

The IDYL of TWIN FIRES

WALTER PRICHARD EATON

CHAPTER XVII—Continued.
—17—

As the busy autumn days came upon us, Twin Fires took on a new aspect, and one to us greenhorns indescribably thrilling. In the first place, our field of corn rustled perpetually as we walked past it, and down in the greenish-golden lanes beneath we could see the orange gleam of pumpkins (I shall so spell the word lest it be mispronounced by the ignorant). Great ears of the Stowell's evergreen were ripe, for Mike's prediction about the early frost had not come true, and we ate the succulent food clean to the cob every day at dinner, besides selling many dozens of ears to the market. In the long light of afternoon, Stella loved to go along the path by the hayfield wall and then turn in amid the corn, losing sight at once of all the universe and wandering in a new world of rustling leaves. She felt, she said, just as Alice must have felt after she had eaten the cake; and once a rabbit bounded across her foot, to her unspeakable delight. She looked to see if he had dropped his gloves!

Then there was the potato field. We were eating our own new potatoes now. Often Stella dug them.

"It seems so funny to go and dig up a potato," she declared. "I've always felt that potatoes just were. But to see the whole process of growth is quite another matter. Oh, John, it makes them so much nicer!"

"Especially when you are getting seventy-five cents a bushel for them," I laughed.

The loaded tomato vines, too, with the red fruit hanging out from the wire frames and sending a pungent odor into the surrounding air, appealed to Stella endlessly. I used to see her now and then, as I glanced from the south room of a morning, eating a raw tomato like an apple, her head bent forward so that the juice would not spoil her dress.

And there were the apples! Already a red astrachan tree invited us on every trip to the brook, and other old trees were bearing fast-ripening fruit. I had wanted to set out more orchard, but we agreed that we could not afford it that year, if we were to build chicken houses against the spring, so I reluctantly gave up the idea. But our old trees, in spite of (or perhaps because of) my spring pruning, were doing fairly well. We had enough for baked apples and cream all winter, anyhow, Stella reckoned, smacking her lips at the thought.

Every day, on our way to the pool, one or the other of us took a hoe along and scraped a tree for five minutes, gradually getting the old bark off, and making a final preparation for a thorough spraying the next winter just so much easier. I used to prune a bit, too, in spare moments, so that by the end of the summer considerable renovation had been accomplished.

And now came the foxglove transplanting. According to the gardener's directions, we took two long rows where the early peas had stood (and where Mike had disobeyed my instructions to spade the vines under, that being a form of green manuring your old-time gardener will not see the value of, I have discovered), trenched them, put in manure and soil, and set out at least three hundred foxglove plants six inches apart. It was a cool, cloudy day, and they stood up as though nothing had happened. Then, as an experiment, we moved scores of tiny hollyhocks from the crowded seedbeds into their permanent position as a screen between the south kitchen windows and the sundial lawn, and as a border on the west side of the same lawn. They, too, were quite unaffected by the change.

Meanwhile, we ordered our bulbs—hyacinths, daffodils (which in our climate refuse to take the winds of March with beauty, cowardly waiting till May), a few crocuses, Narcissus poeticus, Empress narcissus, German iris, Japanese iris and Darwin tulips. We ordered the iris and tulips in named varieties.

"They have such nice names," said Stella, "especially the Japanese iris—Kimi-no-megumi, Shirataki, Momochiguma! The tulips are nice, too. Here is Ariadne and Kate Greenaway hobnobbing with Professor Rauwenhoff! What's the use of having plants that aren't named? We must show them as much respect as Antony and Cleopatra, or Epictetus and Luella!"

We also experimented with lilies—lemon lilies for the shady north side of the house, tigers for the border beyond the pool, and two or three of the expensive Myriophyllums, just to show that we, too, could go in for the exotic, like our neighbors on the big estates.

When the bulbs came, in October, we looked at the boxes sadly.

"Whew!" said Stella, "you can't be lazy and have a garden, can you?"

"I don't work tomorrow, I guess," said I. "Shall we ask Mike's Joe to help us?"

"Never!" said my wife. "We'll put these bulbs in ourselves. If I had any help, I should feel like the Eckstroms, which God forbid!"

So the next day at seven-thirty we began. We ringed the pool with Ger-

man and Japanese iris, alternated for succession, and planted a few Japanese both below and above the pool, close to the brook. We set the Narcissus poeticus bulbs where, if they grow, the flowers could look at themselves in the mirror below the dam. The Empress narcissus we placed on both sides of the pool just beyond the iris. On each side of the bench we placed a bulb of our precious Myriophyllums, and put the tigers into the borders close to the shrubbery on both sides. The hyacinths went into the sundial beds, the Darwins into the beds at the base of the rose aqueduct, a few crocuses into the sundial lawn, and the daffodils here and there all over the place, where the fancy struck us and the ground invited.

"Now, I'm going to label everything, and put it on a map besides," cried Stella, "except the daffodils. I want to forget where they are. I want surprises in the spring. Oh, John, do you suppose they'll come up?"

"Yes, I suppose they will," I laughed, "some of them. But do you suppose we'll ever get the kinks out of our backs?"

"I'm willing to go doubled up all the rest of my life for a garden of daffodils all my own," she cried.

And then my heart with pleasure thrills And dances with the daffodils—

"It was very thoughtful of old Wordsworth, and Shakespeare, and Maselief, and all the rest to write nice things about daffodils, wasn't it, John? I wonder if gardens would be so wonderful if it weren't for all their literary suggestions, and the lovely things they remind you of? Gardens have so much atmosphere! Oh, spring, spring, hurry and come!"

I forgot my lame back in her enthusiasm, and later, when the apples were gathered, the potatoes dug, the beets and carrots in the root cellar, our own sweet cider foamed in a glass pitcher on our table, and the first snow spits of December whistled across the fields, we put a little long manure over the irises and other bulbs, and pine boughs over the remaining perennials, and wrapped the ramblers in straw, with almost as much laughing tenderness as you would put a child to bed.

The cows were back in the stable, and Mike had revised his opinion of cork-asphalt floors when he realized the ease of cleaning with a hose; the potatoes and apples and onions and beets and carrots for our family use were stored in barrels and bins in the cellar, or spread on shelves, or buried in sand. The vegetable garden was newly plowed, and manure spread on the hayfield. Antony and Cleopatra had been captured and brought into the dining room, where they were to spend the winter in a glass bowl. Epictetus and Luella and Gladys and Gaynor had all burrowed out of sight into the ground. The pageant of autumn on our hills was over, only an amethyst haze succeeding at sunset time. Wood fires sparkled in our twin hearths. The summer residents had departed. Our first Thanksgiving turkey had been eaten, though a great stone crock of Mrs. Pillig's incomparable mincemeat still yielded up its treasures for ambrosial pies.

"And now," said Stella, "I'm going to find out at last what a country winter is like!"

"And your friends are pitying you down in town," said I. "Don't you want to go back to them till spring?"

Stella looked at the fires, she looked out over the bare garden and the plowed fields to the dun hillsides, she listened a moment to the whistle of the bleak December wind, she looked at me.

In her eyes I read her answer.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Horas Non Numero Nisi Serenas.

But this story is, after all, an idyl, and the idyl is drawing to its close. Even as the Old Three Decker carried tired people to the Islands of the Blessed, my little tale can only end with "and they lived happy ever after."

That second summer at Twin Fires, of course, showed us many things yet to be done. Neither Rome nor the humblest garden was ever built in a day. Our ramblers did their duty well, but the grape arbor and the pergola would not be covered properly in a season. There were holes in the flower beds to be filled by annuals, and mistakes made in succession, so that July found us with many patches destitute of any bloom. Out in the vegetable area there were first cutworms and then drought and potato blight to be contended with. In our ignorance we neglected to watch the hollyhocks for red rust till suddenly whole plants began to die, and we had to spray madly with bordeaux and pull off a great heap of infected leaves, to save any blooms at all. There were clearings to be made in the pines for ferny spots, and constant work to be done about the pool to keep the wild bushes from coming back. There were chickens to be looked after now, also, and new responsibilities in the village for both of us. We had neither attempted nor desired to avoid our full share of civic work. We lived a busy life, with not an hour in the day idle, and few hours

in the evening. We lived so full a life, indeed, that it was only by preserving an absolute routine for my own bread-winning labors, from 9 a. m. till one, that I was able to resist the siren call of farm and garden, and get my daily stint accomplished.

The preceding summer I had made about two hundred dollars out of my produce, which in my first naive enthusiasm pleased me greatly. But it was surely a poor return on my investment, reckoned merely in dollars and cents, and the second season showed a different result. Having two cows and a small family, I managed to dispose of my surplus milk and cream to a farmer who ran a milk route. This brought me in \$73 a year. As I further saved at least \$100 by not having to buy milk, and \$60 by Peter's efforts at the churn, and could reckon a further profit from manure and calves, my cows were worth between three hundred and four hundred dollars a year to me. Now that we had hens and chickens, we could reckon on another \$100 saved in egg and poultry bills. To this total I was able to add at the end of the summer more than five hundred dollars received from the sale of fruit and vegetables, not only to the market but to the hotels. I was the only person in Bentford who had cultivated raspberries for sale, for instance, and the fact that I could deliver them absolutely fresh to the hotels was appreciated in so delicate a fruit. Stella and Peter were the pickers. I also supplied the inns with peas, cauliflowers and tomatoes. Thus the farm was actually paying me in cash, or saving at least a thousand dollars a year—indeed, much more, since we had no fruit nor vegetable bills the year through. Mrs. Pillig being an artist in preserving what would not keep in the cellar. But we will call it a thousand dollars, and let the rest go as interest on the investment represented by seeds and implements. To offset this, I paid Mike \$600 a year, and employed his son Joe at \$1.75 a day for twenty weeks. This left me a profit of about two hundred dollars on my first full season at Twin Fires, which paid my taxes and bought my coal. Out of my salary, then, came no rent, no bills for butter, eggs, milk, poultry nor vegetables. I had to pay Mrs. Pillig her \$20 a month therefrom, I had to pay the upkeep of the place, and grocery and meat bills (the latter being comparatively small in summer). But with the great item of rent eliminated, and my farm help paying for itself, it was astonishing to me to contemplate what a beautiful, comfortable home we were able to afford on an income which in New York would coop us in an upper West side apartment. We had thirty acres of beautiful land, we had a brook, a pine grove, an orchard, a not too formal garden, a lovely house, in which we were slowly assembling mahogany furniture which fitted it. We had summer society as sophisticated as we cared to mix with, and winter society to which we could give gladly of our own stores of knowledge or enthusiasm and find joy in the giving. We had health as never before, and air and sunshine and a world of beauty all about us to the far, blue wall of hills.

Above all, we had the perpetual incentive of gardening to keep our eyes toward the future. A true garden, like a life well lived, is forever becoming, forever in process, forever leading on toward new goals. Life, indeed, goes hand in hand with your garden, and never a fair thought but you write it in flowers, never a beautiful picture but you paint it if you can, and with the striving learn-patience, and with the half accomplishment the "divine unrest."

HORAS NON NUMERO NISI SERENAS reads the ancient motto on our dial plate, and as I look back on the years of Twin Fires' genesis, or forward into the future, the hours that are not sunny are indeed not marked for me. I am writing now at a table beneath the pergola. The floor is of brick, laid (somewhat irregularly) by Stella and me, for we still are poor, as the Eckstroms would reckon poverty, and none of what Mrs. Deland has called "the grim inhibitions of wealth" prevents us from doing whatever we can with our own hands, and finding therein a double satisfaction. Over my head rustle the thick vines—a wistaria among them, which may or may not survive another winter.

It is June again. I know that a path now wanders up the brook almost to the road, amid the wild tangle, and ends suddenly in the most unexpected nook beneath a willow tree, where irises fringe a second tiny pool. I know that the path still wanders the other way into the pines—pines larger now and more murmurous of the sea—past beds of ferns and a lone cardinal flower that will bloom in a shaft of sunlight. Somewhere down that path my wife is wandering, and she is not alone. A little form (at least she says it has form) sleeps beside her, while she sits, perhaps, with a book, or more likely with sewing in her busy fingers, or more likely still with hands that stray toward the sleeping child and ears that listen to the seashell murmur of the pines whispering secrets of the future. Is he to be a Napoleon or a Pasteur? No less a genius, surely, the prophetic pines whisper to the listening mother!

My own pen halts in its progress and the ink dries on the point. And back, from the pines a tiny cry! Can he want his father?

THE END.

Fit for the Part.

Wife—What do you think baby will become when he grows up?

Hubby—Well, he's had experience enough to be a towncrier.—Town Topics.

Good Cheer, Order, Beauty Prevailed in Home of the Southern Woman Long Ago

In her social progresses she rode in a velvet-lined coach drawn by four or six horses—not one too many for the mud holes to be pulled through in those brave times, writes Octavia Zollicoffer Bond in Southern Woman. Her negro coachman, in cloth coat and brass buttons, who could be trusted to drive her a hundred miles in safety, skillfully handled the lines, while liveried footmen swung jauntily to the carriage straps behind, ready to spring to the ground, open the door and let down the folding steps at the will of the mistress. As to her whole-life at home, Thomas Nelson Page has covered the case in asserting that "the system of living in the South made the domestic virtues as common as light and air." Housewifely thrift and executive ability of a high order made the home of the Southern woman who was true to the type an Eden for all who partook of her hospitality. Good cheer, order and beauty prevailed from the entrance hall, impressive with its array of ancestral portraits, to the clean and ample kitchen and servants' quarters. The well-filled smokehouse, the poultry yard astir with fowls, the pantry supply of jelly, pickle, cordial, "bounce" and preserves, the cellar stocked with the choicest vintages of the old world, and the garden growing with every herb, vegetable and flower known to the new, were results of the industry of the lady bountiful of yesteryear. And, withal, the "sweet and garnished" guest rooms, as rarely unoccupied as vacuum occur in nature, were dainty with lavender-scented linens, waxed floors and polished mahogany.

Tortoise Shell

Now that tortoise shell has once more come into public favor it is well to know a way in which to clean and polish it. When tortoise shell loses its luster from wear the polished surface may be restored to its original condition by carefully rubbing it with powdered rottenstone and oil. The rottenstone should be very carefully sifted through the finest muslin. When all scratches on the surface of the tortoise shell are thus removed, a brilliant polish may be given it by applying gentle friction with a piece of soft leather to which some jeweler's rouge has been applied.

There's Room in Western United States for People Of All European Countries

The United States can swallow all of Europe—area, population and all. The entire combined computed area of the foreign countries and the area of the western United States is very nearly the same, says Popular Science Monthly. The discrepancy is 15,000 square miles on Europe's side. At the same time, however, Russia in Europe would spread over the whole western part of our country, crowding it to the doors with its 111,000,000 of people,

GRIFF RECALLS HOW TRICK PEEVED VETERAN BATTER

Senators' Manager Maintains That Tommy Tucker Was Maddest Man He Ever Saw on Ball Field.

"It has been my luck," says Clark Griffith, "to see a large number of peeved and angry people in this old game of baseball, particularly gentlemen against whom I have been lucky enough to do some successful pitching.

"I still think, however, that the maddest man I ever did behold was that grand old Monolith of the old Boston team—Mr. Thomas Tucker. The occasion on which I beheld the fury of this famous warrior is still green in my memory, and can never forsake me.

"Old Tommy Tucker was pretty nearly on his last legs so far as big league baseball was concerned, and hits to him were more precious than rubies and diamonds when we bumped together one summer afternoon. It was a big game, a most important game, and I really had to win it. I loved Tom Tucker very much, but I loved my salary more.

"The battle was a hot one, running along on pretty even terms till near the close, when we managed to get a couple on the bases and good old Uncle Anson did the rest with one of those murderous hits that they don't make now, the old man not being there to soak them. That Boston bunch was never whipped till the last man was counted out, and they went after me strong in the death rally. First thing I knew they had the cushions populous, two down, and old Tom Tucker standing firmly at the plate. I worked him into biting at two wide ones, then fed him two more, which he refused to reach after. It was coming down to cases and no mistake.

"Just at this juncture I happened to remember a trick of indoor baseball—the enormous upshoot which is put on an indoor ball by swinging it, underhand, with the knuckles uppermost and the ball rolling off the palm. It causes a huge upshoot ball, but is not practicable for outdoor ball because, at the greater pitching distance,

MAN MUST LABOR AND LOVE HIS WORK TO BE HEALTHY AND HAPPY

By DR. SAMUEL G. DIXON, Commissioner of Health of Pennsylvania.

Man was intended to labor by the Allwise Creator. Our mental and physical make-up is such that occupation is essential to continued well-being.

From the hunter, the fisherman and the rude agriculturist, man has evolved a complicated civilization. There are thousands of occupations today in place of the few primitive ones, but still the majority of these center about the fulfilling of the primary necessities, feeding and clothing mankind.

It has become impossible for the laborer to work under the conditions which originally obtained. Besides the fields and forests, we have mine, mill and mart.

Man has progressed mentally to a remarkable degree, but we cannot say that of his physical development. However, his requirements are much the same as those of our remote ancestors. Sunlight, fresh air, pure water and physical exercise are absolutely essential to the maintenance of health.

If the conditions under which men and women labor do not make this possible, they are detrimental to the individual and to society at large, for upon the health of its people depends the ultimate future of any nation. No machinery can entirely replace the sinews of labor.

To be healthy and happy, one must love his work.

being the largest of all the European countries.

The state of California has ample quarters for seven European countries, but its population is only a little over 2,000,000, whereas little Roumania alone harbors just about 7,000,000 inhabitants.

Austria-Hungary fits rather tightly across the shoulders in Texas, which has a scattered population of nearly 4,000,000, whereas Austria-Hungary has more than 51,000,000 of people accommodated within its boundaries.

More striking, however, is corpulent Idaho with its 325,000 inhabitants living in an area sufficient to quarter 16,000,000 of Europeans living in four large countries. Then there are Montana and North Dakota with their 900,000 people enjoying enough room for Spain and Portugal's 25,000,000.

Wise and Otherwise.

Misery loves company—and she usually has plenty of it.

Too much of the noise in this world tries to pass itself off as music.

It's better to be wrong at the right time than right at the wrong time.

Any man who can catch a flea in the dark can hoe his own row in politics.

There is no hope for the man who acts the hypocrite even when he is alone.

A woman who is a has-been beauty is as fussy as a man who has lost his hair.

Many a man's love for his club is due to the fact that his wife never gives her tongue a rest.

Give a man his choice of making friends or money and he'll not hesitate more than a second.

Few men have will power enough to do the things they don't want to do and don't have to, but should do.

Books are desirable companions; when they bore you it is an easy matter to shut them up without giving offense.

A Few Smiles.

Convincing Hard-Luck Story.



"I thought you said you were going to have the \$100 you lent Jibway, or know the reason why?"

"I didn't get it, and I know the reason why."

"What is it?"

"Jibway took me to one side and showed me by the tailor's label inside his coat that he was wearing a suit made in 1912."

Point in His Favor.

"We'll have to promote this young man."

"He seems to be doing good work."

"Yes, and furthermore, when something turns up and he has to stay at the office half an hour later than usual, I notice he doesn't call up four or five people over the telephone and in a despairing voice tell them they will have to go on without him."

His Specialty.

"Haven't you any trade or profession?" inquired the kind lady, as she handed the husky hobo a hunk of home-grown pie and a sandwich.

"I ust be a understudy fer a professional boxer, ma'am," answered the h. h.

"Professional boxer!" echoed the k. l.

"Yes, ma'am," he replied. "He was a undertaker."

A Rare Spectacle.

"You say that campaign for sheriff of this county is being conducted on a high plane?"

"It couldn't be more genteel if the rival candidates were seeking the presidency of a young ladies' seminary."

Looking Ahead.

"Now, this is the kind of movie I like. It's educational."

"Why, it's all about a vampire."

"Just so. I may meet a vampire some of these days and then I'll know how to protect myself."



Speedy Effect.

"It's remarkable how liquor loosens Bibbles' tongue."

"Oh, a great many men are affected that way."

"But Bibbles begins to get loquacious before the cork is out."

More Goats Than Sheep.

"The pastor and his flock."

"Rather a pretty idea, eh?"

"Yes, but while our pastor call himself a shepherd, I fear he is in reality a goat-herd."

Uses of Paper.

The uses of paper are extending very rapidly. Bags made of spun paper are a growing Swedish product, and American manufacturers are beginning to produce them. Coffee bags are made of single strand, open weave, with a sheet of paper pulp inside. Onion bags are being offered. Several firms are engaged in making some very attractive furniture or water-proofed paper reads woven over wooden and rattan frames. The Swedes are making a three-stranded spun-paper rope for general use that is well spoken of. Paper horse blankets sound queer, but they are being made. Fireproof fabrics sound still more odd, but they are making them nevertheless on a paper basis. The Japanese, who are the most expert of all in the utilization of paper, are making aviator's suits of oiled paper that are very light and resistant to cold.



Clark Griffith.

the ball would lose all its speed long before it reached the platter.

"I decided to throw that ball just as a desperate experiment, and I threw it. The globule sauntered along, way, low, below Tom's kneeline, and he stood scoffing at it. Then, just as the ball came parallel with him, it leaped and whirled over the plate, while the umpire yelled 'Strike three!'

"Old Tom Tucker laid down his bat and started toward me, with evidence of much excitement on his face, but I was already on my way, and was going fast. That night he came to the hotel looking for me and publicly announced that he intended to slay me on sight, but I wasn't in and he never got his hands upon me."