

Literature.

IN A CYCLONE CELLAR.

BY ADAH BEERS FOSTER.

"Why doesn't she come? With night coming on so fast, the wind already blowing a hurricane, and such an awful sky, why does she stay?" Mrs. Edeland twisted her hands together in mortal fear, stepped from the door of her tiny house and ran to the edge of the bluff on which the lonely dwelling stood. She anxiously scanned the hot, dry, boundless plains, across which the wind was now tearing madly. Then she raised her frightened eyes to the great mass of purple clouds advancing from the northwest. They were crested with the ominous coppery tinge which the scattered settlers in those desolate wastes knew so well and dreaded so infinitely. After a final despairing glance across the prairie, Mrs. Edeland returned to the house, and from the doorway watched the threatening heavens. Her eyes at length rested, with a faint gleam of comfort in their troubled depths, upon an oblong mound of earth, with a tiny wooded shaft projecting from the centre and at one end—so near she could have touched it where she stood—a heavy wooden door fastened obliquely against the mound. "Oh," she cried, "to think of living in a country where one must be forever retreating into the bowels of the earth for safety! To think that one has come to such a pass, that the greatest comfort one's life holds is a cyclone cellar!" and in the face of her fear she laughed. At this instant, a faint shout borne to her ears on the wings of the wind, caused her to raise her head eagerly. In the gathering dusk she could just make out a woman on the farther side of the "draw," riding as only the women of the plains can ride. Mrs. Edeland, after a fervent, "thank God," watched breathlessly her sister's gallant little pony, which though wild with fear, was still true to the hand that had guided him in many such extremities as this. "Quick, for God's sake!" said Mrs. Edeland, when her sister neared the house. She ran ahead to the snug little "dug-out" stable, and opened the door as her sister drew rein before it. They had the horse stabled in an incredibly short time, and set out on a run for the house, casting piteously frightened eyes at the dreadful sky as they ran. "We are in for another night of it, Rachael," said her sister. "It's becoming monotonous, isn't it! The third this week." "Is everything ready?" hurriedly asked Miss Rogers, as she opened a little door and took a small hand bag from a shelf. "Yes, yes," impatiently. Oh, do come! Just hear that!" almost crying, as a terrific shriek, as of an army of demons, tore wildly about their little house, threatening its instant destruction. "Come," said Miss Rogers, gently, glancing compassionately at Mrs. Edeland's deathly face as she spoke. It took their united strength to close the door, once they got inside. But when they attempted to raise the heavy door of their retreat, they found it impossible. The wind took them off their feet, and they clung together, crouching down against the side of the house. But only for a moment; again they attempted with the strength of despair, to open the door far enough to gain an entrance; but each time the wind tore it from their grasp, and closed it with—it seemed to them—a savage glee. "It's no use," said Mrs. Edeland, at length. "Four years in this horrible place, and then to be blown to heaven knows where." At this juncture, a tall, dark form loomed up beside them. A strong hand laid hold of the door, and a voice said, peremptorily: "Take your hands off. I'll open it; and you want to get in there mighty quick." He held it open, while the sisters stumbled pell mell down the steps. He quickly followed, fastening the door securely on the inside. Mrs. Edeland hurriedly lighted a candle and held it above her head, while she peered in some trepidation at the stalwart form standing quietly at the foot of the steps. "Why, it's Dick Graves!" she exclaimed with a sigh of relief. "Small favors thankfully received," murmured Miss Rogers, as she calmly seated herself on an inverted butter tub. Dick glanced at her with a slight smile, but made no reply, as he found an empty nail keg and seated himself, while Mrs. Edeland appropriated an empty packing box. "This is bad for the wheat," observed Dick Graves, as the rain beat furiously upon the earthy roof above them and the sullen roar of the wind penetrated their subterranean retreat. "We were expecting the harvesters tomorrow," said Mrs. Edeland anxiously. "Oh, I do hope it won't be a regular cyclone! I am always afraid of the house in such a wind. If John had lived we should have had a new one before this." "We'll hope it's only a blow," began Dick, reassuringly, when there was a sudden terrible roaring, and the next instant the crash of falling timbers and the clinking of breaking glass on the cellar floor. It brought them to their feet, the sisters

clinging to each other in speechless horror. Mrs. Edeland sank helplessly at their feet, while Rachael looked mutely across her prostrate form at the man who had doubtless saved them from further calamity—perhaps had saved their lives. He was looking down at the poor soul on the rude floor, with an expression of deepest compassion. Kneeling beside her, he lifted her head, laying it tenderly on his arm, while Rachael rubbed the toil hardened hands and gently brushed the gray hair from the white face. She was inconsolable, once she regained consciousness, and through the long hours of the stormy night the united efforts of the others failed to calm or reassure her. Towards morning she sank into a troubled sleep. Rachael sat beside her, her elbows on her knees, her face hidden in her hands. After a time a slight movement roused her, and she raised her head. Dick was softly unfastening the door. As he raised it a flood of sunlight poured into the cellar. Rachael motioned him to leave it open. It was sometime before she could muster courage to venture out. Finally she crept timidly up the steps and stood face to face with the ruins of yesterday's home. "Everything gone! A step behind her, and Dick Graves stood beside her. "I've just fed the horses," he said, quietly, "and as soon as you are both ready we'll go." "Go? Go where? We've no place on earth to go," with a despairing gesture. "That's likely—and my place only ten miles away. I shall take you there, Aunt Sarah will make you comfortable." "No, no! I shall not go one step. How can I? You ought to know better." "See here, Rachael, if you hesitate because of what has passed, let me tell you once for all, that you may rest perfectly easy on that score. You need fear no more nonsense from me. You said 'No,' and 'No,' it is. You have no right to allow your sentiments to interfere with your sister's welfare. Matters are bad enough with her as it is; her crops are ruined and her house in splinters." "No matter, I will not go." "I would like to have you comprehend the fact that, although I loved you madly once, I am not the sort that goes on annoying a woman when she has told him distinctly, as you have, that she cares nothing about him. That settles it," in a decided tone. With a little effort he continued: "There is not another place within twenty miles where you would be so comfortable. Aunt Sarah will be glad to see you, and Mrs. Edeland must be cared for at once." A little shivering sigh behind them; they turned to see her standing quietly, looking with dry eyes at the havoc wrought in one short night. The house John had built for her so long ago, and where they had been so happy, lay in ruins at her feet. Dick put his arm about her and gently told her he was taking them home with him. She assented listlessly and sank back against her sister, when he had got them into the wagon which luckily had escaped injury. It was a dismal ride. Every now and then some familiar object greeted them, lying where the wind had left it. The fields of grain, yesterday waving in the sunshine, lay beaten into the earth. It seemed an eternity before they left the path of the storm and came in sight of Dick's ranch. How prosperous everything looked! They could see the harvesters at work and all the cheerful farm sounds greeted them as they reached the low, rambling, abode house. Flowers were blooming all about it, and a meadow lark was chanting his Te Deum from the topmost bough of a cottonwood tree near the gate. Aunt Sarah welcomed them with old-fashioned New England hospitality. But when Dick explained their situation, she took first one, and then the other, of the forlorn sisters to her breast and cried over them and comforted them to her heart's content. Then she set about getting them a breakfast that would have tempted an anchorite. They at once put Mrs. Edeland to bed, while Rachael helped Aunt Sarah to wash up the dishes—wondering as she did so, if she knew that her nephew had, six months ago, asked her to marry him, and that she had refused him, and what she must think of her being there, under the circumstances. As for Dick, during the next few days she saw but little of him; but the little was not just what she expected. She wondered if this cold, self-contained man could be the passionate lover of a few short months ago. "One would think he had never been in love in his life," she said, with a strange, uneasy sense of anger in her heart, at the calm, courteous indifference of his manner to her. He appeared to forget that there had ever been anything but friendship the most Platonic in his sentiments toward her. A few days after the storm she rode over to the old place. She was chafing fiercely at their enforced stay under Dick Graves' roof. They must rebuild at once, she felt, and as if in furtherance of this idea, she made her weary way across the prairie, thinking sadly of many things. She went sorrowfully about the place, noting in detail the ravages of the cruel storm. She seated herself at length, upon a large flat boulder near the well, and

was looking drearily across the sunny waste, when Dick rode up. She started and blushed, coloring so deeply that she hastily put up her hand, fearing he might see it and think—but pshaw! Dick had a quiet way of seeing most things, but he wasn't the man to think that because— "Oh, here you are, Rachael! I was afraid I'd miss you. Mrs. Edeland said you had ridden over, and she told me to say that whatever you decided upon would be acceptable to her. I'll go right over to Hilton's and order the lumber so that it can be begun at once. Will you build on the old site, do you think?" "I hadn't thought anything about it! but I suppose so," coldly. "All right. Now, if you'll give me an idea of how you intend to build, I'll make out a bill for the lumber, and right on so as to get home before dusk." "I don't know anything about it. How can I know what Anna wants? I'll have nothing to do with the plans, I tell you," passionately, as she started toward her horse, which she had tethered close by. Dick looked blankly after her, slowly replacing book and pencil in his pocket. Then he hurried after her. "What's the row, Rachael?" he asked, as he untied her horse and stood waiting to help her mount. "I'm not aware of any 'row,' as you call it," she said, stiffly. "Why did you fly off like that, if there isn't," he asked. No answer. He threw up his head and gave himself a slight shake before he ventured to speak again. "I can't think what's come to you, Rachael. You used to be a regular brick, but of late you are downright cranky. I do hope," anxiously, "I have not offended you in any way! We shall be neighbors still, when you are settled here once in the new home—and friends always, Rachael!" holding out his hand. "No! I am not your friend, Dick Graves. I hate the very sight of you—so there!" and she vaulted into the saddle and was off like a shot. He stood watching her in speechless astonishment until she disappeared behind a bluff. "If the ways of the Lord are past finding out," he said, slowly, as he took off his hat and pushed back his hair, "I'd like to know what the 'deuce' is to be said about the ways of a woman. That night after the supper was done, Rachael slipped out of the house, leaving the others chatting on the wide veranda. There was a burning in her heart, a restless craving for she knew not what. She longed to escape into the night and be quiet and alone with her troubled thoughts. And such a night! The dewy earth was flooded with the wonderful moonlight peculiar to these high-lying prairies. It glorified each homely object and enhanced the tranquil quiet which brooded like a spirit over these lonely windswept plains. Rachael crossed the yard, opened a little gate, and in a moment found herself on the edge of a narrow belt of stunted trees which fringed a tiny creek. "How black the shadows are," she said softly, as she stopped and looked through the quivering trees at the water shimmering in the moonlight. What strange thing had come to her she wondered. It was not alone the loss inflicted by the storm. Why did she cling to that home of his, and feel within her breast so deep a resentment against Dick for his efforts in hurrying forward her sister's rebuilding? Was he tired of them—her—so soon? He seemed to have forgotten the past entirely. "And only to-day he called me a crank!" she sobbed. Her sorrow had its way, there in the sweet silence of the night. Presently she lifted her tear-stained face to the solemn sky so far away and so un pitying—her hands folded closely over her throbbing heart, as she whispered: "I see it all now; I know now, when it is too late. The mistake of my life—the forlorn sisters to her breast and cried over them and comforted them to her heart's content. Then she set about getting them a breakfast that would have tempted an anchorite. They at once put Mrs. Edeland to bed, while Rachael helped Aunt Sarah to wash up the dishes—wondering as she did so, if she knew that her nephew had, six months ago, asked her to marry him, and that she had refused him, and what she must think of her being there, under the circumstances. As for Dick, during the next few days she saw but little of him; but the little was not just what she expected. She wondered if this cold, self-contained man could be the passionate lover of a few short months ago. "One would think he had never been in love in his life," she said, with a strange, uneasy sense of anger in her heart, at the calm, courteous indifference of his manner to her. He appeared to forget that there had ever been anything but friendship the most Platonic in his sentiments toward her. A few days after the storm she rode over to the old place. 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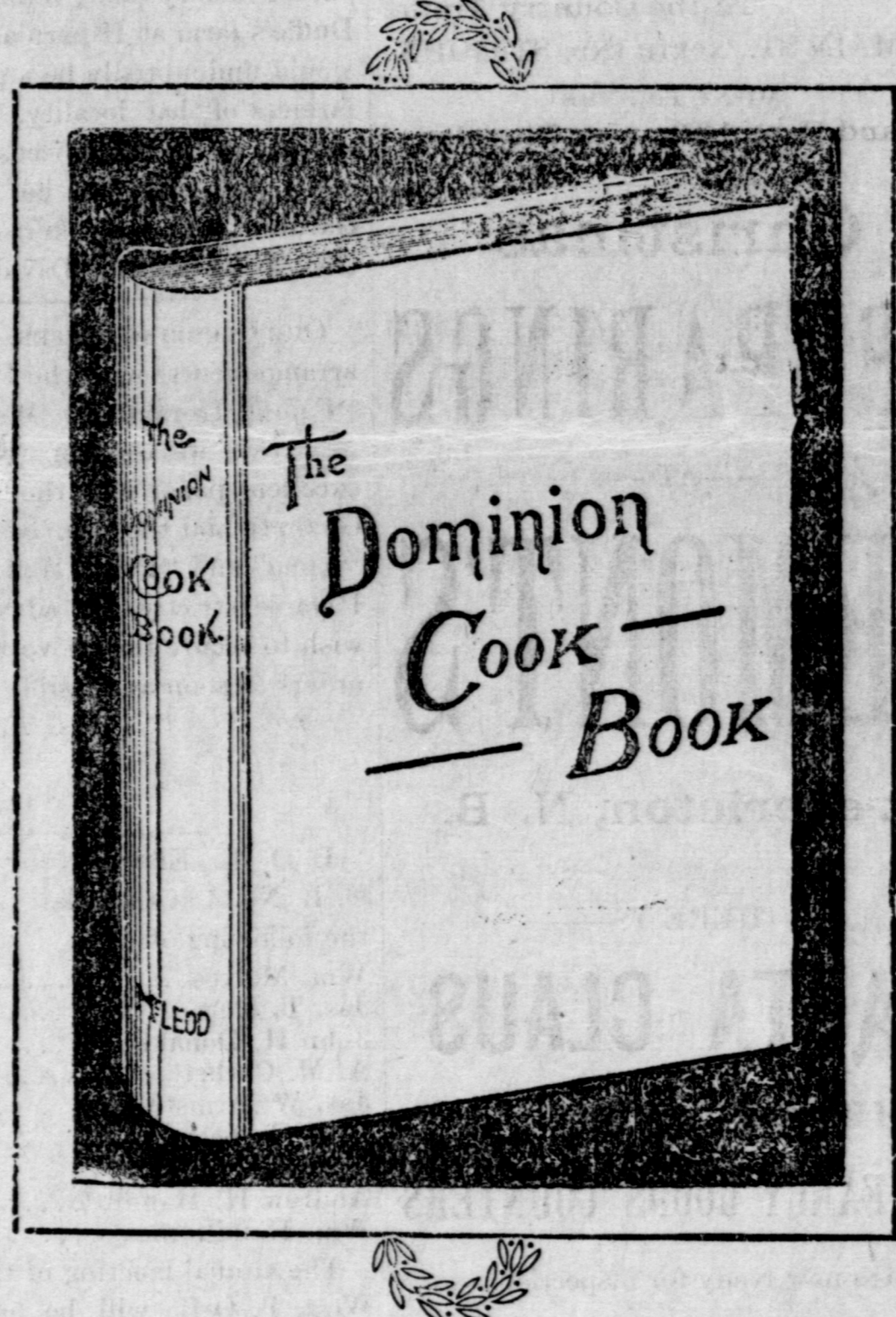
Potato Souffle. Potato souffle is a nice dish for a change. Boil four large mealy potatoes, pass them through a sieve; scald in a clean saucepan, half teacupful sweet milk and a tablespoonful fresh, sweet butter, add to the potato, season with salt and pepper, and beat all to a cream; add, one at a time, the yolks of four eggs, beaten thoroughly; to the whites of the eggs add a pinch of salt, beat them until stiff and turn into the potato mixtures, beating only enough to mix well, then put into a buttered baking dish; bake twenty minutes in a hot oven and serve at once. Believe me when I tell you that thrift of time will repay you in after life with a usury of profit beyond your most sanguine dreams, and that the waste of it will make you dwindle, alike in intellectual and in moral stature, beyond your darkest reckonings.—Gladstone.

Two sisters, while visiting in Ireland last summer, got into conversation one day with a tenant of their hostess. One of the girls, who is quite stout, had talked with this same tenant before, and this time she asked the old woman if she would have known them for sisters. "Well," was the answer, with a smile that would put the blarney stone itself to blush, "ye look alike; but yer sister is slender, while you, Miss,—well you favor the quane." The most effective cure for blackheads is soap, water and a camel's face brush. With these the face should be thoroughly scrubbed every night, after which a good cold cream should be applied. After coming in from a dusty walk or ride the face should be immediately cleansed in this way. This will prevent the blackheads from forming, as they are caused by particles of dust that have lodged in the pores.

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