

An incredulous voice said:

"You?"

"Sadie!" he stammered.

"Oh, don't make me spoil the sauce!" she cried, between laughter and something perilously near tears. "What do you want?"

"To help you! I've come to lend a hand. Command me, please!"

Up went the soup, to be followed, in due course, by fish, beautifully and deftly served, with its accompaniments of fresh, hot lobster and a sharp sauce, by entrees and roast, by game, sweet, savoury and ice. It was a busy hour for Sadie—for Penrose, too, with his many willing journeys backwards and forwards with heavily-laden trays. But at last it came to an end.

Amateur cook and willing helper faced one another, flushed with the heat of the kitchen fire and the success of their endeavours, while dessert was set on the table in the dining-room, and Mary withdrew to her pantry and the washing of silver.

They were alone in the cheerful kitchen, with the remains of the feast before them. They spoke together.

"I'm starving!"

Then they laughed—such happy laughter—as they sat down at a side table to the hot soup which Sadie, with forethought, had put by in a fireproof marmite in the oven.

"Starving! What good soup! We ought to drink the health of—what is the cook's name?"

"Anastasia."

"Here's to Anastasia, then. This reminds me of the illicit feasts of my childhood—the devouring of dainties when they came out from the dining-room. Did you ever sit on the stairs and seize a passing meringue?"

Sadie laughed.

"Often. And how good they tasted."

"Stolen sweets are always the best. I say, they won't want us upstairs, will they?"

"They must do without us. There are things to be done—washing up, you know, putting away china. Our work

isn't done yet. But first we must eat our dinner. It was too bad that you should have been deprived of—"

"Of what? The party in the dining-room? I'd much rather be here with you. I was to have taken you in to dinner, in any case; so it's all right, Sadie. What brings you here? We have leisure to talk now, and I must know all about it. I thought you were married."

His voice fell on the word.

"Married? What made you think that?" she asked lightly.

"A letter told me so. Ransome—you remember him?"—wrote and said that the pretty Miss Preston had married a fellow named Allanby. That was why I never wrote again."

"But it was my cousin Rosie—the pretty Miss Preston who married George Allanby," said Sadie.

"In my eyes the description applied only to you. I had to go away that time—five years ago now—to carry out some work my father entrusted to me in South Africa. It was while out there I heard of your supposed marriage."

"Yes, and since then? What have you been doing?" asked Sadie hastily, wishing the fire and other things would not make her cheeks burn to such a color, and feeling a tide of happiness rising about her as she sat there, with half-empty dishes before her, in the kitchen with Penrose.

"Many things. I've achieved a certain amount of fortune and some fame. I've made my home in Canada. It's a splendid country, Sadie—free, open, broad-minded—far from conventions and Mrs. Grundy—where a man is appreciated for what he is, not for what he makes. A country where a man may keep his individuality and self-respect—where he can live. And we do our own work. I assure you my bread is eatable, and I know exactly how to cook a joint."

"I am sure you do. And you are going back there?"

"Next month. But—there are some things I cannot do alone. One of the drawbacks to my home is its loneliness."

"You have no neighbors?"

"Neighbors?" Yes. But no one of my own. The long winter evenings when the snow falls and one is tucked up by a log fire with a good book—oh, there are worse times and places. But a man longs for some one to talk to—some one with whom to exchange ideas, thoughts, hopes, even fears. And there is only one person who can do all that for me. Sadie, it is you I want. I never cared for anyone else. I've dreamed of you when I thought I ought to tear your image out of my heart. You are free. I want you to come back with me to Canada to help me."

Sadie drew a long breath. She could hear the cheerful murmurous singing of Mary in the pantry, the running of water as the silver was washed. From the dining-room came an occasional burst of voices, of laughter. And there was Penrose, his arm about her, who wanted her.

"Sadie, say something."

Sadie turned her glowing face to him. "I should love to go to Canada," she breathed.

"Is that all, sweetheart. Just to go to Canada?"

"With you," she whispered.

"Sadie!"

She was in his arms. They never heard or saw the entrance of Mary, her mouth open to ask a question. She gave them one glance and fled back to her pantry.

* * *

Biddy Finch entered like a whirlwind, flushed with triumph, for the dinner had been excellent—delightfully served, no delay or ominous pauses between the courses; the plates just at the right heat, the sauce for the hot pudding a veritable treat. What on earth would they have done without Sadie? And now—

"Sadie!" Biddy looked first at one, then at the other. There was something almost electric in the air, some happiness radiating from them both that made itself absolutely felt as well as seen.

It was Penrose who spoke.

"Well, did we acquit ourselves well?" he asked.

"More than well; everything was perfect, but— but—"

Biddy broke off; seized Sadie's arm and shook it gently.

"Sadie, something has happened. What is it?"

"I will explain," said Penrose. "Sadie has promised to come out to Canada with me next month. That is all. We are old friends, you see. All this ought to have happened long ago only something went wrong. Now everything has come right, thanks to the lucky chance that brought me here to-night."

"You're going to take her away to Canada!" cried Biddy. "But what are we to do without her?"

Penrose laughed.

"Hate me if you will, Mrs. Finch," he said, "but, believe me, I want my wife even more than you can want Sadie."

"Oh, Sadie darling, I'm so glad, and so sorry, both together. But you are to come up with me at once—both of you. Washing up? Nonsense! That can wait. We want you more than the plates and dishes do. Oh, how little one knows what is going to happen!"

"One never can tell," said Penrose, with twinkling eyes. "But of one thing I feel quite certain, Mrs. Finch, and that is, I've got the right wife for Canada."

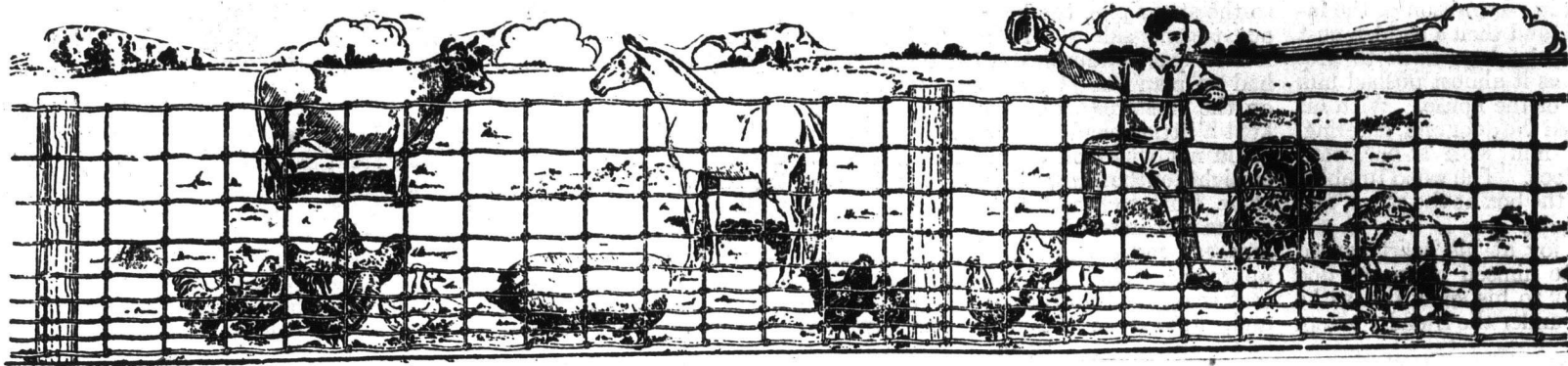
The Gospel of Labor

Hewing wood and drawing water, splitting stones and cleaving sod—
All the dusty ranks of labor in the regiment of God
March together toward His triumph, do the task His hands prepare:
Honest toil is holy service; faithful work is praise and prayer.

This is the gospel of labor—ring it, ye bells of the kirk—
The Lord of Love came down from above to live with the men who work.
This is the rose that He planted here in the thorn-cursed soil—
Heaven is blest with perfect rest, but the blessing of Earth is toil.
—Henry van Dyke.

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H125	Hog and Sheep Fence	8 wire, 32 ins. high, stays 12 ins. apart.	3,3,4,5,5,6	7 1/2 lbs.	23c
H126	Hog and Sheep Fence	8 wire, 32 ins. high, stays 6 ins. apart.	3,3,4,5,5,6	8 1/2 lbs.	28c
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