

# RANCH MYSTERY

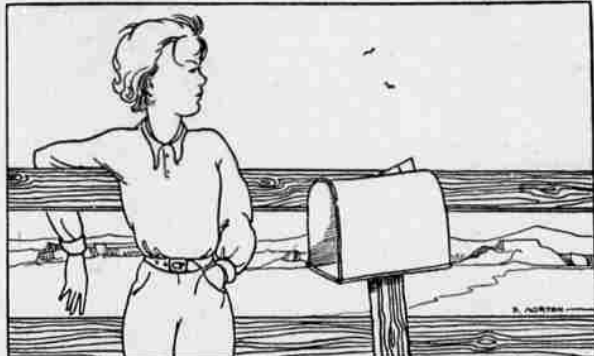
A STORY FOR CHILDREN

By Paula Norton

Beth came out to Nevada to spend several months on a cattle ranch. She anticipated a quiet uneventful visit there, but instead, she found her Aunt and Uncle confronted with the possible loss of their ranch. An unidentified band of thieves had been stealing horses and cattle and in every way trying to bankrupt Beth's Uncle Walter. Beth, like her two cousins, Ron and Tim, wanted to help discover who was back of the plot. While riding in a field with the boys, Beth found a little star-shaped wheel of silver and she had a feeling that it might be a clue to the identity of the thieves. She became chummy with the rural mail-carrier, Claude, because he seemed to know everyone, and he talked freely.

Chapter 7.

BETH thought Aunt Mary a darling because she was not at all upset about the lunch dishes that had not been washed.



After supper the family sat and talked. There was MUCH to talk about. The stolen horses, the neighboring ranch where Auntie had helped old Grandmother Woods through the last hours of her life and the riding lesson Beth had had that day, which, of course, led to the teasing one would expect from Ron and Tim.

Then Uncle Walter said, "We better be leaving to take that carload of steers for shipment to the railroad next week. We won't get a mint for 'em, but anything's better'n nothin'!" Beth could see the worry in his eyes. She knew he was thinking about the cattle and horses that he never would sell.

"Do you think you'll be well enough to ride in with the men and the cattle, Pa?" asked Aunt Mary.

"Sure I'll go along," he answered.

"Do you feel strong enough to go, Tim?" grinned Ron. "You better stay home this time and let Beth go in your place. You could make us some fudge!"

"Now, boys," smiled their mother.

Then Uncle Walter changed the subject. "How's the ridin' comin' along, Beth? You think you'll make a good ranch-hand?"

As usual, Ron answered the questions put to anyone but himself. "Sure she's good. She had old Daisy wishing she was back in the old ladies' home 'stead of tearing around like a circus horse."

THE meal was over and not once had Beth mentioned the little star-like silver wheel she had picked up in the field near the dry-wash. It was to remain her own special secret, at least until she made sure if it was important.

The next morning, Uncle Walter rode into town to "look around." After helping her aunt to clean up after lunch, Beth rode around the pasture alone. The boys had plenty of work to do and, as Ron said, "Beth's just about got Daisy broken in now. She doesn't need us to see that she sticks on."

Beth knew that this was meant for a joke as well as a compliment, for old Daisy was slow beyond words.

"When do I get to ride Bob? You said I could as soon as I got the hang of it with Daisy."

"Tomorrow, if you'll be a good girl and make us a mess of that fudge you've been braggin' about."

As soon as the boys were gone Beth went down by the mail box to wait for Claude. She felt sure there would be a letter from her mother today and, besides, she wanted to see Claude again.

She sat on the rail fence, knees

under her chin, just as she'd seen the boys sit on the corral fence—it was just as uncomfortable as it looked.

THE blue haze on the distant hills held her eyes for a long time as she turned the silver wheel over and over in her pocket. Then at the sound of rattling wheels she turned and saw the old rig and the sway-back horse coming down the dusty road.

"Mornin', miss," shouted Claude. "Nothin' for you today, only the paper for your uncle. How is he?"

"Oh, he's a lot better, thank you," answered Beth. Then to make conversation she told him about learning to ride. Claude was interested because everything that other people did came under the heading of "news" for the mail carrier.

Beth asked about the town and even got the courage to ask if

she could ride in some day with Claude.

"Well, miss, I don't see as you'd find it a very excitin' place, comin' from a big city like you do. But I'll be glad to take you in my rig sometime if your auntie says you can go."

Beth climbed down from the fence. Before she could express her thanks, Claude said, "Say, how would you get back home again if you rode in with me?"

"I could take a horse, couldn't I... tied to your rig?"

"Well, now, that's a right smart idea, miss," smiled Claude. "Are you sure you could come back out alone?"

"All I have to do is come back the way I went." And, woman-like, she had made her point.

"Well, now, that's sure okay by me. Anytime you're ready." He gathered up the reins. "But I can't see what you expect to see to entertain ya' in a little old town like ours, after comin' from a real big city." He looked puzzled.

"Well, you can't tell," smiled Beth. "I might learn a lot of things in a little town I never would notice in the city," and as she watched the mail carrier down the road she took the little wheel from her pocket and studied it carefully as it flashed in the sunlight.

(Continued next week)



Our young readers have started to express themselves and to tell us about the things that interest them most. Today we are printing some information about pigeons.

By Craig Rolla Norton, 12 Of San Marino, Cal.

PIGEONS lay their eggs during January and July. After July, the young bird races begin. These are the races for squabs raised that year.

All pigeons must be banded when they are three days old. Eggs hatch at 17 days.

As for me, I'm interested in almost every kind of pigeon, such as dark checks, red checks, blue bars, red bars, splashes and black checks.

Once a boy shot a pigeon with a BB gun. I did not see him do it, but some other kids said they thought he got it. That night when all the rest of the pigeons were finally in the pen, there was no sign of my favorite pigeon. I just figured he had died somewhere because he was wounded.

The next day while I was out freeing the pigeons, my sister

# "Woman With Hoe" Started Evolution of Houses



## Flour Making First Step In Food Culture

By Dick West

WHEN Edward Markham immortalized "The Man With the Hoe" in that famous poem which will be handed down to a posterity possibly less hoe-conscious than he, it is obvious that the beloved poet wrote of the present, with neither eye nor ear for ancient and more arduous days.

Because the gossip handed down these many generations is that the original "man with the hoe" was—a woman!

About the time our primitive ancestors climbed out of tree-tops and land hovels to house themselves in stilted mid-lake dwellings, someone gave a bit of a thought to agricultural pursuits.

Thus there was planted, in that most inauspicious manner, the seed which blossomed so fruitfully into the current crop of granges, farm bureaus, cultivated crops and county fairs.

In early hoe culture it became woman's work to till the soil and produce the food. This, of course, in addition to her other household duties. It was in this era, also, that the domestic industry began to go kitchenward in a big way. There developed not only the art of preparing food from a form of ground flour, but the making of practical—at least serviceable—utensils. Then, quite rapidly, came a common interest in basketry and ceramic lore.

SHUFFLING along the lane leading to civilization, we'll pass up the wild man of Borneo, since we can work up not the

least enthusiasm for his favorite food—fried worms and pieces of water snake served in sour egg sauce. Likewise, we skip spryly past the Toradjas, erstwhile head hunters, because we have but one head to lose.

However, the Toradjas did create something extraordinary in housing. They built on a framework of cross-piling and the houses were practically all roof. The roof rose from the floor, which was raised on log foundations six or more feet from the ground. To top it off, a pair of antlers or crooked horns reached skyward from each rooftop.

Modern man, who believes his housing problem is one brimful of perplexities, has at least one thing for which to be happy and thankful—that it was not his lot to be of the tribe of Ba Venda of Africa. Polygamy being a common practice, it was incumbent upon the husband to provide not only a hut for himself, but one for each of his many wives. Of course, the women did most of the work, grinding the grain, carrying water and wood, tilling the

garden and preparing the food. The husband ate alone in his hut, the food being brought and served to him by his youngest wife. The children ate with their respective mothers, while the older ones were segregated according to sex and each had his or her individual hut. Hence, the husband and father of the Ba Vendas was faced with a real housing problem.

ALONG with the development of hoe culture, with women wielding the hoe, came the domestication of animals. Great herds were amassed by the more thrifty, and horses were tamed and made to replace shank's mare as a means of transportation.

The next distinct step in creative housing is credited to the American Indian with the building of two types of houses unique in design and construction. First was the familiar wigwam, about ten feet in diameter and ten feet in height, and the Eskimo igloo, or snow house.

Despite popular opinion, however, both the wigwam and the

igloo are more or less mythical. At least, they were the exception rather than the rule.

The Indian preferred rectangular dwellings fashioned of saplings, bark and skins, and he became most proficient in the art of molding a fireplace from clay and sticks. The fireplace soon replaced the proverbial smoldering embers in the center of his single-room abode. It served a three-fold purpose—for light, for heat and for cooking—while the "buck," his squaw and all their papooses, snuggled together on the hearth as cozily as honey-mooners in a tunnel.

Meat and fish ever were the mainstay of the Indian menu, while bread made from the flour of dried acorns, berries and herbs contributed to the fare which early distinguished the Indian as "a good provider."

THE Eskimo usually lived in conical tents made of skins during the summer months and with the approach of winter's chill moved into a hut built half underground and made of stone, turf, bones and dirt. The entrance was through a long tunnel, so low one was compelled to crawl.

Eskimos dress entirely in skins and both men and women wear jacket suits with trousers tucked into boots of seal. Writers by the gross have commented in copious columns about the genuine joviality of the burly Eskimo. It may or may not be letting the secret out of his bag of tricks to record here that when winter winds

sweep in, driving the thermometer to depths colder than your frozen assets, Mr. and Mrs. Eskimo don two suits of skins, one with the hair inside and one with the hair outside. These are seldom doffed. It seems that the suit with the hair inside starts tickling and all winter long keeps the wearer in gales of gleeful giggles.

Both light and heat are provided by a seal-oil lamp which hangs from the roof of the hut. It is made of stettite in basin form with wicks of moss. Ventilation being what it is in an igloo, ere the lamp has burned long the place becomes extremely hot and close, the hairy hides commence to tickle like last winter's red flannels, and the Eskimo laughs himself to sleep. But, with the smell of burning blubber, the odor of cooking and the closeness of the place, not to mention the dogs which sleep in the passageway, it would be no laughing matter to the confirmed fresh-air fiend.

FOOD is principally meat, sometimes boiled but more often frozen and eaten raw. Blubber also is sometimes eaten, but rarely, because it is more valuable for light and heat.

The Eskimo is a prodigious eater, which might be expected in the frigidly of his native land. The daily diet for each individual goes something like this: two and one-half pounds of flesh and blubber and one pound of fish, in addition to berries and seaweed. When they feel prosperous, as much as ten pounds of meat may be eaten. 'Tis said on reliable authority that a male Eskimo will tie on his back and allow his wife to stuff him with tid-bits of blubber until he is unable to move.

## Building Notes

MIRRORS are entering more into the scheme of decorations, particularly in modern homes. The effectiveness of the illusions of space created by mirrors, their sleek surface and the ease with which they can be shaped to fit any desired space, appeal to the decorator as ideal attributes of a decorating medium.

Another element which recently has been introduced is the coloring of mirrors. Now we can get gold, gunmetal, pink, blue or yellow or any other color which fits into the scheme of decorations. The mirror with a faint pink tinge is very kind in its reflections; pale faces take on the healthy appearance of youth. Gunmetal gives back the image without glare and almost without color, so where dull effects are wanted this tint—or rather lack of tint—is perfect.

A large round mirror is a favorite motif in decorating schemes and often forms the proper relief from the straight, hard lines of the modern room and furniture.

Bathrooms and small dressing rooms now are lined with mirrors, sometimes with etched designs on them and sometimes in color, which not only serve as the basis

### BIRD WAYS

A HEALTHY adult pelican can eat as much as ten pounds of fish a day, any day.

A ten-pound turkey has 3860 feathers.

The little birds that light on the backs of the rhinoceroses are meat eaters. They live on the insects they find there.

Chimney Swifts are the birds often found living in chimneys. They can fly straight up and down quite easily. Before there were any chimneys, these clever birds lived in dead trees.

The great Crested Flycatcher decorates his nest with a snake's skin.

There are 560,000 square miles in Canada set aside as bird sanctuaries. No one can fish, hunt or trap on these lands.

It was once believed that turkeys came from Turkey, and thus those birds were misnamed, just as Columbus, thinking he was in India, called the American natives Indians.

for the decorative scheme but the practical purpose of a glorified pier glass.

In the modern apartment and small home, every inch of space in the kitchen is allotted its special function, so when dish towels are washed out it is difficult to find a place to hang the articles to dry. Consequently they are draped all over the house. A convenient drying rack can be fastened to hooks in the kitchen ceiling and can be lowered and raised at will. Wash your towels, stockings and lingerie; hang them on the rack; pull them up to the ceiling, and there you are!

A shelf across the back of the coat closet just above the base board is a convenient place for the rubbers and galoshes which usually clutter up the floor. The shelf should slope to the wall and be set about an inch or an inch and a half from the wall so that dirt and mud can drop through to the floor, where it can be cleaned up more easily.

Before purchasing an old house, go down into the cellar and examine the sills on top of the foundation walls and the first-floor joists. These are the points where decay or the depredations of termites will first take place. If these are sound, it is safe to assume the balance of the frame is sound also.

Outside wooden steps are subject to rapid deterioration on account of their constant exposure to the alternating action of rain and sun. As soon as any "softness" or excessive spring in the steps is noticed they should be examined, and any wood showing signs of decay should be removed and replaced. If the steps have been there for any length of time it might be well to replace the whole flight.

## Around the Block



FREDDIE is six and he lives in the house on the corner. Barbara is five and she lives in the house next door. Just around the corner there is a big empty lot. So, one day Freddie decided that it would be a good plan to build a cave in the side of the little dry-creek that ran wiggling through the vacant lot.

Then the Marshall boys, who lived on the next corner, said they wanted to help build the cave. They brought a spade with a broken handle, and a little tin bucket. So Freddie and Barbara said they could help, too.

All afternoon the children worked on that precious cave.

By 4 o'clock the cave was a very deep and dark one indeed. Why, Freddie (who was the boss) could almost get clear inside.

"Now," he said, as they all sat resting from their hard work, "don't you think we should plan about what we're going to have in this cave to eat?"

"What kind of a cave is it?" asked one of the Marshall boys. "Is it a pirate cave, or a hermit's cave, or what?"

"It's a pirate cave," said Freddie.

"Well, then we'd better have meat and bird's eggs and some

bananas and . . . ." But Barbara interrupted.

"I can get some bird's eggs from our canary's nest. But, I won't eat any of 'em," she finished with a twist to her little face.

"I don't mean canary eggs," shouted one of the Marshall boys, with disgust. "I mean wild duck eggs or pelican eggs, that's the kind pirates find on islands." Then to prove his statement he added, "My brother read that in a book."

"WHAT are you going to bring, fellas?" asked the boss.

"Well, I don't know yet. We could bring the pan to cook the things in."

Then Barbara jumped to her feet. "I could bring some apples and we could make believe they were bananas."

This bright idea was met with "boos" of scorn from the pirates. Poor Barbara, she wanted so to help with the plans, yet, no one was willing to accept her offers. She tried again.

"How about me bringing my little cooking-set I got for Christmas . . . ?" But she was not allowed to go on.

"What do you think this is, a doll's house? It's a PIRATE cave!" shouted Freddie.

Then one of the Marshall boys looked at her over his shoulder and said, in a deep masculine voice, "Say, they don't have GIRLS in pirate caves. You better run on home with your doll dishes."

Barbara walked slowly away to her tricycle. Boys were not nice at all, she thought, and she had helped to dig that cave. Freddie didn't say a word to call her back. She rode slowly home.

As she put her tricycle in the corner of the garage she whispered to no one in particular, "I hope it rains hard tonight and then their old cave will wash away."

But it didn't rain at all, and the next day Barbara and another little girl moved their doll dishes into the cave.

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