



"WE COULDN'T SELL THIS PLACE TO-DAY FOR HALF IT'S WORTH."

March Winds & April Showers

BY MRS. ANNIE A. PRESTON.

IT was dreary March day, cheerless enough without, but within Squire Burton's comfortable farm-house the fire cracked and roared in the shining stove, the copper tea-kettle hissed and sang, the tabby cat purred on her cushion in a snug corner and the louder the wind shrieked without, the more merrily piped up the canary from its gilt cage in the bay window. The good wife hummed snatches of hymns as she stitched away, inserting an invisible patch in the knee of the farmer's barn overalls, and as the visitor in a sunny corner by the plant-stand smiled up from her letter writing to take in the picture of cheery comfort, she thought "Cousin Sarah has a great deal to be thankful for that she has such a husband as Squire Burton."

The squire came in just then, and as he stepped about it was evident from his frequent groans that he was suffering deeply from an attack of the blues.

"Awful weather!" he grumbled; "it seems as if the wind would cut me in two if I go out to trim apple trees, and if I attempt to mend farming tools in the shop I shiver so I cannot stay there."

"Stay here then and visit for the rest of the day," said his wife, cheerfully. "There is nothing to drive you out. There are plenty of fine days coming, and it would be foolish after you have kept warm all winter to freeze to death in March!"

"Might as well freeze to death and have done with it," the "squire" grumbled on. "It's awful hard times! We're running behindhand year by year. We couldn't sell this place to-day for half its worth—"

"We don't want to sell it," put in his wife; "we want it for ourselves, we are satisfied with it, and so long as it is not in the market it does not matter to us what value is set upon it by others."

"I don't know as I am satisfied," growled the farmer, as he pulled off his heavy boots, leaving both boots and jack for his wife to put in place, and taking his slippers from their fanciful pocket behind the stove. "I am not one of the kind to settle down in a rut and stay there. There is nothing going on around here. No market unless you drive two or three miles, and we growing old and no children. What's going to become of us I don't know. It looks dark ahead?"

"Look beyond the darkness to the light of heaven," encouraged the good wife.

"That won't keep us from the poor-house!" groaned the farmer, "and, oh dear! there's a rap at the door. No one to pay a bill, you may be sure, although there are plenty of them coming due."

"Awful weather! haven't been so cold this winter!" was the salutation of the visitor. "Takes off your summer wood, I guess, to have such weather as this in March, and what is worse, it looks to me as if we were going to have a backward, cold spring."

"I know it," groaned the squire. "I have been thinking the same thing myself."

"Well, then, you know as well as I do, there won't be so much hay as there'd oughter be on that Brown place, and I come on ter say that I've concluded not to hire it after all."

"Very well," sighed the squire. "What the times are

coming to I don't know. I was just telling my wife that we are land-poor and buildings-poor."

"Wall, that's so," said the visitor; "all these roofs'll need shinglin' some day, and there will have ter be paint-ain' done, and 't'll cost like blazes. It's an awful bleak place, too, nobody'll want ter buy it. Lots er room, ter be sure, but it takes a pile er wood ter heat it, an two folks 've no need to use so much room. Better live up in the kitchen, I say, through the cold weather," and drawing on his yarn mittens he withdrew.

"Just as I told you!" said the squire, throwing down his paper, and curling up on the lounge. "We are all going to the dogs! That Brown place will be tenantless through the year."

"It never was," put in his wife.

"And we shall burn the summer's wood all up, in spring, at this rate, and go to drawing wood from the lot on wheels, something that never yet was done in our family."

"We haven't begun to use up the winter's supply yet, you know very well," the wife hurried to say.

"And yesterday I was disappointed about selling that wood lot—" the sigh now was a most dismal groan.

"You must learn to bear disappointment with a smile," laughed the little woman. "It is all for the best. This man would be a bad tenant, and the man who talked of buying the wood lot is poor pay, and would have made you no end of trouble. Cheer up now! The darkest hour comes just before the dawn."

"Sarah Jane Uxbridge Burton, I won't hear any more of your absurd speeches," and the squire flopped over upon the lounge, turning his back upon his wife's cheerful face, and the pervading brightness of the rooms, hoping to give himself undisturbed to gloomy reflections, when there was another rap at the door. The squire, as he stood upon his feet, groaned like the last blast of a northeast storm, and admitted a cheerful-faced man, who said vivaciously:

"Yes, yes; pretty rough outside, but I always like to have winter blow itself fairly out in March, and then our April showers will not be snow-squalls, and black frosts. Little you need care care about cold weather, for it is always spring-time in this house, and the sun seems always to shine here. I believe it is that copper tea-kettle, I mean to get one; or it may be because you have doors open all around, and have fires enough to keep warm. I don't take so much more fuel to do that as any one would suppose, and the air is so much better than it is to hive up, that is saving in doctor's bills in the long run. This is the pleasantest situation and house in town. A good many would jump at the chance of getting it for the price you paid and all in good repair. I came to see if I could

rent your Brown place—wife wants to get a little nearer town. I'm sorry to hear that you have sold your wood lot, for I want it myself."

By that time the squire's blues had all blown over, and as he settled himself in his easy-chair for a talk, his wife said cordially to the visitor:

"I am glad you happened in; the squire was finding me rather dispiriting company. Take off your coat; dinner will be ready presently."

"Yes, yes," put in the squire; "Throw off your coat. This rough weather is hard on the women folk; no wonder they get the blues. They can't get out, you know, but March isn't of much consequence anyway only to visit in, and fix up business—nor April either, for that matter. I never let the weather affect me so long as I have comfortable quarters and wood a plenty. Times are looking up a little, ar'n't they?"

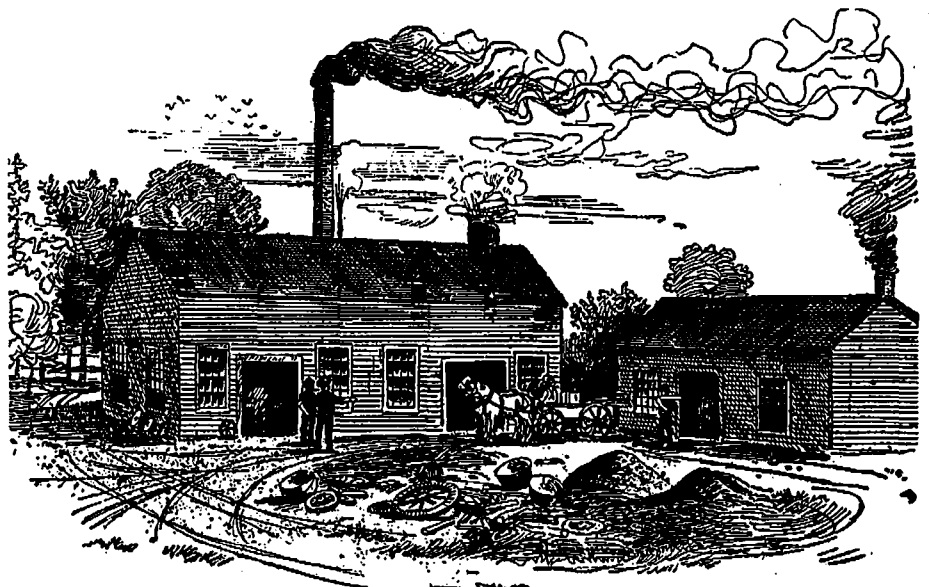
The cheerful wife laughed a little as she put the potatoes into the oven to bake, and said to her visitor, who had followed her, "Just like a man! up and down with the thermometer, as variable as March winds and as uncertain as April showers; but it is well enough to take up with a good offer of a husband when you have one, my dear, for they are amazingly handy to have about the premises."

As the visitor laughed merrily, she thought to herself, "Sarah was not the only lucky one in this alliance. I wonder what John would do without Sarah."

A Remarkable Development.

ON the two previous pages of this supplement we print an advertisement of the Massey Manufacturing Co., showing a splendid and very accurate view of their enormous works, which they claim are the largest under the British flag devoted exclusively to the manufacture of Harvesting Machinery. The handsome engraving is a Canadian production, and is, without doubt, the largest and finest piece of work of that character ever brought out in Canada. Below is a reproduction of a sketch of the original shops at Newcastle (Bond Head), Ont., in which the business started over 42 years ago. A most remarkable growth! We have no space to go into a description of this mammoth bee-hive, with 271,000 square feet of floor space—very nearly 6½ acres—where over 600 men are employed—though such a description would doubtless be very interesting to all—for our columns are more than full of items of greater interest and importance to our rural readers.

It will not be amiss, however, to mention that the Massey Co. are cutting up an average of 300,000 feet of lumber every month. This season they will use about 800 tons of malleable iron, 600 to 700 tons of steel, 40 to 50 tons of dry white lead and other raw materials in like enormous proportions. The company claim to be making thirteen to fifteen thousand machines for 1889—more than double the output of any similar concern in Canada.



The Original Works in which the business started at Newcastle (Bond Head), Ont., 1847.