Romance of a Book Farmer

Continued from Page 13

people being only middle-class folks we shan't be in need of much in the way of clothes. I can't lug a lot of dresses about the world. Do you suppose I shall need any evening dresses?"

"No-o," advised my wife, "I should think not. Just take what street and travelling dresses you will need, and if you are invited out that broadcloth suit with the silk waist that you wore to the meeting of the International Congress of Farm Women will be plenty good enough."

Well, you ought to read the letter Alice wrote her aunt after she got to England. I think I'll give you some of it.

The Embarrassment of Mrs. Jeff

"If I ever wanted to cuff anybody's ears," she wrote, "I want to do it to Jeff's, as he sits before me now—but they are so red with embarrassment at the pickle he put me in that I shall have to forgive him. Why he has deceived me all these years I have no idea; and why he let me come, so unprepared, to be humiliated will always be a mystery. He says that he couldn't explain everything, and he really didn't see the perfectly impossible situation into which he was steering me.

"I won't tell you about London or Liverpool, because I have so much else to tell. We went southwest or southeast from London, two or three hours by train, and got off at the prettiest little village you ever saw—reminds me of the picture of Stratford-on-Avon, only different—and were met at the station by a man with a carriage—a big roomy carriage—but he seemed a little dismayed at the number of children. He seemed glad to see Jeff, and I could see that they were acquainted, because he called Jeff 'Mr. Geoffrey' and Jeff called him 'Dawson'; and told him that Master Bailey would ride in the cart with the luggage, and we'd find room for the rest in the carriage. I thought it funny that none of the family came and that they had sent a hack for us; but I have learned since not to be surprised. We drove along the prettiest roads I ever saw and between the greenest fields, and finally turned in, at a huge gate, into a park, with a great house like a picture in it.

"'This is Oakhurst Park, my dear,' said Jeff.

"'A very pretty park, too,' said I. 'Do your folks live near it?'

"'Yes,' said Jeff. 'In point of fact, they live—' And before he got thru humming and hawing we had driven up to the door, a liveried servant had opened it, little Bailey had arrived in the cart and joined us, and we were ushered into that fine house, with as much ceremony as if it had been the governor's reception!

"Well, Aunt Lucy, that fine house is Jeff's old home; and I can understand why he was so miserable many years ago; and I can see that he is easily comforted when he tells me that I am the only thing that made it possible for him to get used to living as we used to live when we were younger. And his people are perfectly lovely! I find that middle class here takes in some pretty way-up people—it is the class just below the aristocracy in social standing. I have been the most foolish and ignorant woman in the world! But I must tell you about my clothes. When we arrived and had been welcomed with all due warmth by the family—and that's not any too warm—we were assigned our rooms—such beautiful old rooms—and told by the maid—they keep a lot of servants—I have counted ten and am finding new ones all the time—the time of the dinner hour. I went down in that suit that you and I agreed would be plenty good enough—and found a lot of guests, and every man, including Jeff, in evening dress, and every woman, of course! I felt like death. I will say this for them: they never seemed to notice it."

A Hopeless American

"After dinner Jeff's mother came up to see me, and after we had talked a while I said: 'Mrs. Sharpe'—I wouldn't for the world have called her anything else yet—'Mrs. Sharpe, I have an explanation and a request to make of you.'

"'Yes, my dear,' said she, and I began to feel friendly toward her.

"'My husband,' said I, 'has never told me anything about his family. I inferred, however, that they were not—not the sort of people who live in this style.'

"'Quite so!' she said. 'Jeff is like that. No swank, you know.'

"'Well,' said I, 'I wish he had had a little more swank. If he had not treated me in this shabby way I'd have brought clothes with me. I shall never forgive him!'

"'Oh, yes, you will, my dear,' said she. 'I hope you'll never have anything worse to forgive. All the Sharpes are like that. Explanations and descriptions bore them, and they let everyone play off his own bat—and we women who are married to them are obliged to forgive their impassivity.'

"She said this, patting me on the arm—and I burst into tears. I will say this for her, that she helped me very tactfully; and then said: 'My dear, you're explanation is entirely adequate. I think you said you had a request, also?'

"'It is this,' said I: 'Please let me keep my room until you can take me to a shop and help me select some clothes.'

"'My dear,' said she, 'nothing can give an elderly woman more pleasure than to help buy clothes for a young and beautiful one of whom she feels sure she is going to be very fond!'

"And then I said, 'Thank you, mother!'

"'We'll run up to London in the morning,' said she."

Alice is bent on moving to England, where Jeff's interests are about as large as here, even tho he is a younger son; but Jeff has become interested in our neighborhood affairs and refuses to go. The fact is, he is hopelessly Americanized. He says that the governess system in vogue in England is something deadly.

"And then, Uncle Abner," said he—it was the first time he ever called me anything but Mr. Dunham—"I feel that the rural life of England is more beautiful than sound; and it is a decaying thing. Ours is just beginning to find itself—in most places it is not even doing that. I can't forego the privilege, you know, of having a hand in molding it while it is beginning, so to speak. Over there life takes note of what is past. Here we can face what is to come and can build up a country life in which science, art, music and democracy will all be fused into the best the world has seen. I'm going to stay in it and keep my sons and daughters in and for it!"

And then he blushed and said: "Let's have a look at the steers!"

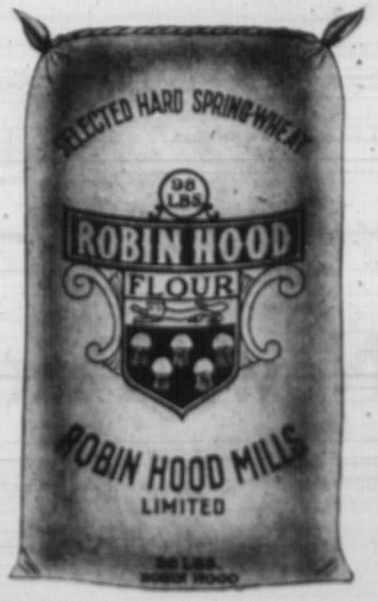
DANCING IN SCHOOLS

At a recent meeting of the Trustees of the Hawkshaw School District, complaints were made of the way in which dancing parties were conducted during last winter. These complaints were, in substance, that injury was done to property and that the moral affect of these parties had been bad inasmuch as the rule made by the Trustees against the use of alcoholic beverages had been broken and some of the dancers had been guilty of improper conduct.

The Board decided that in future any person applying for the use of the Schoolhouse for dancing purposes should be required to give an undertaking that admission should be only by personal invitation, and that applicants should be given to understand that the object the Board had in view was to prevent the assembling of miscellaneous crowds. The Board decided that unless this rule is observed in its spirit as well as in its letter, dancing parties in the Hawkshaw Schoolhouse should be entirely discontinued.—Watrous (Sask.) Post.

CO-OPERATIVE SHIPPING BOOKLET

The Guide has just received from the Alberta Farmers' Co-operative Elevator Company a very complete booklet on the why and wherefore of co-operative shipping of livestock. The book is filled with shipping hints, figures giving the classification and shrink on hogs, the method of forming a shipping association, the amount of stock handled by the company and some of the top prices. It ought to be in the hands of all those with livestock to market.



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