

# Times Change and We With Them



IT WAS a farm house of the colonial time, built before the architects were about. It was broad at the bottom, but broader at the top, with eaves where the swallows could nest in communal force. And the eaves reached down so low to the ground that I have myself ridden off the rear slope from the big chimney and dashed into a snowdrift—and none the worse for it. There were snow piles in those days! Almost to the eaves themselves! And under those eaves—God bless them!—there were warm hearts; and there were also doughnuts in huge piles, and pumpkin pies in rows; and there were other comforts, for no one had then discovered bacteria, and we were in no danger from eating good food. When we got cold outdoors we could go inside and be warmed internally. The house was painted red, for that was the warm color, like the fire in the chimney, and I know no other reason why all old-time farm houses were of that color. Only the front was white, and there were green blinds—I think it was the fashion, and the time never was when anyone would be out of fashion—inovators and radicals excepted. Fashion, you must know, is simply doing what others do, and not bothering your head about it, and believing what others believe, with just as little trouble to yourself. It is a beautiful way of keeping us all alike, for what might come of it if no two ever did the same thing, or believed the same thing, or wore the same coat, or, for that matter, loved the same person? The old-time people had a reason for the catechism. It was a good one. It kept them all together, like a regiment. Nowadays there are some who would even throw away the dictionary and spell the Lord knows how—just as each one pleases.

Over the double door reached the big arms of a great butternut. Do you know there is no tree in all the world so homeful as a butternut? Its arms are like those of a father, and it has not a stingy trait about it. Then you should lie, as I have, in September, and hear of a night the nuts falling off, one, or two, or three at a time on the roof. Rat, tat, tat, until our dreams were full of the joys of the morning; or, for that matter, even of the puddings, which should come of it when the meats were enough to fill a big bowl. Yes, indeed! a butternut pudding, with a plenty of elder, is good even in dreamland. To the back of the house was an orchard, where Spitzenbergs and Pearmaines grew. Some of the trees leaned so that we could walk up them, and sit with the birds. I, when a boy, knew a robin so well that she built her nest within five feet of me, while I whistled and talked to her. To the side of the orchard stood a fine grove of basswood, in which were fifty hives of bees, in two long houses—two rows in each house. There is nothing so wonderful in the world as an apple orchard in blossom. It is fit for worship. The trees are friendly and hearty. Their arms come low down to the ground, as if reaching after us. What wealth of blossom! There is no suggestion of niggardiness. Ah, even now I see the old grandmother in her chair, when the petals came down in a great shower and laid lovingly on her white hair. And the blessed mother beside her also. Nature loved them. There was a sweet fitness, and when we boys came to their side and brought the ripest Pearmaines and Lady Sweetes, and otherwise identified them with the fruit, it was out of our hearts. But how shall I ever get to New Year's at this rate, for I can not yet half around the house, and my soul will not let me hurry on. To see things and hear things when they happen is well enough; but, ah, to have them in one's self and be able to call them out of the memory, that is worth the while. 'Tis better than any phonograph.

There was an offset in the turf, just beyond the harvest pear; and this was where the little mother had her pinks, and poppies, and bachelor buttons, and cinnamon roses, and Johnnie-jump-ups. It was a place of marvelous beauty, and of marvelous work—of that I can testify. But it was delicious in the early morning, before the day was on a gridiron—and again after sundown. You should have seen the little mother and Granny Williams, or some other one, going about this treasure island in the midst of the world. "Ah, this" and "Ah, that!" "It smells like a fresh young babe," said Granny Williams. "Indeed," said the little mother, "but I had not thought of that; but, as likely as not, for it has a soft pinkish yellow color." Then she would sniff at it, like any professor examining a new chemical mixture.

All the time she was gathering in her apron dropped rose leaves and poppy leaves to press between the leaves of the big Bible.

A little down the slope lay the vegetable garden of my father, full of long, narrow beds, all turned over each year by the spade and the spine. Oh, Lord! but yet I have the memory of it in my back. Why had they not thought of gardens to be furrowed by horsepower? But they had not. I think because they were yet too full of Old England, and a Yankee was, after all, the most imitative creature in the world. He shook his fist, and wagged his tongue like the great bell at Moscow at the world Englishman, but for all that he was himself English, both in his stomach and in his head. He not only spaded his gardens, but he took his snuff like an Englishman, and he built his fence after an English pattern. What else could explain why he had so many little yards about our house, and built our house close down by the road? As if we were crowded into a little island, and had not room enough to turn around in. We are more independent now, and really are getting some notions of our own. But then our house stood only a stone's throw from the highway, and there was a little box of a yard in front, and this was full of locust trees and honeysuckles, and there at night the honey moths would come and play high-spy in the blossoms. George III, our great gray cat, would sit down to look at one that came too near—for what was it?—a bird or a butterfly? And like all of us, he was a bit of a naturalist. He liked very much to classify the world, but never hesitated to put the choicest specimens in his stomach, which is, I see, the way with other scientists. They will eat a megalothoroid as quick as a pig.

But you should have seen the "sturtions," as they grew in rows all about the vegetable beds, for our father also had an eye to beauty. Did he not set hollyhocks all about his corn fields? Then, when the great stalks of crimson and gold stood up in summer, and the folk that went by to church stopped to look with admiration, he said, "Truly, one shall not live by bread alone." And he liked best those neighbors who looked the longest, as the little mother liked best those who ate most of her goodies. The saffron, and dill, and the rue and rosemary, and caraway, and fennel, and the mints, grew by the brook that ran down back of the house and garden; and, indeed, there were also more of these herbs that stood always in the place of a family doctor. Indeed, you may look; but it was not so bad an exchange. And as for the notions, they may have been no worse than the guesses of the profession nowadays.

There is no good living where there are no brooks, and this was a brook of the first water. It bubbled out of a rocky hollow, some little secret cavern, and then it laughed and tumbled for half a mile before it got over its fun. The little mother in summer would walk with us there, and she would sometimes say, "Now, let us go father over to the gen, where the bigger brook is, and the ferns, and the witchhazel and the yellow birch, and the beechdrops." Oh, it was glorious fun! But at night, after work, the dear father would come early from the field, and say, "Now, let us all go for strawberries." Then—ah, but how can I tell you such delicious joys! You know nothing of wild strawberries, much less do you know the delight of creeping about the meadows and down by the stumps in the pastures, while the bobolink whistles, and the brooks gurgled, as we gathered the long stems that lay lovingly against the grass.

Where are we? I had no business out of season and in midwinter to take you through snow banks to pick strawberries. But 'tis such tricks the memory plays. We will get at once back to the house. The front door, as you see, opens just in the middle in halves, and from that the hall runs back as straight as a Puritan's nose, right through everything, till it lands in the big kitchen. And the two halves of the door swing open separately. I know not why it was, unless it were an inheritance from pioneer days, when it was well to be able to look out and parley a little before opening the way for an Indian rush. So, at any rate, all the doors in those days were cut across the middle. In the big yard was the woodshed, and that was full of piles of wood as dry as tinder. It was the comfort of winter, and the very right arm of a successful home. From the woodshed we all went, kicking first the dirt from our boots, into the great living room, where we were all together. Over this door was twined with care a great bitersweet, and all over the stone curb of the well was a wild white-flowering clematis.

"Father," said the little priestess, "'tis as well to cultivate the beautiful and enjoy it. Why

should it all be shut up in books?" "It is so," said my father, "God made the world, and he put the flowers here as well as the potatoes. I have no patience with those who do not follow God." "To be sure," said my little mother "and the weeds are here to teach us diligence and patience." "But the quack," said my father, "that might as well be left out." "And the burdocks," said she, "are excellent for beer, and the leaves are good for draughts." "Perhaps, if we could see it," said he, "all things are good." "Tis for us to make the best of everything," said she. And as our Jim came up, she put her hand on his arm and on mine, and then said slowly: "'Tis a world in which we can make beautiful boys and girls—if first we ourselves are right. What more could we ask?"

And the birds, ah, but you should have seen how they nested about that house. "They will eat all the cherries," said my Uncle George, and he rapped his cane lustily on the floor of the porch. But our father smiled and said, "Let us count them all into our family, and plant for them also when we plant." So he put in a few rows of peas more, and said, "They are for the orioles." And a dozen cherry trees down by the fence were for the robins, and for the cedar birds who have a cherry tooth. Then he went up to the wood's edge, nearby, the big beeches, where there were wild cherries, and into these he put acorns of finer sorts; "for the birds, my boys." So the robins, and the bluebirds, and the wrens, and indigo birds, and the goldfinches, and the catbirds, and all other sorts of thrushes and finches, and I can't tell you how many more, came to us; and they filled the trees with nests, and they paid for all they took in song and helpful labor. And a robin built its nest in the window seat of his bedroom and sang to him in the morning, while he lay in his bed. Ah, yes, they worked well together, my father and the birds.

The barn was not far away. "'Tis not decent," said the little mother. "There should be shade for the cows and the pigs and the hens." "You are right, little mother," said my father; and he brought a load of willow sticks; and he planted them all the way around the barn and its yard. And these grew and thrived mightily, and at last they were a great grove, that hung all over the barn and hid it. The little mother said, "Did I not tell you?"—and then she drew the breath coolly through one corner of her mouth, as she surveyed the transformation. "Indeed, you did, little mother—you said it—and no one would have done it, had you not." And the hens cackled their delight, and the cows at night lay down facing the moon, as it sifted in between the leaves, and all day they were nicely comforted from the sun. And when old Daisy went to the tub to drink she would look up between slips, as if to say, "The Lord be praised for this shady yard." A true barnyard is a delightful place, full of peace and love. Lillah, the collic, comes and puts her head through the gate once an hour, and, surveying matters, says, "Yes, all is as it should be; all is correct," then she goes back to run along where Jim and I and our father are at work in the orchard. Or if it be—and it really is—or it ought to be, New Year's day, she looks in at the kitchen window, and waits till we open the door that she may curl up by the fire. But George III gets up on his hind feet to the door latch and rattles it, and then waits till we let him in. A true cat is half human. Ah, if but—if they could once get articulation, what would come of it? It is well that they cannot for they would rout out and dispossess half or more of the human sort. So with quack and thistles, and talking cats, and collic dogs, we should be made either wiser or killed off.

"Come," said my uncle George, "let us make our New Year's call!" In those days it was not yet forgotten to be neighborly, and once a year we all expected to look in on each other, and break bread, or at least cut cake. And we sat down to a bit of gossip and exchanged news; and when it was over everybody knew all about everybody else, and there was no need at all to print it. But I shall tell you nothing at all about it. It was our own business and we were simple folks, and you who live today have your big notions and your new ways and you laugh too easily. So our New Year's day went by in its own homely way, and we had our calls; and we went home at night and rubbed our hands and our stomachs and were content. Not one of us envied your telephones and telegraphs and other knick-knacks—or ever gave them a thought. Bless the Lord, enough is enough, and it is not likely you have any more idea of what will be about a hundred years from now. Indeed I think they will call you savages. Pish, but what a world of conceit it is.

## FIRES ON FARMS CAUSE BIG LOSS

Numerous Disastrous Conflagrations Could Be Prevented With Ordinary Care.

### LIGHTNING IS LARGE FACTOR

Frequent Inspection of Buildings Should Be Made and All Rubbish and Inflammable Material Removed.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

Farm fires cost about \$20,000,000 a year—\$18,166,710 in 1918. Of the fires that year 33 per cent were from causes classed as preventable, 37 per cent from partly preventable causes and 30 per cent unknown but believed to have been largely preventable. With inadequate fire-fighting equipment on farms, fires are hard to control. Prevention is the best way to deal with them.

Defective chimneys and flues took toll to the extent of \$1,962,031; sparks on roofs, \$1,181,171; careless use of matches by smokers and others, \$1,071,987; petroleum and its products, \$732,067; and stoves, furnaces, boilers, and their pipes, \$674,968. The largest item listed as partly preventable is lightning, \$3,933,950.

#### Inspect Premises Frequently.

The Department of Agriculture advises a frequent looking over of the premises to see that the buildings are in the best practicable shape to prevent and resist fire, that inflammable rubbish is cleared away, and that habits of safety be instilled in the handling of matches, lamps, stoves and kerosene and gasoline.

Gasoline has come to play an important part in farm life that special care should be taken to see that it is not stored in inflammable buildings and is never opened in the presence of uncovered flame. If lanterns must be used in barns, they should be kept in good condition, set or hung in a safe place, and never filled or lighted in the barn. Kerosene lamps should be examined to see that the burners are in good condition and should never be left where they may be upset. Kerosene and gasoline receptacles should be kept apart, and should be so different as to avoid possibility of a mistake.

Numerous disastrous fires are caused by thrashing machines, both by scattering sparks and embers and by dust explosions in the separators. All smokestacks should have spark arresters, and the ground around the boiler should be kept clear and wet down, if necessary. Grain-dust explosions are largely preventable. The department has made exhaustive studies of the subject and is prepared to recommend adequate safeguards.

Serious losses are caused by sparks from locomotives, which ignite dry



A Fire-Fighting Outfit for a Country Community.

wooden shingle roofs and start many fires in straw, stubble, and grass during dry seasons. If a railroad runs through the farm it will pay to plow a few furrows along the right of way as a firebreak.

#### Never Smoke in Barn or Garage.

Ordinary friction matches should be kept safe in receptacles, away from children, and never carried loose. Smoking in barns and garages never should be permitted. Fire marshals of western states report greater fire losses in grain and straw than the past season from carelessly thrown matches, engine sparks, and automobile and tractor backfire than ever before.

Buildings may be made safer by seeing that the chimneys are without cracks and free of soot, which may take fire and scatter sparks on dry roofs. Flues which may become hot should be covered with asbestos and any near-by walls and ceilings protected. There should be a sheet of metal under every stove.

Out of all the losses by lightning not one was on a building protected by lightning rods. It is now definitely known that lightning rods afford protection. If installed intelligently they reduce the risk from lightning almost to the vanishing point.

Precautionary measures will do much to cut down a loss that takes millions of dollars out of the possession of rural Americans every year and leaves nothing in its place. Prevention is better than regret.

## STORE SURPLUS CORN FOR BIGGEST PROFIT

Problem Solved by County Agent in Alabama Community.

Farmer Is Well Repaid for Time Spent in Carefully Shucking, Shelling and Sacking His Crop—Others Were Careless.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

Improvement of the methods of gathering and storing and in the time of marketing corn, where there is a surplus, has been one of the problems handled lately by a county agent in Alabama. He reports that in 1920 three men in a community near Gantt unconsciously proved the very point he was anxious to make. Each had about 200 bushels of corn for sale. One sold his from the field at \$1.20 per bushel. The second farmer stored his in the old way and sold it for \$1.75, although it was gnawed by rats and eaten by weevils.

The third man brought his 200 bushels in, shelled, in good even weight sacks, with no weevils, and received \$2.25. He had shucked, shelled



Seed Corn Properly Sacked.

and sacked his corn at spare times during the fall. He had learned from the county agent how to kill the weevils. The only expense he went to, although his corn brought so much better price, was for sacks and the weevil exterminator. He said the shucks were worth all that he got roughage for his cows. This gave him \$100 more for 200 bushels of corn than his neighbor who sold the same day.

## ORGANIZE BULL ASSOCIATION

Success Depends Great Deal on Care in Forming—County Agent Can Give Assistance.

Success in the operation of a co-operative bull association depends a great deal on the care than is used in its organization. To begin with, those interested should obtain as much information as possible regarding the plan of operation and should consult with the county agricultural agent. He may be able to give valuable information from experience, or at least will know where it can be obtained, and he can help greatly in starting the organization. If a county agent is not available, write to the state agricultural college or to the United States Department of Agriculture at Washington, D. C., either of which will be glad to give advice and assistance. It is advisable, if possible, to visit some nearby bull association in order to study the methods of operating, for the more information there is available the better will be the prospects for a well-organized and successful association.

## SAVING SWEET POTATO CROP

Better Storage and Disease-Preventive Methods Arousing Widespread Interest.

The work of the United States Department of Agriculture for better utilization of the nation's sweet potato crop by better storage and disease-preventive methods has aroused widespread interest throughout the sweet potato producing states, which include more than 20 of the 48.

The department has published three farmers' bulletins useful to those interested in the production, harvesting, storage and marketing of sweet potatoes, which can be had on request. They are: No. 970, Sweet Potato Storage; No. 699, Sweet Potato Growing; and No. 1059, Sweet Potato Disease.

## TIME FOR CUTTING TIMBER

Insects and Fungi Which Attack Wood Are Less Active in Fall and Winter Seasons.

Fall and winter are best for cutting timber. Insects and fungi which attack wood are then less active. Seasoning is slow and there is little excessive checking. It is easier to haul logs on sleds than on wheels, and labor suitable for woods work is usually more available.

## VENTILATION IS IMPORTANT

Carbonic Gas Constantly Forming in Poultry House Must Be Carried Away at Once.

It doesn't take long for the air in a poultry house to become poisonous and unhealthy. Carbonic acid gas is forming constantly and as the air becomes laden with this gas it must be carried out by a proper ventilating system and replaced by pure, fresh air.