Our Christmas Visitor.

A HOLIDAY SUPPLEMENT TO THE CHRONICLE.

Annie and Willie's Prayer.

BY MRS. SOPHIA P. SNOW.

'Twas the eve before Christmas; "Good-night" had been said,
And Annie and Willie had crept into bed;
There were tears on their pillows, and tears in their eyes,
And each little bosom was heaving with sighs,
For to-night their stern father's command had been given
That they should retire precisely at seven
Instead of at eight; for they troubled him more
With questions unheard of than ever before;
He had told them he thought this delusion a sin,
No such creature as "Santa Claus" had ever been,
And he hoped, after this, he should nevermore hear
How he scrambled down chimneys with presents each year.
And this was the reason two little heads
So restlessly tossed on their soft, downy beds,
Eight, nine, and the clock on the steeple tolled ten,
Not a word had been spoken by either till then,
When Willie's sad face from the blanket did peep,
And whispered, "Dear Annie, is 'ou fast asleep?"
"Why, no, brother, Willie," a sweet voice replies,
I've tried long in vain, but I can't shut my eyes,
For somehow it makes me so sorry because
Dear papa has said there is no 'Santa Claus.
Now we know there is, and it can't be denied,
For he came every year before mamma died;
But then, I've been thinking, that she used to pray,
And God would hear everything that mamma would say,
And maybe she asked him to send Santa Claus here
With the sack full of presents he brought every year."
"Well, why tan't we pray dust as mamma did den,
And ask Dod to send him with presents aden?"
"I've been thinking so too," and without a word more.
Four little bare feet bounded out on the floor,
And four little knees the soft carpet press'd,
And two tiny hands were clasped close to each breast.

Now, Willie, you know we must firmly believe,
That the presents we ask for we're sure to receive;
You must wait just as still till I say 'Amen,'
And by that you will know that your turn has come then."

"Dear Jesus, look down on my brother and me,
And grant us the favor we are asking of thee.
I want a wax dolly, a tea set, and ring.
And an ebony work-box that shuts with a spring.
Bless Papa, dear Jesus, and cause him to see
That Santa Claus loves us as much as does he;
Don't let him get fretful and angry again
At dear brother Willie and Annie. Amen."

"Please, Desus, et Santa Taus tum down to-night.
And bing us some pesents befor it's light;
I want he should div' me a nice ittle sed,
With bright shinin unners, and all painted red?
A box full of tandy, a book, and a toy,
Amen, and then, Desus, I'll be a dood boy."

Their prayers being ended they raised up their heads,
And, with hearts light and cheerful, again sought their beds.
They were soon lost in slumber, both peaceful and deep.
And with fairies in dreamland were roaming in sleep.

Eight, nine, and the little French clock had struck ten,
Ere the father had thought of his children again;
He seems now to hear Annie's half-suppressed sighs,
And to see the big tears stand in Willie's blue eyes.
"I was harsh with my darlings," he mentally said,
"And should not have sent them so early to bed;
But then I was troubled; my feelings found vent;
For bank stock to-day has gone down ten per cent.
But of course they've forgotten their troubles ere this,
And that I denied them the thrice-asked-for kiss;
But just to make sure, I'll steal up to their door,
For I never spoke harsh to my darlings before."
So saying, he softly ascended the stairs,
And arrived at the door to hear both of their prayers;
His Annie's "Bless papa" drew forth the big tears,
And Willie's grave promise fell sweet on his ears;
"Strange—strange—I'd forgotten," said he with a sigh,
"How I longed when a child to have Christmas draw nigh."
"I'll atone for my harshness," he inwardly said,
"By answering their prayers ere I sleep in my bed."

Then he turned to the stairs and softly went down,
Threw off velvet slippers and silk dressing gown,
Donned hat, coat, and boots, and was out in the street—
A millionaire, facing the cold, driving sleet,
Nor stopped he until he had bought everything,
From the box full of candy to the tiny gold ring;
Indeed, he kept adding so much to his store
That the various presents outnumbered a score.
Then homeward he turned, when his holiday load
With Aunt Mary's help in the nursery was stowed.
Miss Dolly was seated beneath a pine tree
By the side of a table spread out for her tea;
A work-box well filled in the centre was laid,
And on it the ring for which Annie had prayed;
A soldier in uniform stood by a sled,
"With bright shining runners and all painted red."
There were balls, dogs and horses, books pleasing to see,
And birds of all colors were perched in the tree;
While Santa Claus, laughing, stood up in the top,
As if getting ready more presents to drop,
And as the fond father the picture surveyed,
He thought for his trouble he had amply been paid,
And he said to himself, as he brushed off a tear,
"I'm happier to-night than I've been for a year,
I've enjoyed more true pleasure than ever before.
What care I if bank stock falls ten per cent. more!
Hereafter, I'll make it a rule, I believe,
To have Santa Claus visit us each Christmas eve."
So thinking he gently extinguished the light,
And, tripping down stairs, retired for the night.

As soon as the beams of the bright morning sun
Put the darkness to flight, and the stars one by one,
Four little blue eyes out of sleep opened wide,
And at the same moment the presents espied.
Then out of their beds they sprang with a bound.
And the very gifts prayed for were all of them found.
They laughed and they cried, in their innocent glee,
And shouted for papa to come quick and see,
What presents old Santa Claus brought in the night,
(Just the things they wanted,) and left before light;
"And now," added Annie, in voice soft and low,
"You'll believe there's a Santa Claus, papa, I know;"
While dear little Willie climbed up on his knee,
Determined no secret between them should be,
And told in soft whispers how Annie had said
That their dear, blessed mamma, so long ago dead,
Used to kneel down and pray by the side of her chair,
And that God up in heaven had answered her prayer,
"Den we dot up and prayed dust as well as we tould,
And Dod answered our prayers; now wasn't he good?"

"I should say that he was if he sent you all these,
And knew just what presents my children would please."
(Well, well, let him think so, the dear little elf,
'Twould be cruel to tell him I did it myself.)

Blind father! who caused your stern heart to relent,
And the hasty words spoken so soon to repent?
'Twas the being who bade you steal softly up stairs,
And made you his agent to answer their prayers.

THE MYSTERY OF DETCHINGLEY.

A CHRISTMAS STORY.

Go to Detchingley for the Christmas! away from my happy home—away in the distant North! I do not suppose I looked pleased at this proposal of my father's, which he announced to me at the breakfast table one November morning, but notwithstanding my prejudices, as Aunt Dorothy, the presiding genius of Detchingley was my mother's beloved sister, it was only a few days after that I had said good-bye to the dear old home circle, and was traveling rapidly northwards, through the falling leaves and the fading flowers of the dying year.

Aunt Dorothy came out into the great hall to meet me as I alighted from the carriage, and my heart turned towards her with a loyal love.

"You have another aunt, you know, Edie, dear," she said. "Come, now, and see her."

Aunt Myra Westwood sat all alone by the great log fire in the drawing-room. I saw at once that Aunt Myra was not a pretty woman, nor aught that is beautiful or lovely; but coldly, defiantly handsome; and the quick eye of youth told me that there was a mystery about her, and that we should not be good friends until it was unraveled.

I do not suppose I shall ever forget my first evening at Detchingley—the small dinner party of three ladies; the quaint, dark, wainscoted dining-room; the quainter and darker family portraits hanging round us on the walls, like mutes at a funeral; the metallic voice of Aunt Myra falling echoless on my ear, and the sweet, tremulous one of Aunt Dorothy, like notes of the dear home music. I was very glad when we rose to go into the drawing-room. As we were crossing the hall, just by the foot of the stairs, I noticed both ladies glance quickly and most uneasily up them. I followed their glance, but the only thing that attracted my attention was a portrait—the full-length portrait of a lady in a carved oaken frame—a yearning, wistful face, shadowed by rich, soft, hair, and lighted by eyes that had a story in them.

"Isn't it a family portrait?" I asked, "or only an ideal subject?"

I appealed to Aunt Myra. "Ideal you will find it, Edith, in every sense," she replied, but there was something in her tone, something in the way in which she covered her eyes with her hands as if she would shut out the picture from their gaze, that for an instant startled me, but I only replied.

"It is a very wonderful, beautiful painting. I should love Uncle Charles to see it."

The tangled netting at this moment fell from Aunt Dorothy's nervous fingers, and she sprang before me towards her sister; for the cold, white hand had fallen pulseless to that lady's side. Aunt Myra had fainted.

Aunt Dorothy turned suddenly on me—suddenly, almost sharply, it seemed to me; and said: "You must be tired, Edith, with your long journey—come to bed now, child."

I slept very little that night, and many, many times wished myself home again.

Three or four days passed away very monotonously. I devoted myself to Aunt Dorothy, but I shrank intuitively from Aunt Myra. I felt that she repelled me—only endured my presence because I gave pleasure to her sister Dorothy. My mother had made me a little acquainted with her family history. I knew she was what is called "well-born;" but that she had descended from such an ancient line as the names recorded on the old church walls told me she had, was quite unknown to me.

I left Detchingley church that Sunday afternoon under the impression that I had been sojourning for a brief while in a vast charnel-house of the family of Westwood; for almost numberless, it appeared to me, were the tablets, scrolls, and "storied urns" whereon were traced the names of my mother's ancestors.

As I walked slowly along, a white marble cross, rising from among the green mounds, attracted my attention. I read upon it:

"TO THE MEMORY OF
KATHARINE WESTWOOD,
Who departed this life, Dec. 24th, 18—,
AGED 20 YEARS."

A Westwood lying out in the open graveyard! Was there no room in the church for this young girl to sleep beneath the dust-covered banners and rusty armor?

My mind was dwelling on the discovery I had just made. It was only natural that I should turn to my companion and say:

"Who was Katharine Westwood?"

Short and prompt was the answer I received:

"Your uncle Charles's wife."

I literally stood still with astonishment.

"How very strange," I observed—"I never knew Uncle Charles had been married at all."

"That is a proof, Edith," replied Aunt Myra, "that your mother did not think you sufficiently judicious to be entrusted with the knowledge. It shows great wisdom on her part; she has judged of you as I do."

"Aunt Dorothy," I said to her, as she was about to leave my room that evening, "why have I not heard before that Uncle Charles was married?"

"There are some natures, Edie," replied Aunt Dorothy, slowly, "that never can endure to hear their great sorrows talked about. Your Uncle Charles has such a nature, Edith. He loved his wife so devotedly, and cherishes her memory so even at this time, that his family never speak of her to save him the pangs which mention of her would call forth.

I was quite by myself one bright, wintry morning, and was making my way home through the church-yard, when a respectable-looking old woman, standing by the grave with the marble cross, caught my attention. It was a kind, good face, motherly and soft, and it seemed to me that she looked lovingly down on the green turf, and was caressing with one hand the polished surface of the white marble.

"I knew her, my dear young lady!" she exclaimed; "nearly all her life I knew her. She was just a poor young thing, left without any parents when quite a baby; and she was sent to the Hall to be taken care of. Mr. Westwood—the father of the ladies there now, miss—was her guardian; and when she was about seventeen, Mr. Charles who was a cousin of the family, and who, they all hoped, would marry Miss Myra Westwood, came down to stay at the Hall, and fell in love with my Katharine, and married her, and took her off to where his regiment was for two years. And then he was sent away to some foreign place, where there was fighting going on, so he could not take his wife with him; and she came down to live at the Hall again with the ladies. But she was ill and weakly like, poor dear—fretting after him, I suppose. So they took her off to France, somewhere; but she soon died, and then they brought her back here in her coffin; but she wasn't buried at once, miss.

I wanted to ask more—to learn all that the woman knew, but just then Aunt Myra came along, and in her cold, distant way took my arm and we went home.

That evening as I groped my way to my room, the lamp not being lighted, I made a discovery—the recess between two of the portraits was *not* a recess, but a door, and the door was open, only just a little way, and behind it was a dim sort of light which glimmered on to the landing. My "vulgar curiosity," as Aunt Myra would doubtless have termed my very natural desire to know more on the subject, prompted me to push the door a little further open, and look in. Just then I heard the firm, unmistakable footsteps of Aunt Myra coming from her room above. Slow and measured it seemed at first, then suddenly became quicker; and, from my gloomy position on the lowest stair, I could see her hasten across the landing, looking quickly and furtively around her as she went, and disappear in the recess. I heard no door close, but the faint, dim light faded instantaneously; and in the silence and darkness I made my way to my room.

On entering, my heart seemed to cease beating—for there by the fire sat a woman, her face partly hidden from me by the long brown hair that fell over it. The closing of the door had startled her. She half rose from her chair; then appeared to be reassured in some way, and sat down again. Frightened as I was—terror-struck, I may say—as I stood in the shadows, and watched the firelight flicker over the pale, beautiful face, the thought stole into my mind instantly that the face before me was the exact counterpart of the picture hanging in the hall, and which had so attracted my attention. I went a few steps nearer. I made up a mighty mind, and opened my mouth to speak. The bright, wonderful eyes were fixed on me as I did so. But I heard no sound issue from my lips, though they tried to form the words:

"Who are you?"

The face smiled—looked into the fire—pushed away with both hands its long, shadowy hair—then rose from the chair, and came a step nearer to me as it uttered these terrible words:

"I am buried in Detchingley churchyard."

Well, I suppose I shuddered, and turned white, and felt as any other young girl under the same circumstances might have done; but I do not remember anything distinctly, except shivering very much over a tireless grate, and wondering how it was that I was found lying senseless on the hearthrug.

Time stole on; a fortnight had passed away; it wanted just a week to Christmas, but the strange face had not yet reappeared. I had not been inactive all this time, for I had most perseveringly attacked daily the door in the recess, but it never once yielded to my efforts, and I was almost beginning to despair of accomplishing the work I had laid out for myself.

One intolerable dull day I proposed solacing myself with a little music, and was about to commence; but, hearing my amiable relative mutter something about being "bored," and "that horrid march," I thought it as well to spare her the infliction. I remember she informed me that night, before going to bed, that my uncle Charles was expected to arrive the following Thursday—Christmas Eve—and that it was proposed that I should return to town with him after his short visit of two or three days was concluded. Both pieces of intelligence gave more real pleasure than I cared to express.

That night I had fallen into my first sleep, when I was suddenly awakened by a soft, warm hand being laid on mine.

"Yes, Aunt Dorothy," I said, starting up, and endeavoring to look extremely intelligent, at the same time being awkardly sensible that I felt uncommonly stupid.

But the voice that replied to me was not Aunt Dorothy's.

"I was married once," it said, in a low murmur, "a long time ago now—when I was alive. And in the church, that day, they played as you did to-night. But it was on the organ, you know—the organ in the great church in the valley. But I am buried now—buried in Detchingley churchyard. Myra said it would be better for *him* if I died. He would be rich, and great, and grand; and people would love and honor him. It was I only that kept him back—because I was poor and not clever."

I knew all now; there was no Katherine Westwood in the churchyard—no one at all in that grave!

Christmas morning at Detchingley. It had been my intention to meet my Uncle Charles at the station, to prepare him for the strange announcement; but, on reflection, it occurred to me that he would not allow me to accompany him to the grave; therefore, I resolved he should have no opportunity of refusing me, and so would meet him. Thus I came upon him just as he was entering the churchyard gate. I saw he was surprised, and not altogether pleased; but he greeted me affectionately, and as he walked by my side up the narrow-paved pathway, he remarked that I did not look well. We had just reached the marble cross, and the difficulty of my undertaking rose before me in al its magnitude; viewed from a distance, it had not appeared formidable. I stood still, resolved to enter on the subject at once, and said: "I am not very well, Uncle Charles. I have something on my mind that I ought to tell you about. I could not speak of it at the Hall, so have come here to do so."

He frowned, and looked annoyed, muttering something about: "Would not another time do as well?"

"No, not as well," I made answer. "This is the only right time, and the only right place, Uncle Charles. You must listen to me"—for he was turning angrily away. "I would not intrude on your sorrow if I could not lighten it—"

"Lighten it, child!" he interrupted me by saying. "Do you know what the sorrow is that you speak of 'lightening?' Can you bring the dead back to life, or brighten the gloom of ten long years? Can you tell that cold, dark grave to give me back my young wife—"

It was my turn to interrupt now.

"Yes, yes, I can, Uncle Charles. That is what I have to tell you."

Sternly he looked at me as he firmly grasped my arm, and drew me from the grave on to the pathway.

"This gloomy place has weakened your mind, Edith—it is only charity to think so."

"Oh, Uncle Charles, if you could but believe that what I say is real and true! There is no one in that grave—never has been. A terrible deceit has been practised upon you all these years, and since my visit here I have discovered it. Ask Aunt Dorothy, she will tell you what I have."

There was a dead silence when I ceased speaking, that seemed to last a long time. Anxiously I waited for a response; but none came. He stood with his face averted at first; then turned suddenly on me, and said: "Come, come—quick!"

We had reached the Hall; we were in the drawing-room. Uncle Charles folded his arms on the mantelpiece, and leant his face upon them; then said, almost in a voice of command—"Fetch your aunt Myra, Edith; tell her I am here."

"I can't Uncle Charles—I can't indeed."

But he only repeated his words in a still sterner tone.

And then I went—but not to fetch Aunt Myra. I went straight to my own room—for the dusk of the early evening was closing in rapidly, and that was the accustomed time for the strange woman to meet me. She was there, standing by one of the windows, as I entered; and greeted me with these words—"This is Christmas Eve. I died on Christmas Eve."

"That is gone by," I replied. "You are dead no longer. Come now, with me"

I slid by hand into one of hers, and led her to the drawing room; only saying, as I closed the door on her, to my uncle Charles—"Remember, to-day you have come back to life."

Then I rapidly returned up-stairs; but this time I made way to Aunt Dorothy's room. I knocked; no reply. I entered the room; it was tenantless. She would be with Aunt Myra, I naturally thought; so turned my footsteps that way, I softly tapped, but softer still was the low voice that replied—though its tones were firm and concentrated—"Come in, Edith."

I went in. I closed the door behind me, and then I shivered. I don't know why I did so—the room was not cold; and Aunt Myra was lying on the bed, with her chin resting on the clasped hands, and her face turned to the fading light. Sculptured from a block of marble she might have been, for aught of life that was visible in the proud, majestic form.

"Come closer to me, Edie, child," said Aunt Dorothy, with a sort of wail in her voice; "for I am alone in the world—quite alone. I mean, Edie, there is no one now to whom my love is necessary."

I understood what she meant. I went up to her by the bedside, and took her in my arms, pressing the dear face, with its down-falling tears, close to mine.

"Oh, Aunt Dorothy, what have I done?"

"Right, child," she said in a stern, cold voice, strange to her, and startling to me.

And then we were quiet for some time, until Aunt Dorothy spoke again.

"It was as I feared, Edith. Gradually as the truth broke upon her, the shock was too much; but she died as she lived—to herself. She made no sign, uttered no word; only lay down and died. One yearning cry for pardon, one word of sorrow for the sad bitter past never passsed her lips; and now her trial time is over, and she has entered on the never-ending life. Whether it was woman's jealously—for if she ever loved a human being it was your Uncle Charles—or family pride, which has been the curse of her existence, that induced her to act the cruel part she has, I cannot say. She has passed beyond human judgment. We must leave the creature with its Creator, Edith; for to Him alone we either stand or fall."

"Oh, Aunt Dorothy, if she should find no pardon! and I have burried her there!"

"Hush, hush, child! It is not for us to limit the mercy of Heaven."

And then we sat together a long time silent, with our arms clasped round each other, in the dark, solemn room.

I have been a woman ever since that Christmas Eve at Detchingly. It was the turning point in my life—it made me discover the true mission of woman upon earth; to bring comfort and peace into the achmg, weary hearts of our fellow-creatures. Katharine Westwood, with the love light softening the mild, wonderful beauty of her eyes, told me this as we all sat together in the drawing-room, when the evening lamps were lighted; Uncle Charles, with a gladness in his voice I had never heard before, told me the same; and Aunt Dorothy, dear Aunt Dorothy, as she stood by my side in the great hall, listening to the Christmas bells ringing their joy-toned message over mountain and valley, Aunt Dorothy whispered—"The angels—the angels—Edie, that spoke so long ago to troubled hearts, they are speaking to us, child, now—the same words. Let us listen—and learn!"

STRUCK OIL.—When oil was first "struck," on the 26th of August, 1859, few people imagined the vast wealth it was to bring to the country, and the millionaires it was to make. One of the notablest of these, James Tarr, died a few days ago at Meadville, Pennsylvania. The history of the "Tarr Farm," as oil producing, dates from June, 1861. It embraces 198 acres. In August, 1861, Mr. Tarr sold half of it for $20,000 to Clark & Sumner, of New York. They sold one-third of their interest to some Rochester people for $35,000; but the rapid decline in the price of oil made them regret their purchase, and they resold to C. & S. for the price they gave. New wells were continually developed, and Mr. Tarr accumulated a great fortune. In the fall of 1865, when gold was worth $2.50, he was offered $800,000 gold for the fee simple of the farm—equivalent to $2,000,000. He refused it. Oil is still a success as a steady business in the oil region. We know one gentleman whose income from that source is about $1,000 per day.

A WIFE'S DEVOTION.—Mr. Jacob Staley, sometime ago, thought proper to steal a letter in Omaha from the United States mail. The letter contained a draft on which the cash was got by a forged indorsement. A touching feature of the case consisted in the fact that Staley's wife went upon the stand and swore that she was the forger. Her hope was to save her husband, and she apparently perjured herself to compass that end. The effort was vain, and the Judge, in passing sentence, said he was entirely satisfied that the woman was not guilty of the crime with which she charged herself. The sentence was a heavy one, being that Staley should be confined in the House of Correction for ten years. In concluding his remarks, the Judge made the following singular observation: "I will say to you that you will be enabled materially to shorten this term if you are careful so to conduct yourself as to win the approbation of your keeper."

LAUGHABLE.—A pretty good story is told of a citizen of Elizabeth, N. J., who went on the cars on Thanksgiving Day to see his daughter off. Having secured a seat for her, he left the car and went round to her window to say a parting word. While he was passing out the daughter left the seat to speak to a friend, and at the same time a prim-looking lady who occupied the seat with her moved up to the window. Unaware of the important change inside, our venerable friend hastily put his face up to the window and hurridly exclaimed: "One more kiss, sweet pet." In another instant the point of a blue cotton umbrella caught his seductive lips accompanied by the passionate injunction: "'Seat, you grey-headed wretch." He 'scatted.

A USEFUL CROW.—A crow owned by a farmer in Stanton, Va., has constituted himself superintendent of the culinary department of his master's household, and when the dogs invade the premises, clears them out. He destroys every frog about the well; allows a mouse no chance for his life; drives away hawks from the poultry, and bids fair to act as the best squirrel dog in the country. With his argus eyes he readily spies a squirrel either upon the fence or on trees, and, with natural antipathy to the whole squirrel tribe, his shrill, keen note is readily detected by his owner, accompanied by rapid darts up and down, and the owner is thus led to the game.

DECIDED. — Covington, Ga., has a Debating Society. The question last discussed by this august assembly was, "Which is the more useful, paper or gunpowder." The President was for a long time in great doubt as to which side had produced the strongest argument, when one of the powder side arose and very gravely said: "Mr. President: Spose dar was a bar out dar at de door, and you was to go dar and shake de paper at him, you'd see what de bar would do. But jes shoot a cannot at him and mark de result. I calls for de question." The President forthwith decided in favor of powder.

Trees on the Plains.

As you proceed toward the west from the Missouri, says Gen. Custer, the size of the trees diminishes as well as the number of kinds. As you penetrate the borders of the Indian country, leaving civilization behind you, the sight of forests is no longer enjoyed, the only trees to be seen being scattered along the banks of the streams; these becoming smaller and more rare, finally disappearing altogether and giving place to a few scattering willows and osiers. The greater portion of the Plains may be said to be without timber of any kind. As to the cause of this absence, scientific men disagree, some claiming that the high winds which prevail in unobstructed force prevent the growth and existence of not only trees but even the taller grasses. This theory is well supported by facts, as, unlike the Western prairies, where the grass often attains a height sufficient to conceal a man on horseback, the Plains are covered by a grass which rarely, and only under favorable circumstances, exceeds three inches in height. Another theory, also somewhat plausible, is that the entire Plains were at one time covered with timber more or less dense, but this timber, owing to various causes, was destroyed, and has since been prevented from growing or spreading over the Plains by the annual fires which the Indians regularly create, and which sweep over the entire country. These fires are built by Indians in the fall to burn the dried grass and hasten the growth of the pasturage in the early spring. Favoring the theory that the Plains were at one time covered with forests, is the fact that entire trunks of large trees have been found in a state of petrification on elevated portions of the country, and far removed from streams of water.

In routing the Indians from their winter villages, we invariably discovered them located upon that point of the stream promising the greatest supply of cottonwood bark, while the stream in the vicinity of the village was completely shorn of its supply of timber, and the village itself was strewn with the white branches of the cottonwood entirely stripped of their bark. It was somewhat amusing to observe an Indian pony feeding on cottonwood bark. The limb being usually cut into pieces about four feet in length and thrown upon the ground, the pony, accustomed to this kind of "long forage," would place one fore foot on the limb in the same manner as a dog secures a bone, and gnaw the bark from it. Although not affording anything like the amount of nutriment which either hay or grain does, yet our horses invariably preferred the bark to either, probably on account of its freshness.

The herbage to be found on the principal portion of the Plains is usually sparse and stunted in its growth. Along the banks of the streams and in the bottom lands there grows generally in rich abundance a species of grass often found in the States east of the Mississippi; but on the uplands is produced what is there known as the "buffalo grass," indigenous and peculiar in its character, differing in form and substance from all other grasses. The blade under favorable circumstances reaches a growth usually of from three to five inches, but instead of being straight, or approximately so, it assumes a curled or waving shape, the grass itself becoming densely matted, and giving to the foot, when walking upon it, a sensation similar to that produced by stepping upon moss or the most costly of velvet carpets.

Nearly all graminivorous animals inhabiting the Plains, except the elk and some species of the deer, prefer the buffalo grass to that of the lowland; and it is probable that even these exceptions would not prove good if it were not for the timber on the bottom land, which affords good cover to both the elk and the deer. Both are often found in large herds grazing upon the uplands, although the grass is far more luxuriant and plentiful on the lowlands. Our domestic animals invariably choose the buffalo grass, and experience demonstrates beyond question that it is the most nutritious of all varieties of wild grass.

AN EXAMPLE WORTHY OF IMITATION.—The Legislature of Pennsylvania is to be called on during the next session to pass an act providing for the destruction of weeds in that State. Owners, occupiers or lessees of lands are to be compelled to keep not only their farms free from all such weeds as mulleins, wild carrot, Canada thistle, horse nettle and oxeye daisy, but those portions of the public roads which pass through or adjoin their properties. Railroad companies are to be amenable to the provisions of this act. As very much mischief has been done by selling grass seed foul with all these and more vile seed, persons who knowingly or even inadvertently do so should be brought within the scope of this act. If it is true that "the destruction of the poor is their poverty," it is equally true that weeds produce poverty both of the farm and the farmer.

CONCERNING NEW YORKERS.—A free-and-easy correspondent of the Cincinnati *Commercial*, himself a New Yorker, "expands" in this fashion: "New York is a noble State, that can not claim to be the mother of Presidents and tobacco like Virginia, but she has produced a good deal else that is worthy of notice, including Orange County butter. New Yorkers are an eminently respectable set, no matter where you find them. They are famous for good character. In Tennessee, for instance, there is not a single New Yorker in the Penitentiary or in the Legislature either. I call that a pretty good record."

©Maryland State Archives, msa_sc3661_scm12289-0155