

Our Farm Homes

NO HUMAN being can come into this world without increasing or diminishing the sum total of human happiness, not only of the present, but of every subsequent age of humanity.

The Trial of Rodney

(Concluded from last issue.)

In the dark closet, quite alone with the Sins, time dragged to Rodney. He began to wonder that She did not come. He had gone to a forbidden place and stayed a long time; that last sin, he realized, had been a long one, but not as long as this. What if She never came and he stayed here always? What if his hair should become as white as snow?

The closet seemed to grow darker, his cramped legs more cramped. He tried counting, and counted into hundreds. He tried saying all the multiplication tables he knew and some that he did not. He spelled all his scant repertory of words and recited aloud all his pieces. If he had been an imaginative boy, he might have found some measure of consolation in making believe, but to Rodney only stern realities occurred. The Sins seemed to shrivel with age and wither away, and a quaint fancy seized him that he missed them. Even Sins were company.

After a great while came other, sterner fancies. The loud-voiced clock on the other side of the door began to tick off days, instead of hours and minutes. When it struck, it struck a year, and he thought it taunted him meanly: "You never'll come out! First thing you know you'll die!"

It began to feel like that. A sudden fury took possession of Rodney and he screamed and beat on the door and kicked it with his numb little feet. The own little son of Rachel Seymour could not have done it better. But nothing happened on the other side of the door, except that the clock taunted a little more loudly. Rodney sank down again on the floor.

The drowsiness that by and by crept over him he understood. It was—that. He stretched his little body and folded his hands decently. When they found him—when She came—he would look better stretched out with hands folded, he thought. A sad exultation drifted mistily through his mind when he thought of that moment and he wished he was going to come with Her to see how She looked. That was—just before he—died.

In the new silence the clock outside seemed to be saying tender things in a whisper.

Rachel Seymour had fallen in with another friend at one of the "openings." Together they went the rounds of the decorated room and came to a halt before a specially choice little creation on one of the frames. In the middle of a gentle rhapsody the acquaintance caught sight of a new expression on Rachel Seymour's face. It was an odd awakened expression that changed swiftly to utmost dismay.

"My dear! Are you ill?" "I'm wicked!" Rachel Seymour uttered with the emphasis of conviction. She caught the other woman's arm. "I must go home at once. I—I had forgotten something. If I can't get a car I think I shall run! Good-by—good-by." She was off without further loss of time. On



City boys and their first hay making on an Ontario farm. No fun can equal their country pastimes, after a Summer spent in the freedom of the fields and woods.

the car she sat reviewing the awful thing she had done. It grew steadily more awful. Had a woman ever before done such a thing? "And he isn't mine!" she moaned inwardly. She was convinced that it was worse because he was not hers. To shut her own little son in a dark closet and then forget to let him out would be bad enough, but this was worse. He might think—poor child, poor child, what might he not and had he not a right to think? Shut in there, in that horrible dark—but Rod-

ney would not be afraid, she remembered proudly. The darkness had no terror for his stout little mind. He would only hate her—hate her. Her heart went on ahead to open the door and take him out in its arms. In her remorse and pity she flailed herself unremittently—had no mercy. Those sitting near her wondered at her and glanced at each other with looks of suspicion.

She had not dared to look at her watch, but she saw with renewed dismay that the car was full of business men going home to supper. It had been very early in the afternoon when she put Rodney into the closet. Dismounting from the car at the street nearest her own, she sped swiftly away towards home, her troubled thoughts seeming to pant and gasp with her breath.

In sight of the house she began to run. An awful fear gripped her. The closet was not very large, and if the door fitted tightly—She flew up the steps, through the hall, up the stairs. Her heart pounding, her throat throbbing, she wrenched open the closet door.

"Rodney! Rodney!" she cried, but her voice made no sound. She caught up the awful, straight little figure and ran with it in a panic of fear. It was Rodney himself who

"Don't feel bad," he murmured. But she went on feeling bad.

"I forgot, Rodney!" she moaned. Oh, Rodney, you might have died!

"I did," simply, "but it's all right. You were perfectly welcome—I mean it wasn't so very bad. I'd most as leaves. It was nice an—'an' quiet in there. You needn't have hurried."

"Hurried!" She caught him to her in an eager passion of tenderness and remorse. With those birth-pangs was ushered into life Rachel Seymour's love for the little boy that was not hers.

"Dear—dear—you are so good! How can you forgive me?" "Why, I forgot, too," he explained gravely, yet throbbing with vague, new joy. "It's very easy to you. You see, I know 'exactly how it feels—you needn't mind a mite, account o' me."

Her sin was a brother to his own—he could understand forgetting. He felt a new born kinship with the clear-eyed woman who brooded over him in this wondrous unexpected way—a comforting partnership in sinning.

He was glad She had forgotten too. This partnership was sweet.

"But I didn't forgive you. I punished you Rodney—"

"Oh, that's all right!" he laughed out from his pleasant retreat in her arms. "I'm just as leaves." He looked up suddenly, half-mischievously, half-slyly. "I'm glad," he added, "because it kind of joins us." For he did not know the name only the essence of partnership.

She nodded with quick understanding. It made them co-sinners. Bending, she kissed his neck, his ears, his eyes—his rough hair and the hollow of his little white throat.

"But you have a right—Rodney, don't you want to put me in the closet? Now?—I'm ready."

"Oh, no—oh, no, indeed!" He was first a little startled, then the mischief again: "You don't need to be punished for such a little thing as me!"

The big clock appeared to be holding up its hands in wonderment at this thing that was going on. Then the two of them, if they had listened, might have heard the new thing it said:

"Mother and—son! Mother and—son! Mother and—son!"

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by Thomas H. McKee.)

Worth Three Times the Money

Pleased and satisfied customers are usually the best advertisement that a merchant desires for his goods. One pleased customer is worth more in the long run, if he makes his satisfaction known than almost any other form of advertising. The washing machines being advertised in our columns must be giving satisfaction to all who purchase them, if the following letter recently received is indicative of the sentiments of the writer: Mrs. Wm. McBeth of Norfolk Co. writes us as follows:

"The washing machine I purchased of the 1900 Washer Company is a first class article. I would not part with it for triple the price if I could not get another like it. It has given me the best satisfaction, does its work good and in less than half the time taken in the old way of washing, and very much easier. The wear and tear of the clothes is not in any way affected as much as by the old way. The machine is well and strongly built. Since I bought the machine, it has not cost me one cent repairs."

Be sure to live on the sunny side and even then do not expect the world to look bright, if you habitually wear grey-brown glasses.