

JANUARY 22, 1914

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE.

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mular in all such little details of good breeding; so she parried the compliment deftly, and straightway fell to pondering as to what circumstance the remark might refer. Glancing toward the open window, she caught a reflection of herself where the glass, backed by the dark green curtain, made a mirror. She had forgotten to rearrange her hair, and her burnished silver-shot locks remained rolled back lightly from her white forehead without the ugly, concealing front! I rejoiced inwardly, for the spontaneous tribute to the improvement by those two dear, stupid, discriminating men, has settled the fronts in a way in which no arguments of mine could, for to-night she came to dinner not only with her own, emancipated hair, but wearing a bit of red geranium stuck fetchingly in the puff.

August 1. Sylvia has returned, and Miss Lavinia has gone to her. Lucy and the portly cook having arrived from New York last night, in company with Josephus, confined in a large hamper borrowed from the fishmonger, in the top of which a ventilator has been introduced. Josephus was naturally indignant when first let out, and switched his tail in wrath, declining to recognize his mistress, and starting to explore the house like an evil spirit. This morning I found him calmly perched on our woodshed roof, gazing wickedly at the boys' banty chickens in the coop below. I predict that he gets into trouble, unless his silver collar, like a badge of aristocracy, protects him. But what can you expect of a misguided Whirlpool cat, whose only conception of a bird is a dusty street sparrow, when he meets face to face the delicious and whetting elusiveness of a banty chick or a young robin.

Poor Sylvia is nervously tired out, and the month's rest will be a real boon. Her plans are quite settled, and there is nothing for her to do but rest until the time comes to carry them out. She and Horace are to be married the last week in August, so that they will have time for a Canadian trip before College begins and they return to settle down in a scrap of a house in Northbridge.

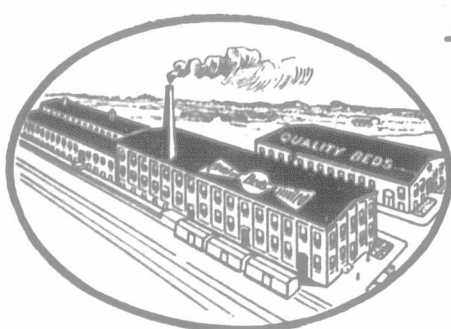
August seems to be considered an unusual month for a wedding; but it suits the circumstances, and as Sylvia has decided to be married quite privately here at Oaklands, for her own sake, as well as for Mrs. Bradford's convenience, she wisely wishes to have it over before the possible return of the Whirlpoolers.

Horace had hoped that his mother would join them in Northbridge, but she said "No," very firmly, adding, with a quaint, twinkling smile, "Horace, nobody ever loved each other closer than your father and I, but there were times in the beginning when ever so well meaning a third finger in our pie would have spoiled the baking. Best leave old mother on the farm until by and by, when she can't tell a fresh egg from a bad one any longer."

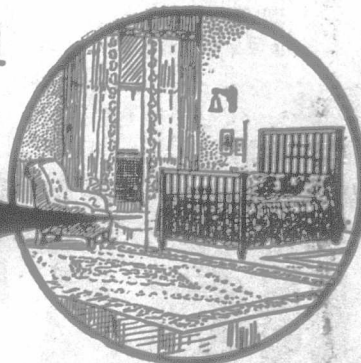
So Horace comes down twice a week to visit Sylvia, and Miss Lavinia often drives to Pine Ridge with her and leaves her for a day, so that Mrs. Bradford may share the pleasant woman's talk of linen for table and bed, and other details of a bridal outfit.

We all missed Miss Lavinia when she left, that is, all but the boys, and they hailed the change with joy, as giving them another house to roam in and out of. How much of the joy of childhood that we so envy comes from their freedom from prejudice, the ability they have for adapting themselves.

Martin was so distraught for a time that father absolutely ventured to tease him a little, whereupon he turned stoutly about and declared: "I have never denied the inspiration and value of congenial female society, and the mere fact that circumstances have shut me from it so much of late years makes me all the more appreciative of present privileges. Oh, Dick, old friend, isn't it some credit to a man who has lived backward almost from his birth, if, after he's sixty, he realizes it and tries to catch up with the present? It seems to me as if the best things had always been just within my grasp, only to slip away again, through unforeseen circumstances, and my ill luck reminds me of a story and picture in a comic paper that the boys were chuckling over last night. It was of a well-intentioned beetle who fattened a nice green cater-



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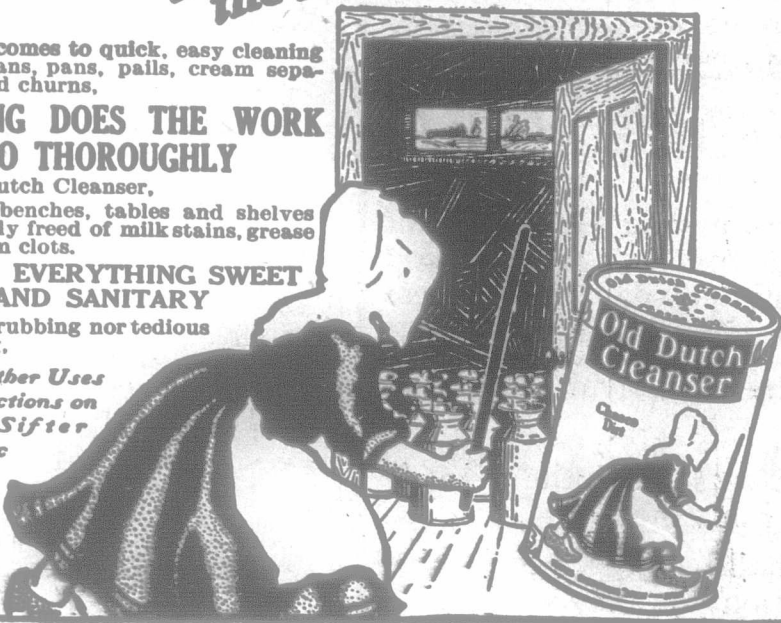
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pillar for its family's thanksgiving dinner, and the thing went and spun itself into a cocoon the night before!"

Martin Cortright at times verges on the pathetic, but always cures himself by his appreciation of his own limitations before he reaches the bore stage. He too is taking a short vacation from work, or rather I should say that he has developed industry in a new direction and become absorbed in entomology, to the extent of waging war on the tent caterpillars that are disfiguring both the orchards and the wild cherry trees on the highways with their untidy filmy nests, leaving the foliage prematurely brown and sere, from their ravages. Yesterday, in driving home from Pine Ridge with Sylvia, we noticed that even the wood edges had the appearance of being scorched by fire, and many of the old orchards where we go in May for apple blossoms are wrecks meshed in the treacherous slimy webs.

Martin's methods are regular and very simple, but he goes about his task each day as if the matter was a marvel of military strategy. First he puts a book ostentatiously in one pocket and a flask of alcohol in the other. Next he takes his torch, consisting of a piece of sponge wired to an old rake handle, which he keeps on the back stoop, and makes sure that it is tight and secure, finally searching me out to say that in case he meets Miss Lavinia, have I any message for her.

Why he does not keep his outfit up at Martha's I do not know; perhaps he is cause of Timothy's keen tongue.

Miss Lavinia, after her morning house-keeping is over, takes her work bag to the narrow cottage porch and apparently gives herself up to the task of making pin-cushions for Sylvia or embroidering initials on napery. Suddenly she will get up, say that her feet are falling asleep and that she needs a walk to restore her circulation. Will Sylvia go with her? Sylvia, after pretending to consider, thinks not, making some excuse of its being too warm or that she expects Horace that day. Presently two prim people walking in opposite directions meet and, taking the same path, may be seen any morning along the less frequented roads and orchard paths, sometimes repairing the torch that has a constant tendency to lose its head, sometimes watching the destruction by fire of an unusually wicked worm city, and frequently with their heads stuck into some suspicious bush, where they appear to be watching invisible things with breathless interest.

Father and I chanced upon them when thus employed the other morning. Mar-