobles, were speaking of the kindness of heart of the aged countess. During the chat I offered to bet Laura von C. that I would get a job from the old lady by simply asking for one. Laura said: "You ought to be ashamed of yourself—you, one of the wealthiest girls in Dresden—to take her money!" However, the bet was made—a sealskin coat against a diamond ring. I put on some old clothes, went to the countess, told her a pitiful story and was engaged as nurse. Finding that I was educated, she promoted me to be governess.

April 5.

I have found it easier to win the bet than to get away from here. What excuse can I give the dear old lady for one day accepting a position given in kindness alone and throwing it up the next? I don't mind staying here a bit. My duties give me occupation, the children are dear little things, and the countess is all loveliness. They say many daughters of wealthy people in America are nowadays accepting positions in order that they may find an object. At any rate, I am in no hurry to get away.

April 18.

I am still with the countess. I have not been so contented since I left school. But one thing troubles me. Every day the children must drive out in the air, and I must go with them. I do not like to confess it even to myself, but I have such singular feelings toward Hans. Great heavens, can I be falling in love with a coachman?

He never addresses me except when I address him. Then he talks delightfully. He has been to America and tells me many things of that remarkable people. He says he's going back there to make his fortune. It frightens me to feel as I do about his going so far away from me.

May 2.

It is a month today since I came here. I made a great mistake in coming and a greater mistake in not going away at once. I am daily becoming more deeply involved—just think of it—with a coachman. Yesterday he passed the grief that separates us and told me that he loved me. What shall I do? I can't stay here, and I can't bring myself to go away. I feel all the while a burning shame. True, I told Hans that if he presumed again I would tell the countess and he would be discharged, but this was only my weakness. I should have left the house immediately.

May 10.

Hans yesterday met me in the garden. He was coming from the stables and I from the house. He asked me to go to a rustic bench, as he had something very important to say to me. Weak creature that I was, I consented. He poured out his love in such a passionate torrent that he took me quite off my feet. What did I do but admit that I loved him, though I told him that the difference in our stations must keep us forever apart. Oh, the weakness of a woman's pride when love comes!

May 15.

A letter from Laura today saying that she is ready to pay the bet she had lost and asking what in the world is keeping me here. I have replied that I love every one here so well that I can't tear myself away. Horror of horrors! Am I rash enough, weak enough, silly enough, to let it come out that there is a case of the real love and the object is Hans, the coachman?

May 22.

Something very remarkable has happened. I am going home at once. When the countess paid me my wages I felt so funny. She told me that I have suited her exactly and she would recommend me for any position for which I might apply. But when the dear old lady added a considerable sum to what she had agreed to pay I felt my cheeks grow hot, and I shed a few tears.

I must make a note of what has brought about my leaving her service. This morning I went into her boudoir suddenly without being announced. She was not there, but some one was there whom I did not expect to find. It was Hans, the coachman.

My astonishment would not have been so great had he not been dressed like a gentleman and was lounging in an easy chair reading a newspaper. On seeing my surprise he smiled.

"Fraulein," he said, "I am in your power. You may take revenge if you like for my presumption. If you report me to the government I shall be held for military service. I live in America, where I have a profitable business. I am the countess' youngest son and have been obliged to make my own career. Desiring to see my dear old mother, I have come incog. that I may not have to spend several years here in the army. The only real coachman's duty I have performed has been to drive you and my nephews and nieces, who do not know that I am their uncle."

What did I do? What did I say? I have no remembrance of either. I recollect waking as from a dream to find myself clasped in his arms. Never has there been such a transition of feeling with me. For weeks I had suffered torture to be suddenly not only relieved from it, but given an exquisite happiness, a happiness that promises to endure with our lives.

Cardiff Coal & Coke Co.

4 C C C C COAL
AT \$5.00 PER TON

A Few Reasons why you should Burn 4 C C C C Coal:

- First. Because it costs you only about half what you are now paying for coal.
- Second. Because it is helping to develop a home industry instead of developing coal mines in Australia.
- Third. Because it will give absolute satisfaction wherever used. It is free from soot, burns freely, gives a good heat and lasts well.
- Fourth. While we do not claim it is the best coal on the market it is good, honest value at \$5.00 per ton, and if properly handled we will guarantee that 5 tons of our coal will give the same results for either steam or domestic purposes as 4 tons of the best Australian coal. We will have a barge load here in a few days. Give us your order for a ton and give it a fair trial. That is all we ask.

Cardiff Coal & Coke Company

Stock at \$3.00 Per Share
is a good clean profitable Investment

A Few Reasons Why You Should Buy this Stock:

- First. Because coal is one of the necessities of life; it is as staple as flour.
- Second. Because it is not a prospect, but a fully developed mine with more than 5 tons of coal in sight to secure every dollar you invest.
- Third. Because the stock is figured conservatively on a basis of 12 per cent on par \$10.00 per share, which means more than 40 per cent on the present selling price of \$3.00 per share.
- Fourth. Because the price of stock will be advanced to \$5.00 per share on or before the 15th of April. Only a limited amount of the stock will be sold at \$3.00 per share and we would prefer to sell it to 100 people rather than 5, as we would have 100 people boosting OUR MINE and inducing their neighbors to burn OUR COAL.
- Fifth. It is a matter of business that every man or woman who has a dollar to invest to put it where it is reasonably safe and where they can realize the most profit from it, and we believe that any one who will investigate this stock as they would if they were buying a stock of goods or a farm, that they would find it had sufficient merit to warrant them making the investment.

Orders for either Coal or Stock or any information about either will be cheerfully furnished by G. H. CALLANDER, at the Callander Navigation Co. or J. C. LEE, at the Northern Hotel.

Joy! Joy! Am I the empress or the queen of Holland? I am certainly at least happy as a queen.
MARY D. PRITCHARD.

SECURITIES SCALED DOWN.

NEW YORK, Mar. 26.—Plans for the reorganization committee of the Consolidated Steamship Company, the Morse Atlantic Coastwise Merger involve a scaling down of securities from \$120,000,000, the present outstanding capital to \$34,500,000. The \$60,000,000 of stock of the Consolidated Steamship Company, it is learned, will be wiped out to the holders of the \$60,000,000 four per cent bonds and \$4,500,000 in new bonds, preferred and common stock will be given.

The reorganization plan does not make any provision for the eastern Steamship Company or the Metropolitan Steamship Company. The reorganization applies to the Ward, Clyde, Porto Rico and Mallory Lines.

For Diseases of the Skin.

Nearly all diseases of the skin such as eczema, tetter, salt rheum and barbers' itch, are characterized by an intense itching and smarting, which often makes life a burden and disturbs sleep and rest. Quick relief may be had by applying Chamberlain's Salve. It allays the itching and smarting almost instantly. Many cases have been cured by its use. For sale by Frank Hart and leading druggists.

Create an Appetite

BY DRINKING BASS' ALE AND GUINNESS STOUT WITH YOUR DINNER PUT UP IN NIPS. IT IS A SYSTEM BUILDER. RECOMMENDED BY ALL PHYSICIANS. PRICE, \$1.50 PER DOZEN.

AMERICAN IMPORTING CO.

589 Commercial Street.

THE TRENTON

First-Class Liquors and Cigars

602 Commercial Street.

Corner Commercial and 14th.

ASTORIA, OREGON