

The... Prairie Mother By Arthur Stringer

(CONTINUED) "It seemed to bring us so gloriously close together. It seemed so homy and happy-go-lucky and soul-satisfying in its completeness, and we weren't forever fretting about the balances and taxes and overdrafts. I was just a rancher's wife then—and I can't help feeling that all along there was something in that simple life we didn't value enough. We were just rubes and hicks and clodhoppers and hay-tossers in those days, and we weren't staying awake nights worrying about land-speculations and water-fronts and trying to make ourselves millionaires when we might have been making ourselves more at peace with our own souls. And now that our cardboard of high finance has gone to smash, I realize more than ever that I've got to be at peace with my own soul and on speaking terms with my own husband. And if this strikes you as an exceptionally long-winded sermon, my beloved, it's merely to make plain to you that I haven't surrendered to any sudden wave of emotionalism when I talk about migrating over to that Harris Ranch. It's nothing more than good old hard-headed, practical self-preservation, for I wouldn't care to live without you, Dinky-Dunk, any more than I imagine you'd care to live without your own self-respect.

months. I'd worried, in secret, about that fog. I'd tried to tell myself that it was the coming of the children that had made the difference, since a big strong man, naturally, had to take second place to those helpless little mites. But my Dinky-Dunk had a place in my heart which no snooty aristocrat could fill and no infant could usurp. He was my man, my mate, my partner in this tangled adventure called life, and so long as I had him they could take the house with the laundry-chute and the last acre of land.

"My dear, my dear," I tried to tell him. "I was never hungry for money. The one thing I've always been hungry for is love. What'd be the good of having a millionaire husband if he looked like a man in a hair-shirt on every occasion when you asked for a moment of his time? And what's the good of life if you can't crowd a little affection into it? I was just thinking we'd all terribly like children in a Maypole dance. We're so impatient to get our colored hands wound round about a wooden stick, a wooden stick that can never be ours, that we make a mad race of what really ought to be a careless and leisuredly joy. We don't remember to enjoy the dancing, and we seem to get so mixed up in our ends. So, my dear, say I am, perhaps you remember that sentence from Epictetus you once wrote out on a slip of paper and pinned to my bedroom door: 'Better it is that great souls should live in small habitations than that abject slaves should burrow in great houses!'

Dinky-Dunk, as I sat brushing back his top-knot, regarded me with a sad and slightly acidulated smile. "You need all that philosophy and a good deal more, before you'd lived for a month in a place like the Harris shack," he warned me. "Not if I knew you loved me, O Kalkobad," I very promptly informed him. "I wouldn't care to live without you, Dinky-Dunk, any more than I imagine you'd care to live without your own self-respect."

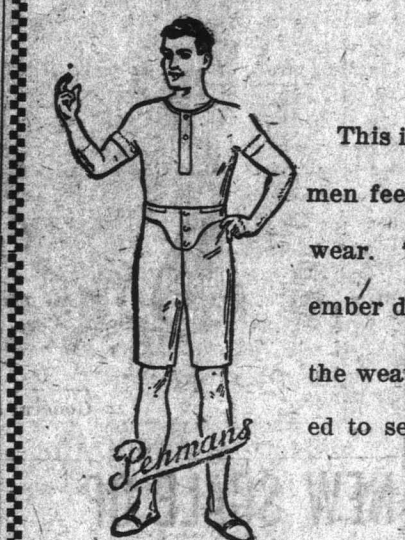
"I sat back, after what I suppose was the longest speech I ever made in my life, and studied my lord and master's face. It was not an easy map to decipher, for man, after all, is a pretty complex animal and even in his more elemental moments is played upon by pretty complex forces. And if there was humility on that lean and rock-ribbed countenance of my soul-mate there was also antagonism, and mixed up with the antagonism was a sprinkling of startled wonder and tangled up with the wonder was a slightly perplexed brand of contrition, and interwoven with that again was a suggestion of allegiance revived, as though he had forgotten that he possessed a wife who had a heart and mind of her own, who was even worth sticking to when the rest of the world was threatening to give him the cold shoulder. He felt awkwardly down in his coat pocket for his pipe, which is always a helpful sign.

"It's big and fine of you, Chadde, to put it that way," he said, rather awkwardly, and with just a touch of color coming to his rather gray-looking cheeks. "But can't you see that now it's the children we've got to think of?"

"I have thought of them," I quietly announced. "As though any mother, on prairie or in metropolis, didn't think of them first and last and in-between-whiles? And that's what simplifies the situation. I was there to have a fair chance. I'd rather they—"

"It's not quite that criminal," cut in Dinky-Dunk, with almost an angry flush creeping up toward his forehead. "I'm only taking your own word for that." I reminded him, deliberately, of the compassion that was trying to dissolve it. "And I'm only taking what is, after all, the easiest course out of the situation."

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WEDDINGS MILLS—FITZGERALD BELGIUM AND NORTH FRANCE STRUCK BY VIOLENT STORM PARIS, Nov. 8.—A violent storm is raging over Belgium and the North France, and considerable damage has been reported. The docks at Calais were submerged by the high seas and there were several fatalities. DRAPER'S NEW JOB OTTAWA, Nov. 8.—P. M. Draper, secretary of the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress has been appointed Director of the Government Printing Bureau here, in which he began as a compositor twenty-eight years ago. The initial salary is \$4,500 yearly.

BEAT U IN JAIL TAKE Prisoners at G ed Trip to Sen THREE PL Governor ove key Beate Heavy GUELPH, forts to trace of John Bed man, who suc his escape fro after he and awaiting tra Kingston Pen en up the ja have so far h GUELPH, No tion is on today as a result of sing happenings After "beating Nab and Turnk the Wellington ly after five o noon, three pri Joseph Hobson made a sensat the local instit Hobson were minutes after stable Brash o force, assisted mediately the a the convicts had custody. Beda man, successful The trio wh were prisoners Reformatory broke away lockup, and freedom, were back to Guelph rained before on Friday, and to breaking cu to a term of t Kingston Pen their removal were being de jail. Beataw well planed just as the tw prisoners' o'clock to give Although all t plying individua permitted dur take a little ex ted enclosure and referred to as a "corridor." Nab unlocked leading to the made a leap fo the Everson, v bed Jailer McN cials put up a immediately th had to battle and McArdle w shouted at Be as the tw tussled with drew out a he had wrapped i wielding it w both Jailer Mc on over the After receiv clous doors, M over 70 years o floor, while Ev the fight sign overpowered at the corridor it tion, the three cape. Woman Unable to f the building, t collar and fin dashed upstair Everson, wife of ing the Guelph McArdle, as he on the run, gr ceiver from h wire completely which the thr way upstairs, t private dwellin stairway, maki the front door dence. Luckily, the Everson over h heard by Cons on duty at th a bicycle, he w an instant aft made their esc men through t bee street, th from a number seen the prison that they had were making t wick street. Two A minute lat