

praisement will be comparative rather than specific, for its only object is to afford a basis of comparison on which to equalize the allotments, but it will nevertheless give a considerable insight into actual values as conditions are today, with the exceptions as to improvements and locality noted by the rules. Those are advantages to be weighed by prospective purchasers, and will fluctuate in value according to individual desires.

Within the year just past, thousands of persons have taken advantage of favorable opportunities afforded by the railroads entering the Territory to inspect the country. I have encountered these "prospectors" everywhere. Few, indeed, are disappointed with what they see, but I find that many had before coming an erroneous impression as to the conditions under which the Territory is soon to be thrown open to settlement. Many thought that, as soon as the Dawes Commission has finished its work, the lands may be purchased outright. Some, when they learn the facts, feel a sense of disappointment and are somewhat averse to locating upon land they cannot, at least for a time, own. That this consideration will cause many who had entertained a project to remove to the Territory to change their mind, or defer moving in the matter, is certain. In a country where no man is so poor but he may, if he really wishes to own some land, many are disinclined to settle upon ground to which they do not hold a title. However, unless one is swayed chiefly by sentimental considerations, such objections must fall to the ground in this instance. Owing to the fact that the lands of the small tribes that occupy the Quapah Agency, in the northeast part of the Territory, have been allotted for over ten years under almost exactly similar provisions as will obtain in the Five Nations, we may observe how the system operates when put into practice. Nearly all the land in the Quapah Agency is cultivated by white persons under leases, and the arrangement has

worked with complete satisfaction to all parties concerned.

Take the Five Nations. Here practically all the land that is in cultivation has been tilled by white men, the interlopers whose presence gave perpetual offense. These lands were cultivated under conditions where not even valid leases could be obtained, where all improvements became the property of the tribes, and where the tenants were in constant fear of eviction which they would have been powerless to resist. Yet the lands found men willing to cultivate them. What more need be said? There is no scarcity of land as yet in the United States. There is land in plenty. But some is more desirable than others. The fact that white men cultivated the Indian lands under insecure tenure, or no tenure at all, is absolute proof that they found it profitable to do so. If they found it profitable under no tenure, is it not reasonable to assume that under secure leaseholds, with a prospect of eventual possession, it will also be profitable? Moreover, conditions are vastly more favorable in other respects. Formerly this region was isolated from the world's markets. Now it is rapidly becoming a network of railway lines. Within five years a railroad map of the Territory will look like a spider's web. If the present rate of construction continues, and there is no doubt that it will. Five great systems now reach the Territory, and all have the building fever. The railroads are getting into shape to handle the traffic that will result when the additional million, expected to arrive within the next ten years, gets on the ground and to work.

So the "prospector" who comes to the Territory now will have no just cause to regret his journey. He is a seeker for opportunity, and opportunity is here. If he be a farmer looking for land, he may find himself just a little ahead of time, but to be ahead of time is generally estimated an advantage. The man who is ahead of time is infinitely better off than

the man who is behind time. But is the "prospector" who comes to the Territory now ahead of time? I should say, decidedly not. A man does not, or should not, change his home without good cause. He must see, or think he sees, a fair chance to better his condition. If he is wise, he will "prospect" a little before taking the plunge; and if he expects his "prospecting" trip to result in anything, he must certainly not be behind time, or he will find that others have seized the opportunity he sought, while it was yet newborn from the womb of progress.

In a short time, now, this fertile region will open its arms to embrace the men whose destiny is to convert its teeming resources to the uses of mankind. It is, indeed, fortunate that this brief in-

terim will intervene. It means that home-seekers will have ample opportunity to look over the ground, decide upon a location, and prepare for removal. It means that the new territory will not start handicapped by the unsettled conditions that always follow a "rush." Its "boom" will be more gradual, but will lose no impetus on that account. The foundations are well laid, the results certain. I have had occasion, during the past few years, to traverse a large part of the earth's surface, and if I were asked today to name the locality most likely in my opinion, to enjoy during the forthcoming decade the most substantial development, I should, without hesitation, reply:

"The Indian Territory."



Master Johnny Leaf, a brave young Cherokee.



Ya ho-la, the bright little son of Chinnubbie Harjo, the Indian Poet.

Courtesy of Twin Territories Magazine.

AN ARKANSAS YARN.

"And you mean to tell me the hailstones were as large as hen eggs?" queried the stranger in Arkansas.

"Yes, sir," responded the native without blinking, "and our hens were so much de-

ceived that they sat on them."

"H'm! Guess you are going to say they hatched out something."

"Yes, stranger, they hatched out frozen chickens."

A NIGHT OF TERROR.

BY MAJOR ARTHUR GRIFFITH.

This is an absolutely true tale. I could, if called upon, give chapter and verse for it, the name of the place in which the terrible incident occurred, the name also of the principal actors.

It happened at a famous old hotel in a great seaport city—an hotel known to all the world, a well-managed, highly respectable hotel. I will tell the story as I heard it.

A family party was staying at this hostelry—father, mother, two daughters, and a son. They were about to embark upon a long voyage by an ocean steamer, and they had come down the night before departure.

They had dined quietly, and after an hour or two in the drawing-room the ladies had retired for the night, each to her own bedroom. What is coming affects one of the daughters, whom I will call Laura, the eldest of the family.

Laura had fallen off to sleep very soon after she got into bed—the sound, dreamless sleep of a healthy, unemotional girl who had had a hard day's traveling, enough to induce physical fatigue, and with nothing on her mind to cause wakefulness.

Yet she awoke suddenly and with a shock, with intense but nameless, inexplicable terror. She became conscious of something serious impending, something that foreboded evil to herself, something so awful and so near that she shivered under the bedclothes in horribly acute fright.

Her first impulse—the most natural in a weak woman—was to hide her head. She might have cried out to give the alarm, to appeal for help, but she was voiceless, quite incapable of action, almost paralyzed in thought. Her room was not absolutely dark. As is often the case in hotel bedrooms, a faint pencil of light came over the door from the lamp

in the corridor; it was not sufficient to make things perfectly clear, but at least it was not darkness.

Now a fresh paroxysm of terror supervened, having a most distinct and tangible basis—that of sound. Although buried beneath the blankets, she could not escape the noise that now came and went in regular pulsation—a wheezing, coughing, sepulchral utterance, rising and falling painfully, hideously, but increasing always in volume, as though it was steadily approaching her room.

What was it, this horrible, unearthly, supernatural sound? It was so dreadful, so sickening, that she was constrained, in spite of herself, to look across the dimly-lighted room for any visible explanation.

There was none at first nor for some time. All that she knew and with positive certainty was that the sound came nearer and nearer. It was in the passage or corridor, moving slowly forward, till now at last it paused and hung for a moment plainly and unmistakably at her very door. She waited breathlessly, eagerly hoping it would pass on, when—

All at once she remembered she had not bolted her door. It was only left on the latch. She had neither bolted it nor put the chain up. She was thus at the mercy of any intruder.

She was now frantic, quite beside herself with alarm. Yet in this her last and greatest extremity, when she was on the point of jumping up to set all and every bell jangling and shriek aloud for help, she saw it was too late.

The handle of her door turned, the door itself opened, it was gradually but distinctly pushed in by some unseen hand or agency from the other side. Through the wide open door crawled a formless mass, a living creature, having some human semblance, clothed, but moving close to the ground on all fours, like a beast of

the field. And continually the same dread sound proceeded from it, the stertorous wheezing of some one breathing hard. A voice it must be, laden with menace, but unable to frame a syllable of intelligible speech.

The climax was soon reached. This Thing so mysterious and so terrible quickly crossed the floor till it came to the bottom of the bed, and then, with one bound, the spring of a wild animal instinct with fierce energy, it sprang up and settled in a heavy, inert mass across the poor girl's feet.

So far it was Laura herself who subsequently recounted the awful adventure. She could tell no more, for she lost consciousness at the supreme moment, fainting dead away.

The sequel comes from others. It was to have been an early start, and the chambermaid who was to call Laura should have reached her door at seven A. M. But as she was flying along the corridor, as usual in a desperate hurry, her foot slipped on some soft, greasy substance, and she fell. When she regained her feet and looked for the cause of the accident, she found, to her horror, that she had been treading in blood.

With a shriek she could not restrain, she ran back for assistance, and now, backed by the chambermaid of the next floor, made a further inspection. There was a trail of blood, great gouts of it on the stairs, along the corridor, and to the very door of Laura's room. Her door was still ajar, and the track of blood was followed inside to the foot of the bed, where it gathered into a stagnant pool.

The Thing on the bed was a man—dead. His throat was cut from ear to ear—a hideous and appalling sight.

Laura still lay senseless, and nothing could rouse her till her mother and sister came with tender care to win her back to life. No mention was made to her of the horrible occurrence. The dead body had

been removed, with all suggestion of the horrifying episode, and when her memory returned sufficiently to tell the tale it was treated as a vision, a strange black nightmare, a baseless dream.

For herself, some suspicion of the agony through which she had passed must have been evoked, for the first glance at her glass showed that her hair had turned snow-white in the night.

The real truth was known only to a few. The deceased had committed suicide. The dread act had been performed in the smoking room, but death was not immediate, and the man, struggling now for the life he had thrown away, crept upstairs to die. He no doubt mistook Laura's room for his own, and there expired.—Metropolitan.

The Current River division of the Frisco penetrates one of the best fruit sections of Missouri, and it is a wonder that there is not much more development in that direction than there is. It may also be said that there is much fine corn and wheat land on this line also. It is true that the lumber industry predominates now, but after the lumber is all worked up the land will remain, and it will be utilized and bring in large returns.

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Immigration into Oklahoma never seems to check up. Like a mighty river it keeps on flowing forever, and **can neither** be dammed nor turned from its **course**. The best of it is that the **great mass of** people who have gone to Oklahoma **have prospered**.

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Land in **South Missouri** is increasing in value, and **the low prices** of the past few years will **never be experienced** again. The sensible **man is he who** takes advantage of present **prices and gets** the benefit of the rise that **is now under way**, and will continue for **years to come**. A delay of a month may make **a material difference**.

OKLAHOMA TOWN BUILDING.

BY A. K. W.

The commercial axiom, "Towns do not grow, they are built," is being accentuated every day in the marvelous development of the Great Southwest. The sun rises there on a houseless plain and sets on rows of buildings, with families snugly ensconced in comfortable cottages, and plenteous meals cooked therein to celebrate their first day in the new home in a new land. This building of towns in a day has been going on in the West—in Oklahoma especially—for some years, but the people are not through with it yet. Immigration sufficient to make a good sized town flows into that Territory every day, and yet there is room for more. These opportunities for settlements of from 1,000 to 5,000 have been made possible by the network of railways that the Frisco System has been and is spreading throughout not only Oklahoma but the Southeast and Southwest. The material for the houses, stores and shops is hauled to the proposed new site, every household utensil and furniture is shipped in advance, and when the day comes for the "opening," or rather sale of lots, train load after train load of people are hurried to the chosen spot. There is no "riffraff" among them; they are men and women with the money to pay spot cash for what they want, and have come to make not only a new home, but better fortune for themselves and children.

These observations are most pointedly and practically pertinent to the growth of urban communities in Oklahoma. Since last August four new towns have been made there within a distance of not a hundred miles. Prior to that time there was scarcely a village of a dozen persons to be found along the route. The reason why is easily explained. The building of the Blackwell, Enid and Southwestern from Beaumont, Kas., to Vernon, Texas, and the Oklahoma and Western from Okla-

homa City to Quanah, Texas, both divisions of the Frisco System, opened up a broad and fertile section that had hitherto been sparsely settled by ranchmen and not a few farmers. There were many excellent locations along these routes for thriving towns and the most advantageous were chosen by the founders. These new towns each now number from 800 to 2,000 population, and every day newcomers arrive.

The first of the young and vigorous municipal quartette was Thomas City in Custer County. This town was promoted by the Oklahoma Railway Townsite Company, which is composed of a number of the leading citizens of Clinton, Mo. They purchased 580 acres of land and offered 2,000 lots for sale at the low price of \$20 per lot. The company retained every other lot. The purchasers of \$20 lots drew for location, and it was a novel lottery. Two nail kegs, one containing the lot number, the other the names of purchasers were placed on pivots, and as the kegs were whirled around the numbers were drawn. One man cleared \$1000 before the close of the day by buying and selling lots. The Farmer's and Merchants' Bank of Thomas City paid \$1250 for a corner lot. The next morning Thomas City was ready for business with two banks, two newspapers and about fifty different other industries. Among its first shipments to the outside world were nine car loads of cattle.

Custer City was the next to come forth full panoplied in municipal garb. This was on November 18. The founder of this town is Mr. D. F. Nicholson and several associates of Lamona, Ia. The town was platted on 420 acres, and the lots disposed of on the same plan as had been followed in Thomas City. When the sale of lots had been concluded Custer City had a bona fide population of 800 people,