

## OUR FARM HOMES



No man is happy who does not think himself so.  
—Marcus Antoninus.

### Victory on Windmill Row

By MABEL S. MERRILL  
(Farm and Pirende)

THE two sisters stood still to look across the three-acre field of corn which stretched from the river on one side to the woods on the other.

"It's the best piece in town," announced Marion proudly. "And just think, Hugh has done all the work on it ever since it was put into the ground."

"Here he comes now," said Estelle, the elder girl, gazing critically at a long-legged boy of seventeen who was hurrying toward them across the field. "He looks as worried as if he had taken a contract to sail the ship of state."

Estelle's tone was ironical, but Marion ran to meet her brother.

"I can't hire a man to pick corn for love nor money," explained Hugh in answer to her question. "The corn shop starts in the morning, and all of the men that haven't got corn of their own to pick are going to work for the packers. It's just possible I can get Captain Wheeler for a day, but he wasn't sure he'd come."

The three acres of corn had been planted to sell to the canning factory—the "corn shop" as Hugh termed it—and the crop was now just right to be gathered and delivered. If allowed to stand even for a few days longer it would be too hard and dry for canning.

"Then we must go right to work and pick what we can ourselves," declared Marion. "Every ear we pick is so much saved. We can load it into the carts as we work, and cover it up for the night with big pieces of canvas in case it should turn cold or wet. I'll go this minute and get Clifford to help harness the horses and bring up the baskets and everything we want."

Estelle opened her mouth to speak, but Marion was already running lightly down the long field toward the house.

The elder girl turned sharply upon her brother:

"It can't be you expect Marion to help with it?"

"I did the best I should to find a man," Hugh returned shortly. "I never asked Marion to help, but you can't keep her out of the field, when she sees anything going to waste for want of a hand."

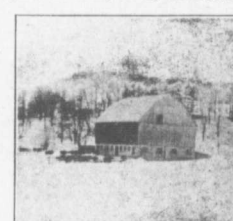
"Of course," snapped Estelle, "with Father sick and nobody to manage properly everything is in a mess."

"The saving of the corn crop means the saving of two or three hundred dollars to Dad," Hugh explained savagely, "and Marion knows how much he needs it."

Estelle turned her back impatiently and looked with a frown at the procession coming up from the barn. Marion was driving the pair of big farm horses harnessed to the largest cart. Behind her came Clifford, their fourteen-year-old brother, standing

jauntily upright in a smaller cart and urging old Maggie, the slow-stepping mare, by flourishing his flapping straw hat above her lean back. The elder sister bit her lip as she looked on, then she caught up an empty basket and fell to work.

"I suppose I must make up my mind to stay here and drudge with the rest of them," she thought drearily. "It does seem as if Father might have spared the money for his senior year



A Well Sheltered Homestead in Halton Co., Ont.

Mr. George Coulton will admit that there are disadvantages in having the greater part of the farm on higher ground than the buildings. But what a splendid shelter is the high wooded bank to the northwest of the house!

—Photo by an editor of Farm and Dairy.

when I've worked all summer at private teaching to help out."

They worked until darkness crept upon them and rain began to fall. Heavily and steadily it fell all night, and when the corn pickers awoke in the morning they were not surprised to find that the river had overflowed its banks.

"I don't see how you girls can go corn-picking any more," observed Mrs. Deland, the mother of the family. "Clifford says the water is rising every minute and the boat has gone off."

Hugh's face grew gloomy. The help of the girls would be badly needed to-day, though he hadn't counted much on Estelle after her grudging assistance of last night.

But Estelle had been in her Father's sick-room and something in the sight of the worn and aging face had changed the color of her thoughts.

"We can ride up to the corn piece in the carts," she said promptly. "The water isn't too deep yet. And we'll take a roll of bedding and the oil stove, and a great basket of things to eat. The carts are sure to be high and dry to sleep in if we have to camp in the field, and not a thing can happen to us up there."

"Captain Wheeler sent word early this morning, that he would come and help all day," Hugh said as they hurried out and clambered into the wagons. "That will make three of you to pick. Cliff and I can haul the loads by the pasture road as fast as you can fill the carts."

They worked steadily all day, the carts being filled, and then emptied at the mill again and again. The day's work was giving Estelle a new understanding of what the "home team" as Hugh called it, had had to face during the three years she had been away at college. She felt increasing respect for the pluck and patience that had gone into the work of the farm.

"It's Father's sixtieth birthday," she thought once, stopping to straighten her tired back. "Poor Father, I never realized before what it meant—all this work that keeps coming and coming and piling itself up the year round. He's got food and clothes and comfort for us out of these old fields. He got my three years at college out of them—by work like this. It begins to seem a miracle to me that he could, and yet here I am sulking all the time because I can't go back and finish. The last payment on the mortgage comes due this week, and I suppose he hasn't any money."

Estelle was the first to finish her luncheon at noon, and then she slipped away and ran down to the brink of the rippling sheet of water that divided her from home. It was much deeper than in the morning, and the surface of it was red and yellow with apples and pumpkins from low-lying harvest fields above. But the girl was so intent on her mission that the significance of these changes escaped her.

She fluttered her handkerchief till the white signal brought her mother

denly back upon them. She rose to her feet and peered anxiously down into the field where the black waves were catching the fire of the stars.

"Oh, here they come! I'm so glad!" she cried at last as the heads of Hugh's horses came out of the darkness at the other side of the stream. Clifford and Marion were in the smaller cart which drove close behind into the water.

Suddenly Estelle sprang to her feet. "Hurry, hurry!" she called in sharp tones of alarm. "Something's happened down below. The water's just rushing back from the field."

The thing the Captain had predicted had come to pass. The flood, pent up below, was backing up the course of the small stream across the pasture road. The water was up to the bodies of the carts before dry ground could be reached. Hugh's horses struggled safely to the ridge where Estelle was, but old Maggie, floundering after them, was off her feet. Hugh left his own team and, dashing into the water, got up to his seat, and helped her up before he saw that the cart body with Clifford and Marion clinging to it was swirling away on the flood that seemed to be running in all directions.

"They'll be drowned or smashed if they get out into the field," he muttered, staring into the dark.

Come quick! saw Clifford bob over in the choker cherry bushes. Wake up, Hugh, and do something," cried Estelle sharply, for the suddenness of the emergency seemed to have left the boy dazed.

It was Estelle who made sure that the old boat—a bit of the flood's debris—would hold them, who found the oars and got Hugh into his seat, and it was at her word that they dashed across what had been the brook, and slid out upon the black wreck-strewn water beside the river whose bank was blotted out.

A small building of some kind was careening along in midstream; boxes, barrels, heavy logs, and sticks of hewn timber made the flooded field a perilous place for the old boat. But Hugh had recovered himself now and rowed steadily, while Estelle, with a stout pole she had found, pushed away threatening obstacles. They soon found the castaways clinging to the cane boat which had jammed itself against a tree. They were unhurt, and presently all four were in the boat fighting their way toward the nearest land, which happened to be the foot of the cornfield. A little later they were laughing at their mishap as they sat drinking hot coffee around a comfortable bonfire at the edge of the woods. Only Hugh's sister, who had been at college didn't spoil a girl, after all!

The makeshift dam between the islands broke that night, the water fell rapidly, and by noon of the next day they were able to walk home to dinner. Hugh's recent adventures to the anxious mother and father. They walked back again in the afternoon, however, for the corn job must be finished.

Estelle was very tired and depressed, and the feeling kept growing upon her that it was her duty to stay here and share the drudgery of the old farm.

"Estelle," Marion, basket in hand, broke in upon her solitary musing, "mark your row with something pink and fluffy, so you'll know where you stopped, and then let's go up and find Mother. She's at the top of the stream now, picking corn, and it's too hard work after all she's done at home."

They went crosswise through the rustling corn forest to investigate the engines at the top of the windmill row. Diving at the top of the windmill row. Ever since the water had gone out of her basket, for no more was visible. As Estelle caught sight of a

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