

NOTES FROM MEADOWBROOK FARM

By William Pitt



After the lambs are a few days old they begin to look around for something to eat, and they should be given an opportunity to go out in search of food, by making creeps which they can go out and in as they please and have access to such foods as oats and bran with some of the finest and most tender hay that the farm affords; nothing is too good for the little fellows.

The grape needs nitrogen for growth of vine and potash and phosphates for the perfection of its fruit. Bone dust worked into the soil about roots after growth is established supplies phosphates and one-half a bushel of unleached wood ashes to a vine applied in the spring gives the necessary potash.

Water or moisture is always on the move. When it rains it soaks the ground, and as soon as it stops raining it starts its upward movement by capillary attraction. It travels from one soil particle to the next, and so on until the soil becomes what we call dry.

Now is a very good time to save out the best pullets to take the place of the discarded hens this fall. It pays to keep the best stock in order to get good results, and this can be done in no other way any better than by constantly culling and picking.

Don't fail to give the fall pigs plenty of slop consisting of skimmed milk mixed with some kind of a ground grain. They will soon be getting most of their living from the trough and will not be checked in their growth at weaning time.

Where large plantations of asparagus are made it is important that the roots be planted so deeply that all fillage may be accomplished with the plow and other heavy farm implements, and thus avoid the expense of hand-labor.

Sheep raising is a new thing to almost every prairie state farmer, and as long as cattle and hogs prove money-makers and furnish all the choring the average man cares to do, there is no likelihood of any radical change.

To produce milk economically we should use the roughage on our farms wherever it is possible, for by so doing we not only save the labor of hauling bulky material, but will also build up the fertility of our land.

The farmer should calculate what increase in crop it is necessary for him to obtain in order to make the use of fertilizers profitable, and if only this is obtained he should not condemn their use.

When the ground freezes apply a cover of well composted manure on the asparagus rows which will keep the ground from freezing deeply and provide plenty of fertility for next summer's growth.

During the fattening period, the previously built frame in the making of which protein is so essential, is loaded with fat, a process in which corn makes the most economical gains.

When ready to empty the ash pan mix a good lice powder with the ashes and empty in the hen house. The hens will dust themselves in it and rid themselves of lice and mites.

Corn and water are the best fattening foods although a feed of roots once or twice a week will give them a keener appetite and keep their bowels in excellent condition.

Never change milkers when you can possibly avoid it, but have the same one milk the same cow every time, and milk in the same order.

Be careful about overfeeding with sugar beet tops as too heavy feeding will prove injurious on account of the oxalic acid they contain.

Dairy cows should be placed in the stable in the fall before rigid cold weather commences, and winter rations should be fed.

At this time of year, just before cattle go into winter quarters, a dairyman can replenish his dairy by buying heifer calves, often at great bargains.

Most people recognize the value of fall plowing for grain crops but very few, however, follow the practice with their corn crops.

Some of the cracks in the stable can be stopped up more cheaply than you can feed oats to keep the horses warm.

One cannot expect to raise large and valuable draft horses out of colts by giving them nothing but coarse hay and free range of the straw stacks to live on during the winter months. Roughing it does not encourage growth, neither does it develop hardiness as is so generally supposed by many farmers. Our perfect specimens of pure bred horses, cattle, sheep and swine have been made possible only by having been given the best feed and care as well as breeding and by their ancestors having received like treatment.

The stallion should show strong masculinity, as indicated by vigorous, bold eyes and a massive, well crested neck. The mare should be feminine in character, as indicated by mild eyes, comparatively small head and slender neck, which together with a somewhat more roomy barrel should constitute a breeding appearance.

In these days of exceedingly high-priced concentrated feeds, it behooves the farmer, depending principally on dairying, to produce on his own land as much as possible of the rations necessary for his herd to make a profitable flow of milk. In order to do this, it is not too emphatic to say he must grow alfalfa.

If you are going in for a few sheep this season, don't overlook the matter of shelter. Sheep must be kept dry as to fleece and feet, otherwise your venture will result disastrously. Provide dry quarters for wet weather and you'll not have much difficulty in carrying them over.

Great Britain imports much less live stock than formerly. In 1909 the receipts of live cattle were 54,000 less from the United States and 9,000 less from Canada than in the previous year. At the same time it imported a greatly increased quantity of chilled beef.

The cows should not be fed their roughage, nor the bedding be stirred up before milking, and as far as possible the barn should be opened and aired also before the milking time, so that the foul air which taints milk so readily may escape.

With cheap corn and other grains any man who could buy a few pigs and finish them for market could make a little profit, but it requires skill and ability to grow pigs and fatten them on 60-cent corn and make a reasonable profit.

Any system of farming which provides regular summer and winter work for the horses will prevent the waste caused by their "eating their heads off" half the year or so that they may be available for work at other seasons.

Weeds in the lawn are an indication that the soil is poor. They differ from cultivated plants in that they require poor land. If the lawn is good and rich the grass will grow vigorously and crowd out the weeds.

Don't feed dusty hay to horses. If you have no other kind sprinkle it with water just before feeding. Many horse troubles may be traced directly to dusty hay and these are much more easily prevented than cured.

Sell off the cockerels. Do not incubate. If you are not going to fill the incubator before March you will not need a cock before February. But don't be stingy when you buy him.

When spraying the chicken house there is no good in making a seven-eighths job of it, because the vermin left in the last one-eighth will quickly multiply and spread all over the other seven.

It is a mistake to dump potatoes immediately after digging into the wagon box and shovel them into pits while they are easily bruised and the skin broken with rough handling.

Cream on the average will weigh about eighteen pounds to the gallon, but will vary according to the per cent. of butter fat it contains—butter fat being lighter than cream.

Many people are realizing the profit in raising heavy geese, as they are worth more a pound than the lighter breeds, and every year there is more demand for the Toulouse.

A sheepkeeper should study his individual animals and observe them daily, reading meanwhile all the government bulletins on sheep that are obtainable.

A crop raised on sod plowed under wet, eight inches deep, and worked until fine enough to cultivate, is often the best ever raised on a given piece of land.

In feeding aged steers quality and type are not so essential as in feeding calves, provided the purchase price is proportionate.

Most farm horses get too much hay. Cut down the amount and feed it mostly at night. Thorough dampening lessens the danger from feeding dusty hay.

When cows are given less food than they require for maintenance and production the milk production must suffer or the cow.

With the fall letting up of work, let up on the heavy feed. Like men, horses doing little work should eat little.

Christmas for Two by Clarissa Mackie



The crowded east-bound train disgorged two passengers at the little red station and then thundered on its busy way.

A long stage, rusty and ramshackle, backed up to the platform and the driver's lusty "All aboard!" brought the girl and the young man hurrying into its dismal depths.

"I s'pose you're for Ferguson's place," remarked the driver as he turned the horses skillfully in the narrow space.

"Yes," said the man rather gruffly. "I thought there would be a carriage to meet us."

"So there has—so there has! Been prancing around her for two or three hours, but I guess they got disgusted; anyways, they left word for me to stay here till the train came in and if anyone was bound for their place to bring 'em along. The train's four hours late as it is, and I don't suppose them servants want to be kept away from their Christmas dinner."

"How long will it take us?" asked the girl.

"A matter of an hour or so," was the unconcerned reply.

The girl stifled an exclamation of annoyance and she drew still farther away from the vicinity of the morose young man. The latter turned up the astrakhan collar of his overcoat and dropped his chin into its depths.

They had started forth that morning so joyfully—Polly Standish and Derrick Gordon—newly engaged and blissfully happy. Things had gone wrong from the very beginning. Polly's aunt, who was to accompany them for the short stay at Ferguson's hospitable country house, had failed to put in an appearance, and consequently had been left behind. That was vexatious. Then the train had been delayed by snow drifts and during the four hours' wait in the cold train Polly and Derrick had quarreled.

"Nice Christmas day," volunteered the stage driver in his queer, cracked voice, as they squeaked over the hard-packed snow.

"Very!" returned Derrick, sarcastically.

There was a long silence as the strong white horses plodded up the steep incline of the mountain. Here the snowfall had been light and only served to dust the dark green pines and hemlocks with a white powder.

They had reached the top of a steep incline and were rolling evenly over a level stretch when suddenly, without an instant's warning, the stage crashed down and precipitated the passengers and luggage in an ignominious heap under the driver's seat.

"Are you hurt?" asked Derrick coldly, as he assisted Polly to her feet.

"No, thank you," she said stiffly, as she peered out from the curtained window.

The driver was soothing the frightened horses and his nut-cracker face was knotted anxiously.

"Lost a wheel, by gorry!" he said, ruefully. "Smashed it to flinders!"

Derrick had crawled out and stood beside him.

"This is the dickens of a mess—how are we to get to Ferguson's place? Are we near a telephone—or where are we anyway?"

Luke Sanders scratched his ear thoughtfully. "I took a short road across—'tain't the usual route to Ferguson's and we ain't near nobody! Ten miles from anywhere. The only thing to do is for me to ride one of the horses into the village and send back another wagon. You and the young lady better get out and move about a bit and keep warm. You might build a fire—there's plenty of fuel." He was unharassing the horses as he spoke.

"Why can't we all ride—or, better still, Miss Standish can ride one of them and I will walk beside her. We will get there much quicker and can keep warm and have something to eat. We're almost starved." Derrick glanced quickly at the stage where Polly's pale face was framed in the darkened opening.

"Can't nobody ride Bob-white. A jumpin' kangaroo ain't nothin' to that horse if anybody gets on his back! Just you stay here and make yourselves comfortable and warm and I'll be back in the course of an hour or so." He tethered the ferocious Bob-white to a tree by the roadside. Then from the space under his seat in the stage he drew forth a basket covered with a white cloth.

Standish; he knew she was sitting proud and defiant with a contemptuous curl on her red lip. Instead, he stared away through the aisles of trees, made into golden paths by the later afternoon sun.

It was too bad that Christmas should have turned out so disastrously for them both. There was to be a jolly party at the Fergusons and in the evening a Christmas dance. Perhaps Ralph Ferguson would send forth another conveyance for them—but it would go by that other road. They were marooned on the short cut.

A glimpse of Polly's woeful face brought a revulsion of feeling. Poor little Polly was cold and tired and he was acting like a brute.

Without a word Derrick approached a small clearing in the middle of which grew a young pine tree.

It was the work of minutes to gather an armful of wood and broken branches and to clear a space of snow. Presently a bright fire crackled cheerily and then Derrick brought cushions and blankets from the stage and prepared a place for Polly.

"Come, Miss Standish," he said politely. "If you will draw near the fire we will have some dinner."

"I'm not hungry," said Polly, holding her hands to the blaze.

"At least you will sit down and wrap this blanket around you—so," insisted Derrick.

"Thank you," said Polly without enthusiasm.

From the blanket Derrick produced a large plate loaded with a generous Christmas dinner. There were turkey and cranberry sauce, stuffing and mashed potatoes and, gravy, turnips and celery, and a whole mince pie.

Derrick managed to convey half of the dinner more or less daintily to the plate and this he placed before Polly. "Eat," he said sternly. "You will need the nourishment before we reach Ferguson's."

"I am not a child," said Polly resentfully.

Derrick did not reply. He fell to his own dinner with a vigorous appetite and it was not until he turned to give



"This is Our Christmas Tree, Polly Dear," said Derrick, in a Low Tone.

Polly some mince pie that he discovered that the weary girl had eaten a little of the dinner and then fallen asleep in her nest of blankets.

For a long time he watched the changing lights on her sweet face as the branches tossed in the wind; then, softly he arose and approached the little pine tree standing in the middle of the clearing.

The cones were silvered with snow and it looked like a Christmas tree decorated for a festival.

Derrick opened his suit case and brought out sundry white packages. These he tied to the tree with colored cord. Gay toys for the Ferguson children were added until the little tree stood forth bravely in its fine attire.

"Polly!" he called softly. "Polly!" Polly sat up with startled eyes seeking his face. For the instant she had forgotten their misunderstanding, but suddenly their light clouded.

"Come here, Polly, and see our Christmas tree," urged Derrick.

Reluctantly she came, a rose flush staining her pale cheeks. But yet her red lips were obstinately set in a straight line.

"This is our Christmas tree, Polly, dear," said Derrick in a low tone. "Yours and mine! Shall we be happy and enjoy not only this one, but many, many others after, please God? Say, dear."

"Oh, Derrick, how wicked of us to quarrel when we should be happy! I am so sorry!" sobbed Polly in Derrick's coat sleeve.

"And so am I—and now I'm glad," said Derrick after a time. "Now, let's enjoy our own particular tree before anyone comes! I shall be Santa Claus—and you may be Mrs. Santa Claus!"

"I have things in my bag, too," blushed Polly as she hastened away.

An hour afterward Ralph Ferguson brought a sleighload of merry-makers in search of them. Together they sat demurely on a log before a dying fire. Near by stood a little pine tree, powdered with snow, and dripping with hanging cones.

GIVE THE SHOP-GIRL HER DUES

By KATHERINE POPE

IN an excellent short story published not long ago, O. Henry gave to his shop-girl heroine a colossal character, emphasized that in her were combined the notable attributes of Hercules, Joan of Arc, Una, Job and Little Red Riding Hood. And at this season of the year—"glad Christmas days"—it easily might seem to a less sympathetic person

than the regretted O. Henry that the shop-girl most stands in need of the strength of Hercules, the heroism of Joan of Arc, the truthfulness and other singular excellencies of Una, the patience of Job. Think what it must mean, from eight to six, or eight to ten, as the case may be, to face and serve the rattled throngs that are now surging through the shops, think of the strain on endurance and nerve, on temper and manners. The wonder is not that she often comes up to the demands on her, but that she ever does.

Some of the veterans, survivors of many hard-fought Christmas battlefields, are marvels; may be seen at the end of day still alert, though drooping; still clear-headed, though with conscious effort; still with courteous attitude in their serving, though those they serve have lost the last shred of any politeness with which they may have started out.

Compare the manners of some spoiled darlings, some indulged, arrogant child of wealth, with the dignity and patience and sweetness often shown by the girl behind the counter. The one self-centered, of most restricted vision, captious, petty; the other self-effacing, far-seeing, charitable, big. Caleb in search of a wife might well pursue his quest along the aisles of the big stores, find womanly ideal standing there behind the counter.

They are not all caricatures of fashion, with hair tortured into latest exaggeration, frocks cheap copies of showy splendors; not all more given to powder and rouge than to soap and water. And in the attainment of the so highly-desirable neatness and trimness heroism again has to come to the fore, it is no easy matter after long hours of labor to labor more, take pains for personal cleanliness, sew and darn when eyes are heavy, back is aching. Heroines every one of them that make a good show.

I know a girl in a fashionable candy shop that every other night washes and irons that she may be presentable the next day. Her moderate wage is the chief part of the family support, there is not enough money for enough blouses to last the week, and so the midnight laundrying is done as a matter of course. But how pretty and sweet and fresh the girl does manage to look in her snowy white and well brushed black; much better dressed, she seems to me, than the woman of fuss and feathers.

What little mothers they are, a lot of them, simple affectionate, domestic creatures—though so often characterized as vain, shallow, foolishly ambitious, thinking only of dress and "dates." I know one girl that worked in one of the department stores which keep open evenings at Christmas time, who the night before Christmas did not leave the store until midnight, then after traveling an hour on the street cars to her home stayed up hours to trim a wonderful Christmas tree for the children of the family, the bunch of little ones the poor seem always to have with them. I know another girl that at this season goes down unusually early mornings to arrange "stock," comes home unusually late evenings; but after dinner cheerfully dons kitchen apron and helps with giant plum pudding and other Christmas preparation that yearly is repeated in honor of old England and the home left behind when there was made search for fortune in the rich land of America. These are just two instances, the one quite commonplace, unheroic, but you may pick up a few for yourself by eavesdropping a bit in your shopping; observing among the buyers the many shop-girls purchasing toys and silver "pusher," children's

THE IDEAL WORKSHOP.



And the jolliest and best old workman in the world.

Christmas Day

To rule and reign with gentle sway,
The King of Love was born today.
No palace walls enclosed him round,
But in a manger was he found;
That so the boastful world might see
The greatness of humility.

He came, a child, in lovely grace,
That so a child might seek his face;
So poor was he, the humblest born
Might come, without a fear of scorn.
To all mankind he showed the way,
And ushered in the dawn of day.

And so, with grateful love and praise,
We hail this blessed day of days.
The children's joy, the poor man's feast,
The star of hope to great and least;
When holy angels come to earth,
And sing anew a Savior's birth!

gloves and sweater, or gray dress for mammy, muffler for daddy.

Of course there is any number of pert, incompetent girls that wait on hapless customers, rather keep hapless customers waiting, but they have been pictured with enough frequency, this sort repeatedly held up as typical, thereby obscuring the virtues of the many worthy ones following the profession of "waiting on." For some time past I have been gathering data, making experiment; and have found it the rule rather than exception that courtesy meets with courtesy. "Soft and fair go far in a day," not only on highway but in the miles of space in a huge department store.

A man said to me recently: "How little of church is brought into the Christmas of today." And how sadly true this is—"church" in this connection standing for whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are good, of full import to all religions. And bullying and bullyingragging a shop-girl at this season seems about as far from "lovely and good" as one may wander. Put yourself in her place, remembering previous failures of your own when bodily weariness snapped strained nerves, broke down poise.

Ye gods and little fishes, in what condition is the shop-girl to "enjoy" Christmas! I am sure if I were she



Sew and Darn When Eyes Are Heavy.

all I would ask of good Saint Nicholas would be a dark, airy room far, far away from people (from man, and especially woman); a great, soft bed where I could stretch out long and wide; silence and sleep forever and forever. No dreams to disturb that sleep; no vision of peat hanging, no vision of, wearisome "exchanges" to come.

But the reality is a long way from this that I would ask. Do you suppose such a proud wage earner as she would be content to let Christmas day go by without displaying wealth and power? No, every dependent in the household must partake of her bounty, every pensioner be given good proof of what it means to have her dress up and go down town every day. Nothing of niggard is the shop-girl at Christmas, she is as much a Lady Bountiful as any millionaire's of them all.

What a creature! A "Hercules, a Joan of Arc, a Una, a Job" and a Lady Bountiful on eight dollars and less a week!

(Copyright, 1910.)

Agnes' Prayer.

Our little five-year-old Agnes, having been reprimanded by her mamma for some slight misdeed, went and knelt by a chair and prayed as follows:

"Oh, Lord, make me a good little girl. I want to be a good little girl, but I don't know how. But, if I am naughty, please send Santa Claus just the same."

Christmas Time.

I have often thought of Christmas time, when it has come round, apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to it can be apart from that—a good time, a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time.—Charles Dickens.