

stone before the door to keep it from being blown by the wind.

The mother never refused food nor courtesy to any stranger. Many cow men stopped to sleep in the stacks, which the mother allowed if they left their tobacco and matches with her until morning—Prairie fires caused great damage to range and settlers, who were watchful and cautious.

Many cowboys cooked their own meals over a camp fire, others ate with the family and bowed their heads as the grandfather asked the blessing. Each man removed belt and guns, leaving them with his hat on the door stone. The ethics of the west, decree that men shall not wear guns in the home of a friend. The cowboys were never loud, nor coarse. This family never heard profanity nor saw a drunken cowboy. The ones they knew were low voiced and gentle in manner and treated the little mother like the queen she was.

The grandfather always gave every group a little temperance talk to which they respectfully listened and it is to be hoped heeded.

Then they stopped in groups of three or four to sleep under the stars or in the stacks, one by one, at bed time, they brought their watches and wallets to the little mother for safe keeping—They did not trust each other, but they did repose implicit confidence in the aristocratic little woman with the five children, the old father and the unlocked door.

Every man knew and understood that each man respected a lady. Sometimes they paid a small price for a meal but just as often did not.

One severely cold New Year's morning five half frozen men rode up to the door. The spokesman was the sheriff of Ford County, and had two deputies and two manacled cattle thieves with him that were being taken to Dodge.

"We are so cold" the sheriff said, "I dare not go

farther, may we bring our prisoners in to warm? You need not fear them."

The grandfather hurriedly filled the stove. He called it "mending the fire" while chairs were placed around the kitchen stove and oven doors were opened. The men filed in with teeth chattering. The sheriff stood back to give the prisoners and his deputies the warmest places. The little mother made a pot of hot coffee. The oldest little girl held the cups to the prisoners' mouths as handcuffed hands could not hold cups.

They took deep swallows and said "Thank you" but did not look up. The little girl had no thought of fear, but instead pity for the men and thankfulness that they had been caught.

Everybody despised horse and cattle thieves—They were a menace to the settlers and were usually desperate men with small regard for human life.

Pioneering in old Hodgeman removed every vestige of fear from most of its early settlers and instilled a self reliance and courage to meet the world under any condition. In cases of emergency, sorrow or death there were willing hands to help.

There was a kindly elderly man named Robinson, living a few miles distant, who having no team, walked long miles with a cane. He had trouble with his arms and shoulders that he called "rheumatics". He lived comfortably with his wife and one or two adopted little girls, on a government pension.

After while there was quite an aged man living with them. Mr. Robinson was asked about him. His answer was as follows—"You see Uncle George can't get around on account of rheumatics in his legs, but his back and arms are strong—just the opposite of the rheumatics in my arms, but when there is anything to lift, my legs steady Uncle George and he can lift anything—so with my legs and Uncle George's back and arms we make a pretty good man. It's handy to have him around, besides he has no home and no folks."