

The IDYL of TWIN FIRES

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SYNOPSIS.

I grow tired of my work as a college instructor and buy a New England farm on sight.

The practical thing for this would-be farmer to do would be to rent his new-bought farm and become an earnest student at the nearest agricultural college. Will he be like most other teachers and persuade himself that he knows it all before he has really learned anything?

CHAPTER II.

My Farmer Comes.

Three days later I closed the deal and hastened back to college. Professor Grey of the college botanical department assigned his chief assistant at the gardens to my case. He took me to Boston and in one day spent exactly \$641 of my precious savings, while I gasped, helpless in my ignorance. He bought, it appeared to me, barrels of seeds, tons of fertilizers, thousands of wheel hoers for horse and man, millions of pruning saws and spraying machines, hotbed frames and sashes, tomato trellises, and I knew not what other nameless implements and impedimenta.

This was rather disconcerting. But the die was cast, and I came to a sudden realization that seven years of teaching the young idea how to punctuate isn't the best possible training for running a farm, and if I were to get out of my experiment with a whole skin I had got to turn to and be my own chief laborer, and hereafter my own purchaser, as well.

All that night I packed and planned, and the next morning I left college forever. I slipped away quietly, before the chapel bell had begun to ring, avoiding all tender good-bys. I had a stack of experiment-station bulletins in my grip, and during the four hours I spent on the train my eyes never left their pages. Four hours is not enough to make a man a qualified agriculturist, but it is sufficient to make him humble. I landed at Bentford station, hired a back, and drove at once to my farm, and my first thought on alighting was this: "Good, Lord, I never realized the frightful condition of that orchard! It will take me a solid week to save any of it, and I suppose I'll have to set out a lot of new trees besides. More expense!"

"It's a dollar up here," said the driver of the hack, in a mildly insidious voice.

"I paid him brusquely and he drove away. I stood in the middle of the road, my suitcase beside me, the long afternoon shadows coming down through my dilapidated orchard, and surveyed the scene. Milt Noble had gone. So had my enthusiasm. The house was bare and desolate. It hadn't been painted for twenty years, at least, I decided. My trunks, which I had sent ahead by express, were standing disconsolately on the kitchen porch. Behind me I heard my horse stamping in the stable, and saw my two cows feeding in the pasture. A postcard from 'one Bert Temple, my nearest neighbor up the Slab City road, had informed me that he was milking them for me—and, I gathered, for the milk. Well, if he didn't, goodness knew who would! I never felt so lonely, so helpless, so hopeless, in my life."

Then an odd fancy struck me. George Meredith made his living, too, by reading manuscripts for a publisher! The picture of George Meredith trying to reclaim New England farm as an avocation restored my spirits, though just why perhaps it would be difficult to make anyone but a fellow English instructor understand. I suddenly tossed my suitcase into the barn, and began a tour of inspection over my thirty acres.

There was tonic in that turn! That brook ran south close to the road which formed my eastern boundary, along the entire extent of the farm—some three hundred yards. As I followed the brook into the maples and then into the sudden hushed quiet of my little stand of pines, I thought how all this was mine—my own, to play with, to develop as a sculptor molds his clay, to walk in, to read in, to dream in. Think of owning even a half-acre of pine woods, stillest and cooliest of spots! A single great pine, with wide-spreading, storm-tossed branches, like a cedar of Lebanon, stood at the stone wall, just inside my land.

"Somebody ought to get amusement out of this!" I said aloud, as I set off for the barn, gathered up my suitcase, and climbed the road toward Bert Temple's.

If I live to be a hundred, I can never repay Bert Temple, artist in caulkfowers and best of friends in my hour of need. Bert and his wife took me in, treated me as a human, if helpless, fellow being, not as a "city man" to be fleeced, and gave me the best advice, and the best supper a man ever had, meantime assuring me that my cows had been tested, and both were sound.



All That Night I Packed and Planned.

into yer system. Neow, ez to a farmer—there's Mike Finn. He lives 'bout a quarter of a mile from your corner. He'll come an' his son'll help out with the heavy work. We'll walk down to see him neow, ef yer like."

I liked, and in the soft, spring evening we set off down the road.

"Wal, then, ez to carpenters," Bert went on, "tha's good carpenters, an' bad carpenters, an' Hard Cider Howard. Hard Cider's forgotten more about carpenterin' than most o' the rest ever knew, and he ain't forgot much, neither. But he ain't handsome, and he looks upon the apple juice when it's yaller. Maybe yer don't mind looks, an' I kin keep Hard Cider sober while he's on your job. He'll treat yer fair, an' see that the plumbers do."

We walked on, turned the corner at my brook, and followed the other road along past my pines till we came to a small settlement of white cottages. At one of these Bert knocked. We were admitted by a pretty, blue-eyed Irish girl, who had a copy of Caesar's "Commentaries" in her hand, into a tiny parlor, where an "airtight" stove stood below a colored chromo of the Virgin and Child, and a middle-aged Irishman sat in his shirtsleeves, smoking a pipe.

"Hello, Mike," said Bert, "this is Mr. John Upton, who's bought Milt Noble's place, an' wants a farmer and gardener. I told him you wuz the man."

"Sit down, sor, sit down," said Mike, offering a chair with an expansive and hospitable gesture. "Sure, let's talk it over."

The pretty daughter had gone back to her Caesar by the nickel oil lamp, but she had one ear toward us, and I caught a corner of her eye, too—an extremely attractive, not to say provocative eye.

"Well, now," Mike was saying, "sure I can run a farm, but what do I be gettin' fer it?"

"Fifty a month," said I, "which includes milking the cows and tending furnace in winter."

"Sure, I got more than that on me last place and no cows at all."

"Ye're a liar, Mike," said Bert.

"That's a fightin' word in the ould country," said Mike.

"This ain't the old country, and yer got forty-five dollars," Bert grinned. "Besides, ye'll be close to yer work. You wuz a mile an' a half frum the Sullivans. Thet makes up fer the milkin'!"

"True, true," Mike replied, meditatively. "But what be yer runnin' the place for, Mr. Upton? Is it a real farmer y'd be?"

"A real farmer," I answered. "Why?"

"Well, I didn't know. I've heard say yer wuz a literary feller, too, Mr. Upton, and I have no doubts."

"Well, I'm a sort of a literary feller," I confessed. "But it's you I want to be the real literary feller, Mike. You must write me a poem in potatoes."

Mike put back his head and roared. "It's a poem yer want, is it?" he cried. "Sure, it's an oration I'll give ye. I'll grow ye the real home rule partakers."

"Well," said I, rising, "do you begin tomorrow morning, and will your son help for a few weeks?"

"The mornin' it is," said Mike, "and Joe along."

I paused by the side of the girl. "All Gail is divided into three parts," I laughed.

She looked up with a pretty smile, but Mike spoke: "Sure, but they give all three parts to Nora," he said, "so what was the use o' dividin' it? She thinks she's me mither instead o' me daughter!"

"I'll put you to bed in a minute," said Nora, while Mike grinned proudly at her.

"I'm going to like Mike," said I to Bert, as we walked back up the road. "I know yer would soon ez I seen you," Bert replied. "The only folks that don't like Mike is the folks that can't see a joke. Mike has a tolerable number o' dislikers."

"Well, I've got my farmer," said I, "and now I suppose I've got to find a housekeeper, as soon as the house is ready to live in. Nora would suit me."

"I reckon she would, but she wouldn't suit Bentford."

"In other words, I want an oldish woman, very plain, and preferably a widow."

"With a young son old enough to help on the farm," Bert added with a grin.

"I don't suppose you know of just such a combination?"

"Reckon I do. You leave it to my old lady."

"Mr. Temple," said I, "seems to me I'm leaving everything to you."

"Wal, neow, yer might do a heap worse!" said Bert.

I went up to my chamber when we got back, and sat down beside my little glass lamp and did some figuring. Added to my alleged salary as a manuscript reader, along with what I hoped I could pick up writing, I recklessly calculated my annual income as a possible \$3,000. Out of this I subtracted \$600 for Mike's wages, \$300 for a housekeeper, \$400 for additional labor, \$75 for taxes, and \$500 for additions to my "plant," as I began to call my farm.

Then it occurred to me that I ought, of course, to sell my farm produce for a handsome profit. Bert had gone to bed, so I couldn't ask him how much I would be likely to realize. But with all due conservatism I decided that I could safely join the golf club. So I did, then and there. Whereupon I began to play golf, and, picking out the manuscript of a novel from my bag, I went bravely at the task of earning my living.

CHAPTER III.

Joy in an Old Orchard.

The following morning was a balmy and exquisite first of May and Bert hustled me off immediately after breakfast to meet Hard Cider Howard, whom, by some rural wireless, he had already summoned.

As we walked down the road, I glanced toward my lone pine, and saw my horse and Mike's hitched to the plow, with Joe driving and Mike holding the handles. Across the green pasture, between the road and the hayfield, already four rich brown furrows were shining up to the sun.

At the house we found awaiting a strange-looking man, small, wrinkled, unkempt, with a discouraged mustache and a nose of a decidedly brighter hue than the rest of his countenance. He was tapping at the sills of the house.

"How about it, Hard? Cement?" said Bert.

Hard Cider nodded to me, with a keen glance from his little, bloodshot eyes.

"Yep," he said. "Stucco over it. Brick underpinnin's be ez good ez noo. Go inside."

We stepped upon the side porch Bert handing me the key and I opening the door of my new dwelling with a secret thrill. Hard Cider at once began on the kitchen floor, ripping up a plank to examine the timbers beneath.

We crossed the hall to the south side, where there were two corresponding rooms. Here, as on the other side, the chimney and fireplaces were on the inside walls, and the mantels were of a simple but very good colonial pattern, though they had been browned by smoke and time to a dirt color.

"Now I want these two rooms made into one," said I. "I want one of the doors into the hall closed up, and a glass door cut out of the south side to a pergola veranda. Can you do it?"

Hard examined the partition. He climbed on a box which we dragged in, and ripped away plaster and wood, ruthlessly, both at the top and at places on the sides, all without speaking a word.

"Yep," he said finally, "ef yer don't mind a big cross-beam showin'. She's solid oak. Yer door, though, 'll have to be double, with a beam in the middle."

"Fine!" I cried. "One to go in by, one to go out. Guests please keep to the right!"

"Hev ter alter yer chimney," he added, "or yer'll hev two fireplaces."

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"Besides, ye'll be close to yer work. You wuz a mile an' a half frum the Sullivans. Thet makes up fer the milkin'!"

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TO BE CONTINUED.

Speechless Wooer Not Popular

By LAURA JEAN LIBBEY.

Oh, when he comes again,
In the old glad way,
I will smile and take his hand,
What were there to say?
I will drop my eyes and smile,
For my soul would be
Like the peace of summer noons
Beside the sea.

It would make the world laugh
were it to hear or read all that I do
about courtships—
good, fair and indifferent—from
anxious women who whisper their
heart secrets to me. I often wonder
how it is that some lovers are
able to win the objects of their
hearts' desire, they stumble through
courtship so clumsily.

I find that not
one young woman
out of a hundred
really admires the
bold wooer. Lovemaking,
above ev-

erything else, should be done with the
greatest delicacy, adroitness and rever-
ence. The young man who calls a
score or more of times without the
slightest kind of hint to the girl who
is spending her evenings entertain-
ing him, that he is interested in her—a
notch farther than friendship—should
not expect that the flame of hope
which he has probably lit in her
breast is to burn continuously without
fuel.

There is another kind of man who
is a puzzle to the cleverest of women
—he who delights to have the dearie
of his choice all to himself after blurt-
ing out a few words in which he has
popped out the question, but never afterward
referring to the subject, content

Some Mysteries of Turkish Censorship Are Explained

In all letters from America the Turkish censor seemed to take the most personal interest, writes Arthur Ruhl in Collier's. At the end of one letter of mine from New York, he wrote in pencil: "Please not so long—Censor."

One day I had the pleasure of meeting him, or at least that part of him which handled English correspondence—an Oxford Turk who could speak English as well as anybody.

"Fancy," said he, "a woman takes a donkey ride over in Anatolia somewhere, and writes her husband sixteen pages about it. Well, now, no one could read that!" So his young men read the first page and the last, and the rest they simply lifted out and into the waste basket!

This explained it—those curious letters people had been getting with a start and a finish and the rest all gone. Imagine yourself, for instance, separated by five thousand miles and a continent covered with war from those you care about most and then getting a letter: "I feel it my duty to tell you the real truth. . . . then a gap and the conclusion: "If you act at once, there may still be time. Yours sincerely. . . ."

It wasn't that the censor objected to the middle of the letter, but there wasn't time to wade through all, and he merely sent what he could read. Then it occurred to me that I ought, of course, to sell my farm produce for a handsome profit. Bert had gone to bed, so I couldn't ask him how much I would be likely to realize. But with all due conservatism I decided that I could safely join the golf club. So I did, then and there. Whereupon I began to play golf, and, picking out the manuscript of a novel from my bag, I went bravely at the task of earning my living.

In a new desk calendar the dates are carried on a reel in such a manner that 13 weeks are visible at a time and the background causes the figures for any week desired to appear more prominent than the others.

A method for freezing fish, patented in Denmark, by immersing them in a cold liquid, is claimed to preserve them in more perfect condition than air freezing as the fish is not dried nor broken by ice crystals.

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TO BE CONTINUED.

HERE'S ONE OF REASONS WHY EVERES HATES UMP

Captain of Braves Tells About Run-in He Had With Official