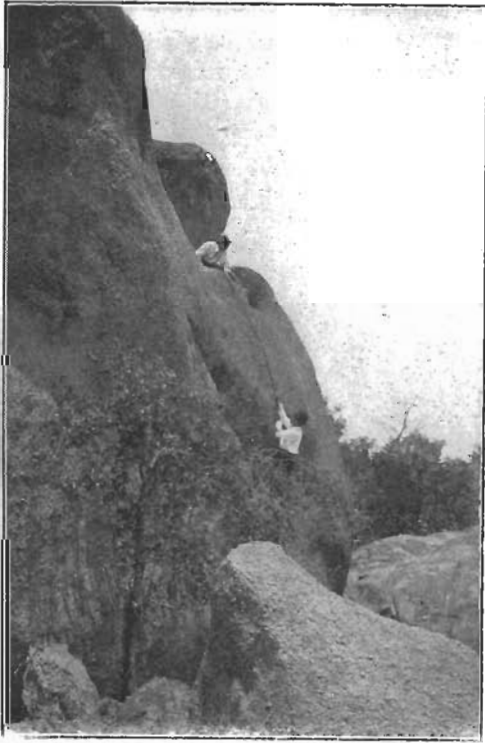


localities in Oklahoma, and these may yet solve satisfactorily the fuel question as it has for southeastern Kansas.

**TOWNS.**—Oklahoma prides herself on her fine farms, her railroads, her schools, her intelligent people and her enterprise as a whole, but her towns come in for a full share. Her town building has always been the wonder of the whole country, and the growth of her towns has indeed been phenomenal. The sun has risen on a wild prairie or a cultivated field one morning and at her next rising shone on a city of



Climbing the great granite boulders of the Devil's Den, Chickasaw Nation, I. T.

thousands of people with all the rush and bustle of a metropolis. Not one only but several of her cities have sprung up in one short day. It has been said that though some may be better than others, all Oklahoma towns are good. To see a city of 30,000 population, modern in every particular, where a decade and a half ago not a white man had a right or a foothold, is something for the world to wonder at, but such is Oklahoma.

**POPULATION.**—The population of

Oklahoma can only be guessed at. The returns of the assessors in 1902 showed a population of 541,480, and there can be no doubt that this has been increased to at least 600,000 at the present time. Some interesting figures may be given as to the population of the Territory. Only five and one half per cent of the citizens of Oklahoma are unable to read and write and the public schools are rapidly cutting down this percentage. Only four per cent are of foreign birth, 54 per cent are males and 46 per cent females. It will thus be seen that it is an American population and that the sexes are nearly evenly divided.

**PROPERTY AND TAXES.**—In 1902 the assessors of Oklahoma returned \$72,677,423 for taxation, showing an increase of 15 per cent over the preceding year. The tax levy for territorial purposes is about seven and one-half mills. As Oklahoma has a magnificent dower in her school lands, it is safe to assume that the future state of Oklahoma will never be burdened by a heavy taxation for school purposes. The state indebtedness is not large and is mainly for the construction of educational institutions.

**MINERAL RESOURCES.**— While usually classed as a strictly agricultural state, it must not be forgotten that Oklahoma has great mineral resources also, largely undeveloped as yet it is true, but known to exist. The eastern part of the Osage Nation has coal, gas, oil, lead and zinc. The Wichita Mountain district has lead, zinc, copper, oil, gas, gold and silver. The northwest portion has an abundance of salt. Asphalt deposits are found in the southeastern portion. Shale for vitrified brick and stone ware is found in various localities. Cement rock is found in endless quantities and in different parts of the Territory, and in fact Oklahoma abounds in mineral resources only waiting for capital and labor to develop them.

**MANUFACTURING.**— Manufacturing in Oklahoma is as yet in its infancy, but a fair start has been made, enough having been accomplished to demonstrate what may be done. Among the more feasible manufacturing propositions, where the raw material is at hand, are the manufacture of cotton products, wood products

and grain products. Flour mills are already numerous; cotton mills are under way; oil mills are in operation, and small factories of all kinds are springing up and in time the smoke stack will be in evidence on all hands, and profitable employment will be given to both capital and labor.

IMMIGRATION. — Immigration has been pouring into Oklahoma in a steady stream for more than a dozen years, and there is no indication of its ceasing or any good reason why it should cease for years to come. It comes from the North, the South, the East and the West, though more largely from the North and East. All people of industrious and frugal habits are welcomed, whether poor or rich, and all are given a chance. The man with capital is welcome, but no more so than the man with muscle and energy, as the opportunities for the use of both are to be found on every hand.

Hundreds of cases could be cited of individuals who went to Oklahoma but a few years since without money and without property, but who are now in comfortable circumstances and are living in contentment amid scenes of plenty. Other hundreds could be told of who had gone to the Territory with shattered health, but who are now strong and well. Thousands of renters of high priced land in the States could soon own farms of their own in Oklahoma, and have them paid for. Thousands that are now cramped up in cities could find homes where they could expand their lungs with the free air of heaven, and breathe the ozone of the plains, and for the first time realize what untrammelled life is. Thousands of young men who are wasting their lives away in the crowded East waiting for "something to turn up," could go to Oklahoma and soon turn something up that would redound to their profit and future happiness.

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## A VISION.

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By HATTIE WHITNEY.

Out of the dusk of the yesterdays,  
 With the muffled dawn it came,  
 Winged with the fragrance of cool, dark  
 ways,  
 Yet touched with a hidden flame;

Dear as the light of an afternoon  
 That dies in a golden hush;  
 Heart-breaking sweet as the half-heard  
 tune  
 From the soul of a hermit thrush.

It came when the fog-white dawn was  
 still  
 As the wing of a weary dove;  
 A broken chord with an echoed thrill—  
 The dream of an old time love!

—Munsey.

## HOW I REFORMED CHARLIE FINCHER.

BY WILLIS LEONARD CLANAHAN.

"I'll tell you what I'll do with you, Charlie," I said, looking him earnestly in the face. "If you will not take another drink or rob another man between now and Christmas, I will take you home with me and you shall be the guest of honor in my house that day."

You see, I could talk thus familiarly to Charlie Fincher, because Charlie and I had gone to school together down in the Ozark country, and it really was not my fault that he and Eli Denton, who had likewise been raised in Springfield, had held up big Ben Clark one night—or, rather, had rolled him over, for Ben was speechless, being mightily drunk—and robbed him of a few dollars; neither was it my fault that a jury found them both guilty of highway robbery and sentenced them to a term at Jefferson City. Neither, I am convinced, was it my fault that Charlie felt like a vagabond when he was released from prison and immediately commenced to drink whiskey as fast as his stomach and his pocketbook would let him, as his father had been doing ever since the boy could remember. Neither can I hold myself accountable for the fact that Charlie had been compelled on two or three occasions to work out a fine on the city streets by reason of his inability to pay cash after an uproarious bout with corn. Neither was it my affair directly that Charlie Fincher was held up by Springfield mothers to their sons as a horrible example of depravity, although he was barely twenty-five years old. I refer to these painful facts only to show you that Charlie was in a bad way, socially and morally, at the time I made him my proposition concerning the Christmas dinner.

Now, a Christmas dinner is not much of a reward, per se, for one whole month of righteous living after ten years of drunkenness and evil associations—for Charlie had long been accounted a bad,

bad boy, and his old school teacher, Miss Musgrave, blushed with shame every time she thought of him or met him on the street—but it had been many and many a day since Charlie Fincher had had a Christmas dinner of the right sort; and Charlie knew one thing—that of all the crowd who had been his friends in boyhood, I was the only one who had unfailingly recognized him. Others either avoided him or snubbed him outright. Some spoke to him, but patronizingly, and either told him what a shame it was that he had gone to the dogs as he had, or remarked how they pitied him. The Sunday school superintendents passed him by, and even the saloonkeepers took his money grudgingly—all but Ike Brennan. Ike was impartial. A thief's money looked like any other coin to Ike. So it came to pass that of all the town I alone stood by Charlie when he was at his worst. Never once did I mention the penitentiary to him; never once did I treat him other than as the Charlie of school days; never once did I speak to him commiseratingly.

"Don't pay any attention to these fellows, Charlie," I said. "You hold onto my coat-tails, and we will pull out of this mire yet."

Charlie heeded the word and held on, and for the first time in six months I saw him smile when I mentioned the Christmas dinner.

"What do you say?" I asked, seeing that he hesitated. Charlie said nothing, and I smoked away in silence for ten minutes.

"I would go you," he said at last, "if I had any clothes."

"Oh, darn the clothes!" I replied. "Who do you think I am entertaining these days, anyway—millionaires? Brush up the best you have, get a shine and come on."

"All right," he said, after a pause. "I will. Here goes for the last drink till

Christmas night!" And he drew from his hip pocket a small flask, which he half drained, not even offering it to me, then hurled the bottle through a window, bade me good-bye and departed.

I continued to see him every day after that, and if Charlie ever took a drink, he must have used some powerful disinfectant immediately afterward; and if he ever had designs on any man's person or property during that time he never betrayed the fact by word or look, although before that there had been several rumors closely connecting him with midnight robberies, to at least one of which Charlie had, to all intents and purposes, confided to me a guilty knowledge. But the Christmas dinner idea seemed to be a deadener to his career as a merciless marauder, and I felt considerably encouraged (and, perhaps, secretly, a little proud) when Charlie remarked sorrowfully one night as we passed a church where the choir was practicing Christmas anthems:

"I wish to God I had a seat in the Gospel wagon!"

"That beats the water-wagon?" I said, inquiringly.

"Yes," said Charlie, "yes!" And he almost hissed the word in my ear. "But for God's sake, don't mention that! It might tempt me to drink again, just by making me think of it."

And the poor fellow drew the thin collar of his only coat as far up around his neck as possible, and shivered in the wind, which was beginning to howl dismally. We walked along in silence another block, and passed a saloon wherein a noisy crowd had assembled, for the holidays were fast approaching, and men were beginning to take on the festal spirit. Charlie shuddered, and looked toward the street as he heard the half-drunken shouts that came from the inside, and we hurried onward, neither daring to speak.

"It's a bad night," I said as we reached the corner of the big brick house, where we had gone to school together, not so many years before. Wintry whirlwinds

were tossing abandoned papers around the old school-yard, where we had played, and biting winds soughed through the leafless branches overhead and shook the coal-house in the rear. "It's a bad night. Don't you think we had better go home?"

"Yes, it is a bad night," answered Charlie, hoarsely; and I thought he said it between his clenched teeth. "It's a damned bad night, at that. We ought to turn in."

"Very well," I replied. "Shall I walk up your way?"

"Yes," he said, "you may go as far as the Hart corner. I'll make it the rest of the way."

And he did. I know he did, because I watched him. He went home and went to bed, and I knew that the poor fellow's struggle for one night was over.

Christmas Eve came at last. I knew it behooved me to keep an eye on Charlie, and I did. It may seem strange that I, a young man honorably employed in combatting the world, should spend so much time in the company of a jail-bird, who had been suspected of other crimes than the one for which he had been convicted, to say nothing of his drunken record, but everybody in Springfield knew that Charlie and I were friends, but not partners, and came to look upon our association as a matter of course. So on this night, of all others, I sought Charlie out, and kept him company. Up and down the streets we walked, watching the crowds, viewing the windows and decorations, smiling at the bantering of friends in merry mood—"my friends," I should specify, for Charlie had none—and even venturing to take a peep into one church where a Christmas tree was being divested of its sweet and glittering fruit, and where little children, when not engaged in cracking nuts or gorging themselves with candy, were singing Christmas carols, while their elders looked on with parental importance.

"Kids are all right," was Charlie's only comment as we walked away.

We sauntered around till midnight,

sometimes talking, sometimes silent, for the day of reckoning was near at hand; and the knowledge of that fact, perhaps unconsciously, oppressed us both.

"Well," I ventured at last, "this is Christmas morning. I wish you a merry Christmas, Charlie. Don't forget the dinner this afternoon. I shall expect you at 1:30 sharp."

He promised, and we parted. Entertaining ex-convicts is not much in my line, but I flatter myself that the King of England never sat down to a neater or more tempting spread than that which greeted the gaze of Charlie Fincher that Christmas afternoon at my cottage.

The neighbors were horrified, and the Methodist preacher, whose church I sometimes attended, seemed to be in doubt as to whether I was a criminal or only a fool, as I learned later. But that made no difference with me. I had my tow-line around a young man whom they had all declared was shooting down the rapids of sin to perdition, and I was determined to haul him ashore and set his feet upon the rock of respectability.

The dinner passed off pleasantly enough. Had I been entertaining the Governor of Missouri, I could not have enjoyed his society more than I did that of Charlie Fincher, reformed drunkard and highway robber. He got his full share of the white meat, and when he sniffed the brandy in the mince pie, he was virtuous enough to leave it untouched. As we parted, he grasped my hand fervently, and said:

"This is the best day of my life. I can't tell you how I feel. I am like a different man. Life is not the same that it used to be. I am going away from here, and begin all over again. I will keep my word or die."

And so he did. That night, as soon as he could absorb enough whiskey to give him the courage, Charlie went forth upon the highway, fell upon a stranger, beat him half to death, and robbed him of every cent he had. He had spoken truly. Life during that long month of decency

and sobriety preceding Christmas had "not been the same that it used to be," and Charlie did exactly what he said he would do—he went away from my house, from my elegant Christmas dinner, from my friendly voice, from my brotherly smile, and commenced "all over again." He kept his word, as he said he would; and had not his pent-up devilry had a chance to exert itself, no doubt he would have gone a step further and died—blown up—exploded. Yes, he kept his word with me, both before the dinner and after.

And that is how I reformed Charlie Fincher.

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The Dog—Feeling pretty blue? The Turkey—You needn't talk. I'd rather be stuffed than a sausage, any day.

"Have you heard the latest? Brown's wife has run off with his chauffeur." "Mercy, what a pity! He was such a good chauffeur! Brown will never be able to replace him."

He—And at last they agreed to marry. She—Yes, and it was the last thing they agreed on.

Wife—What do you think of my picture? Husband—It will do. Evidently a snapshot, my dear. "Why?" "Your mouth is shut."

"The expedition endured the extremest hardship." "Yes; I understand they were locked in the ice during two lecture seasons."

A magnate—"Is he very rich?" "Rich? Why, he's so rich he daren't look twice at a girl for fear she'll bring a breach of promise suit."

Guest—Why do you believe in second sight, major? Major Darby (in an impressive whisper)—Because I fell in love at first sight.

"What's the matter with Fred?" asks one workman. "'E's got a splinter in his 'and," says another. "Why don't 'e pull it out?" "Wot! In his dinner hour! Not likely!"