

## TAKING JIM BACK

How a Discredited Husband Was Shipped Back to Wife in Goods Box.

By H. M. EGBERT.

Abigail Smales entered the express office at Norbury, which was kept by Mrs. James Searles, her finger on her lip, her free hand pointed down the road.

"He's coming, Jane," she whispered mysteriously.

Mrs. Searles looked up wearily from her delivery book, "Who?" she asked tersely.

"That worthless husband of yours," responded the other tartly. "He's been gone three days now on one of his regular sprints with that Joe Turner and their worthless friends. Jane, promise me you'll not take him back. Show your dignity."

Jane Searles sighed and folded her hands in resignation.

"Abigail," she said, "Heaven knows he's been a good man to me, when he's been sober. But when his friends get hold of him and get him to drinking he's somebody else. I don't know what to do."

Abigail Smales stood up. "Jane," she said firmly, "last time he came home you told him if he ever another drop of liquor passed his lips you'd cast him off for good. Here you are with a prosperous business and a worthless, drunken husband that contributes nothing to your support. Why should you endure him any longer, staggering round the house and putting you to shame before decent folks? Jane, if you're weak-kneed and spineless enough to take him back again you'll lose all your friends."

"I guess you're right, Abigail," responded Jane Searles meekly.

"Good! Good!" exclaimed the other heartily. "And as I see him coming up the path now and don't want to be contaminated by his presence, I'll say good-bye."

Jane Searles looked after her thoughtfully. "I wonder just why you're so set against Jim, Abigail," she said. "I wonder if it's true that you and he were sweethearts once. Or is it just love for me?"

"My dear!" said a thick voice behind her. Jane Searles turned. Her husband stood on the threshold, regarding her with a mixture of anxiety and affectionate benignity. "My dear, I've come home to the fold, he murmured with an ingratiating smile.

Jane Searles went up to him.

"Jim," she said, "I've been a good wife to you for nearly ten years, and I've worked and slaved for you, and I've stood for a good deal, but it's over now. I told you if you went off again to drink you couldn't come home. This home is mine, and I've paid every penny that's been put into it. Now take yourself off!"

"Jane! Dear Jane!" murmured Mr. Searles uncertainly. But he withdrew hastily as the slammed door grazed his nose, and, looking back ruefully at this unexpected phenomenon, he decided that it was not a propitious moment to renew the attack, and limped back down the road in the direction of his cronies, Joe Turner.

"What, back again?" shouted the latter, looking up from his forge. Though a hard drinker, Joe never neglected his work. He was an old bachelor, a life-long friend of Jim's, and of his wife's too, until Jane had begun to attribute her husband's occasional debauches to Joe. As a matter of fact the blacksmith had done much to restrain his friend from excesses.

"Wife won't have me," murmured Jim Searles disconsolately, taking a seat beside the fire.

"I guessed not," shouted Joe. "I warned ye, Jim. You've got a grand wife and you've spoiled her temperament by the excessive use of ardent spirits. Now you'll have to go without her."

"But it's breaking my heart, Joe," muttered the other. "Help me."

"I'll help ye," roared the blacksmith, advancing upon the other with a red-hot horseshoe gripped between a pair of tongs. "Get out of my sight, you drunken profligate. I've drunk with ye and I've made merry with ye, but I won't break your wife's home or break her heart either, Jim."

Jim Searles tumbled off his chair and grovelled at his friend's feet.

"Joe, help me out this once," he begged. "I've had my lesson. Square me with her and I'll never touch liquor again. Jane's so cursedly conscientious," he added, seeing his friend set down the horseshoe again. "It's because she said she wouldn't take me back that she's bent on keeping her word. Can't you help me, Joe?"

Joe Turner pushed his friend into the little room at the back of the forge.

"You lie down there and take a nap," he said. "I'll see what can be done for you."

Jim Searles awoke that evening to find Joe Turner toasting bacon over the fire. The table had been laid for two and a caldron of soup hissed on the coals.

"How d'you feel, Jim?" asked the blacksmith, coming back with the bacon. "Pretty bad, hey? Have some beer?"

"Not for me, Joe," said Jim Searles, and the other gave him a violent clap on the back.

"Good for you, Jim," he shouted. "Now I can go ahead with a good conscience. Well, I've been up to your wife's. Jim, there's nothing doing there. She won't take you."

Jim's face fell several inches. The other resumed:

"But, Jim, I guess she loves you.

only she can't find a way to go back on her word. So we've got to use stratagems—see? If you can't go in at the front door you've got to go in the back."

"But she slammed the back door in my face," frowned Jim.

"Now take it easy," his friend counselled him. "Tomorrow morning we'll find a way." And with this Jim Searles was forced to be content.

The sound of hammering awakened him the next morning. Slipping on his clothes, he went into the smithy, to find Joe Turner putting the last nails into a huge packing case which stood on his cart, the horse being already harnessed. On one corner was a label bearing the words:

"ABIGAIL SMALES, Express Office, Norbury. To be kept till called for."

"What's that for, Joe?" inquired Jim in amazement.

"That's for you, me boy," answered the blacksmith. "Hop in."

"But you aren't going to send me to Abigail?" groaned Jim. "She wouldn't take me. Send me to Mrs. Searles."

"Now see here, you thundering old fool," shouted the blacksmith. "Suppose I send you to your wife and she refuses you—what then? You're put out on the sidewalk. Whereas if Abby Smales don't take you in you'll have to stay three months at the express office. See?"

"Help me in, Joe," cried Jim, climbing into the wagon with alacrity, and a minute later the blacksmith was nailing on the slats of the lid. A few minutes later the cart drew up at the door of the express office.

"Package for Miss Smales, Mrs. Searles," called Joe.

"All right; take it into the office, Mr. Turner," answered the lady, and Joe, with many gruntings and heavings and bangings which called forth smothered ejaculations from his freight, carried the package into a dark corner.

"Now you keep still until the proper time comes, Jim," he exhorted, and re-entering his cart, whipped up the horse and drove away.

As soon as he was gone Mrs. Searles went over to the case and looked at the label. She tried to lift it, but it was too heavy for her. Her husband, within, crouching like a frog, with fingers gripping the slats, hardly dared breathe.

"That looks like Joe Turner's writing," he heard his wife say. "Full of old iron, I guess. Some trick of Joe's. He never did like Abby, and I guess I don't either, after the way she tried to set me against Jim."

Jim heard her sob as she turned away. His heart leaped up. His wife cared for him! If she would trust him again he would never touch another drop of liquor in all his days. He must get out to her. His cramped position was fast becoming intolerable. He heard her go into the parlor, and quietly forcing up two slats of the lid, thrust out his head. Next moment he withdrew it hurriedly, for he heard his wife and Abigail Smales entering the office.

"Well," sniffed the latter, "it certainly is a relief to be able to come around without seeing that filthy drunkard."

"Do you allude to my husband, Abigail?" inquired Jane Searles.

"I certainly do, Jane," answered the other. "But thank heaven you showed him you're not to be trifled with any longer. I heard you put him out the house for good."

"Yes, but—"

"Jane Searles, you're never thinking of taking him back again? Why, he's been at Joe Turner's all night, I'm told, drinking with him and his low friends. They're a bad lot, Jane. Now why don't you strike while the iron's hot and see a lawyer about getting a divorce? What was that you were going to say, Jane?"

"I was going to say that there's a package come for you, Abigail," she said.

"For me?" exclaimed Miss Smales. "What surprise. Where is it Jane? What that big case? I wonder who can have sent it. I wonder what's in it. Oh!"

Jim Searles's head emerging grotesquely like that of a jack-in-the-box, for once completely decomposed Miss Smales. She had no words to say. At her for his wife—Jim dared not look at her.

"Good morning, ma'am," shouted Jim briskly. "I'm the filthy drunkard that's been sent to you. I hope you have good accommodations for me ma'am."

"Oh, this is too much!" gasped Abigail. "How dare you! Jane, you knew he was here. You set him or to do this."

"Indeed, Abigail—" "I'll never come here again," cried the irate spinster, stalking to the door. "This is a poor return for all my kindness to you."

"Yes, but you've got to take me or pay freight charges!" Jim shouted at her; but she was already out of the house and hurrying into the street. Jim turned to his wife to find her shaking with laughter.

Jim spoke up like a man. "Jane dear," he said, "I've had my lesson. God help me, I'll never touch the stuff again. Won't you give me a chance?"

"I—I'd like to, Jim," murmured his wife. "But how can I take you? You belong to Abby Smales now. You're—Oh, Jim, you're just freight," she sobbed.

Jim Searles got out of his box and placed his arm round his wife's waist. "Jenny, I'm going to work tomorrow," he said. "Will you try me out once more—if Abigail don't claim me?"

"Yes," whispered his wife, raising her lips to his. "And I tell you what I'll do, Jim," she added. "If Abigail doesn't claim you within three months I'll put you up to auction and buy you in myself—if you make good."

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## NOTES FROM MEADOWBROOK FARM



Build a silo.

Keep the calves dry.

Hens are mortgage lifters.

Good ground is needed for apples.

The well-drained garden is an early one.

Farm tests are worth more than all the theories.

Sugar beets are a most valuable addition to the pig ration.

The back-to-the-land movement is bound to attract many failures to the farm.

A hopperful of bran, handy at all times, helps to balance the winter ration.

Cream 24 to 28 per cent. richness yields about 3 pounds of butter to the gallon.

The first time the ground is frozen hard enough, cover the berry patch with straw.

When any other income on the farm has stopped, you can still depend on the cream check.

Other things being equal, the largest yields of milk usually represent the largest profits.

Better make two churnings than have the churn too full. Half full should be the limit.

Don't put the manure spreader in the shed. This is just the kind of weather when it works best.

It is possible for the hens to lay when shedding their feathers, but not when growing the new crop.

It pays to take plenty of time to investigate the standing of nurseries before placing orders for seed or trees.

Raspberry tips, from young, vigorous plants, should always be selected in preference to those of any other kind.

No plant or tree is fit for setting out unless it has made a normal, healthy growth. Neither extreme is desirable.

Good looking fruit on top of the basket will get you new customers, but only honest quality lower down will keep them.

In the commercial orchard of 200 trees it is better to have 40 trees, each of five varieties, than five trees of 40 varieties.

Trees and small fruits generally like applications of ashes and bone dust. By fertilizing liberally, good crops may be assured.

One of the best ways of managing raspberries is to set in rows six feet apart, and the plants two feet apart in the rows.

A cow that will give milk right up to the time of coming fresh again, and not dry up on her own accord, is a persistent milker.

Entirely destroy those old rusty cans and pails or else use them for some other purpose than holding sweet milk and cream.

In grading up a dairy herd remember that the characteristics of the sire and his dam are very apt to be reproduced in the female offspring.

It seems a pity to feed high-priced corn to scrub hogs these days, when a prime full-bred animal will take on one-fourth more flesh at the same cost.

If the young orchard contains grass or weeds you may be sure that the mice will cause great damage unless the trunks of the trees are well protected.

Good timber is still in good demand, in spite of the largely increased use of steel and cement in building and the authorities are urging people everywhere to plant more trees.

The repulsive looking scaly legs in chickens can be improved in appearance a whole lot by rubbing them at intervals of a few days with a salve made of equal parts of lard, sulphur and kerosene.

It is not pleasant to be kept awake on cold nights by the flapping of loose boards or doors on the outbuildings. A pound of nails and a couple of dozen screws and a half day's time will make everything snug and tight for the winter—just the kind of a job for a bright, sunny day.

Keep the hens laying.

Unfertilized eggs keep best.

Use care in selecting a sire.

Turkeys are always in demand.

Pumpkins may be kept all winter if desired.

Not one cow barn in a hundred has windows enough.

When you begin to handle the colts, keep it up every day.

If the hogs squeal, find out why. Comfortable hogs never squeal.

The hog that is kept growing is always finished for market most easily.

The Babcock tester tells definitely and does not guess the cow's worth.

In dairy-made butter the individual tastes of each customer can be supplied.

Two weeks of milk and corn meal feeding will add to the profits of market stock.

Feed is an important factor in successful dairy work but it is not the only thing.

Cows, sheep, goats and hogs are fond of pumpkins, and, incidentally, man as well.

Plan the feeding of the brood sows in such a way that they must walk to get their feed.

Symmetry of outline, or balancing of parts, is a very important point in selecting steers.

When two horses become accustomed to working together keep them working that way.

Every grocer will tell you that there is a demand for good dairy butter far beyond the supply.

If vegetables are withering in the cellar pick out the best and pack in slightly moist sand.

In handling the milk at home the conditions and equipment must be of the best and up to date.

The production of green ducks is coming to be a large business, especially in the eastern states.

The feeding value of the skim-milk and buttermilk will alone pay for the extra work of making butter at home.

If sheep are in a good, thrifty condition at the start, two months of good feeding will properly fatten for market.

December is a good month to cut scions for grafting. Bury in well-drained soil on the north side of a building.

Good breeding and good feeding are so closely related that they must go together; one is useless without the other.

Another abbreviated blessing adopted by farmers, along with the horseless wagon and plow, is the barbed fence wire.

The richer the soil in the asparagus patch the better the crop will be. A rich soil also makes asparagus start earlier in spring.

An account should be kept with every cow. The way to determine her value is by using the scales and the Babcock test.

With the advent of horseless carriages there is noted an almost entire absence of tailless horses in our parks and city driveways.

A coat of cheap paint will do much to improve the appearance of the wire fence and also to increase its period of usefulness.

No use to plant bush fruit in poor ground. It should be plowed deeply, thoroughly worked up with good stable manure before the bushes are set out.

Pork making ought to be a profitable side line for the dairyman this winter. Forty-cent corn, cheap skim milk and a good hog market is a money making combination.

Pick a sire with a good disposition. Never raise a colt from a naturally vicious tempered mare. Peculiarities of disposition are almost invariably transmitted.

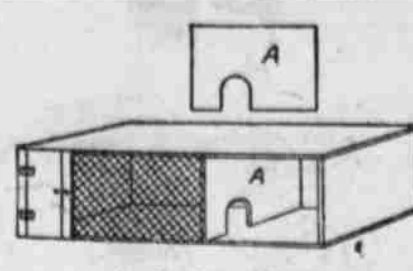
The vices of feather-pulling and egg-eating are always more common in overcrowded flocks than in quarters where there is plenty of space for the fowls to exercise.

By keeping a variety of stock on the farm a larger number may be kept and the best use can be made of all food by giving what is best suitable to each class of animals.

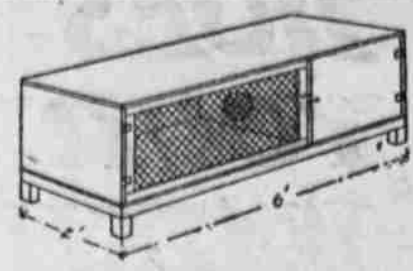
If possible plan for dry box stalls with dirt floors in which to winter the colts. If this is impossible keep the stalls well bedded and clean to prevent accidents from slipping.

An orchard of young apple trees is a good deal like an endowment life insurance policy. For a term of years it seems to be nothing but paying out, but the rewards are almost sure to come.

## CHEAP SUBSTITUTE FOR ORDINARY MEAT



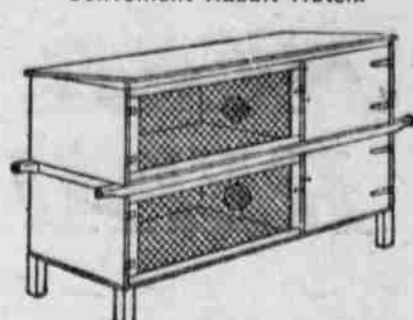
An Outdoor Hutch.



Convenient Rabbit Hutch.



Belgian Hare.



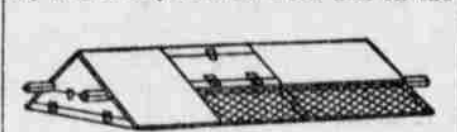
Movable Hutch.

(By DAVID E. LANTZ.)

The fact that rabbits are easily grown and are a cheap and excellent substitute for the ordinary meats is likely to turn the attention of many persons to rearing the animals. That they can be propagated without costly investment in land and buildings is a peculiar advantage. Further, the presence on the farm of another animal which, like poultry, may be killed and prepared for the table entire and at short notice, is exceedingly desirable. All these circumstances make it extremely probable that the business of rearing rabbits will grow in importance.

The Belgian hare is one of the best rabbits for table use. It weighs more than most breeds, develops very rapidly, and the quality of the meat is superior to all the others. The Flemish giant is a Belgian hare bred exclusively for large size, but with the result that the meat is coarser and less delicate in flavor. These characteristics are regarded by some persons as desirable, but this is largely a matter of individual taste. Most people would prefer the white, slender, graceful flesh of the original Belgian hare. It should be remarked, however, that much of the excellence of the rabbit as food depends upon its cooking. As often prepared, it is dry and insipid; while in the hands of an experienced cook it becomes all that the most fastidious taste can wish. An especial requirement in cooking the Belgian hare is that none of the natural juices of the meat be lost in the process.

The Belgian hare does not do well when kept wild in open warrens. The common English rabbit is better for this purpose. A good many Belgians have been turned out in various parts of the United States, and in the vicinity of the city of New York and on the



A Movable Hutch Having a Wire Floor, Which Enables the Rabbits to Eat Grass Through the Netting.

western coast there have been some complaints of damage to crops by wild Belgian hares. As a rule, however, and fortunately for the farmer, these animals, when obliged to shift for themselves, fall an easy prey to their enemies and disappear within a few months.

Belgian hares may be successfully managed in two ways: (1) Entirely in hutches, or (2) in outdoor fenced runs, or courts, with hutches for does when having young, and sleeping hutches for other stock. The hutch system with various modifications is the more common, and is the only method adopted by rabbit fanciers who raise for show. The use of small runs or rabbit courts to give the animals healthful exercise in fine weather is of advantage.

The rabbitry may occupy part or all of a barn or shed, or be built in a sheltered space in the angle between buildings or walls. The indoor rabbitry has decided advantages. The place should be well ventilated, but not subject to draughts of cold or damp air. These may be prevented by ventilators in the roof, or by a system of elbowed pipes passing through the sides of the building and reaching a height of 2 or 3 feet above the openings.

Hutches for the Belgian hare should be somewhat larger than those intended for smaller breeds. They should be built of good lumber, should have tight floors, and should have at least 12 square feet of floor space and a height of 2 feet. If there is plenty of room in the rabbitry it is best to have the hutches separate; but they are usually set in tiers or stacks, two or three in height. Each hutch in the rank is complete in itself, so that its position may be shifted at any time.

A rabbit court may be paved or floored, or it may be a grass court surrounded by a rabbit-proof fence. Sleeping hutches inside the court may be small boxes of any sort if they are stout and waterproof. They should have sliding doors to confine the rabbits if desired, and should also have small holes near the top for ventilation. If a court is used, hutches will still be needed for breeding does.

A rabbit-proof fence to inclose a grass court should be made of heavy poultry netting 5 or 6 feet wire and of 14-inch mesh. The posts, projecting 3 or 4 feet above the ground, should be well set outside the edge of the court. The netting is stapled to the posts, leaving a projection of 6 inches or more at the top and about 18

inches at the ground, to be turned into the court. The lower edge should be covered with 10 or 12 inches of soil to prevent the animals from digging out. The upper edge is also turned inward to keep them from climbing over. Brackets at the tops of the posts make the best support for the overhanging netting, although horizontal pieces of wood nailed to the posts will answer.

While not affording large profits, the business of raising rabbits in a small way may be made an interesting as well as a reasonably remunerative adjunct to other pursuits. It is adapted to small village places, as well as to farms, and under careful management the returns from it are likely to increase as one gains experience. Under favorable circumstances it is capable of expansion into a serious vocation. The presence of rabbits in inclosures on the farm or on village premises furnishes opportunity for an agreeable change in the family diet; a fact that is of considerable importance when ordinary meats are high-priced, or in regions where they are difficult to obtain.

## FRESH VEGETABLES MAY BE OBTAINED

Eastern Writer Makes Suggestion That Is Worthy of Some Consideration.

(By R. B. HUCKAM.)

The time was when it was customary to see the small farmer and truck raiser going about the streets from house to house with his produce. The trip to town was an important part of each day's round, which was made as regularly as the sun, usually at just such an hour every day. The farmer had his friends and patrons in town, who knew the worth and quality of his produce, and who were wise enough and fortunate enough to make arrangements with him to bring it to them, fresh from the fields, daily.

But nowadays, for one reason or another, this particular activity on the part of the farmer has fallen away wonderfully. In its stead has come, to a large extent, the cry and the push-cart of the "hawker," a species of middleman who must look to this occupation alone for his profits, and who is usually not so much concerned to supply a friend with the best to be had as he is to do a good business, and that is but natural.

One cannot but infer that this change must be more or less to the disadvantage of the customer. He is the loser in the main by this new order of things, though the farmer is probably somewhat in the same position too. Why does he not come to town as he used to? Doubtless more than one cause contributes to this result. He is farming on a larger and more extensive scale than he used to, and has found a ready market for all that he can produce in the modern middleman, who is ready to take off his hands all that he has for sale. He is no longer under the necessity of going in search of purchasers of his wares. The self constituted agent of the public comes to him voluntarily and bargains with him for what he has, and usually pays him a fair price, too.

But a writer in an eastern daily publication makes a suggestion which is well worth considering by any who would welcome an approach to the old order of marketing. It is this: These are the days of the automobile and pleasure riding. Almost everyone, in these times, high or low, manages to get possession of one, by one means or another. But instead of going aimlessly hither and yon, for the pleasure of riding merely, why not have an objective point in view, some farmhouse in the country, and the purchase of a generous supply of fresh vegetables and produce one purpose and object of the outing? Quite a quantity could easily be carried home thus, and the pleasures of the trip extended for several days by the better quality of food and relishes upon the table.

If the farmer will not, or cannot, find time any more to come to the city, then get out the auto and go after him! Strike his trail as the hunters do when they go out with their hounds after the fox, and run him to earth! And when the run is over and the return is made, I, for one, would ten times rather have a bag of fresh vegetables than have a bag of a poor, butchered fox.