UNDED 1866

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## THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE.

A Friend in Need. By Oscar Urban Robinson.

"Well, Harold, that settles it between

you and Ray Williams!"

Robert King had just returned from an eight mile drive to Waterville, where he had been obliged to draw one hundred and fifty dollars from the Bank of Montreal; and he was, therefore, in a decidedly unpleasant mood.

"I can't see it that way, father," responded Harold, rising from his seat on the well-curbing where he had been waiting to put away the horse as soon as Mr. King should drive up.

"Can't see it that way, ch?" quickly retorted the big, burly man, as he sprang, panther-like, out of the runabout, and glowered upon his eighteenyear-old son. "Well, you put this horse into the stable, and then come into the house. I'll find out whether you can see it that way or not."

Harold had, on several previous occasions, observed his father in a fit of temper but he had never beheld him more furiously angry than he now was. However, it takes two to make a quarrel, and Harold, wisely enough, made no reply. Instead, he approached the beautiful, dappled Percheron, who had turned his massive head and was looking wonderingly at them both, and said, as he gently took hold of the rein at the bit:

"Come on, Prince, old fellow; it's you and I for the corn field."

But Robert King was not to be out-

"No, it's not for the corn field, either," he shouted hoarsely... "It's almost half-past eleven now. You come to the house."

And he strode along into the summer kitchen, where his wife, seated on a chair beside a crate of strawberries picked the day before, was busily employed in hulling the fruit.

"Back so soon?" she asked in the softest of tones.

(She had, of course, overheard the man's outburst toward Harold, and knew very well what she might expect from him; but she had learned by experience that gentleness was her best weapon at such times.)

His only immediate response was a low grunt, but he drew his bank book from his inside coat pocket, and after opening it to the page on which his withdrawal and balance were recorded, he finally muttered in an ominous voice:

"One hundred and fifty dollars poorer, and all on account of those beastly Williamses!"

How much have you left down there?" asked the little woman, scarcely taking time to raise her flushed face from her work.

"Only fifteen hundred dollars. That's six hundred I've taken out since Christmas. It will soon be all gone."

"Oh, but Robert, you know you're worth just as much or more, for you said that the four hundred and fifty you paid for that team was not within two hundred of what they are worth. And who knows? Perhaps this ditching will make your farm a lot more valuable to you than it has been."

"Valuable nothing!" he growled, "Why it will take me ten years to get that money back. But that ain't the point at all, Mary. When a man living next door to me, and pretending to be a neighbor, starts to dictating to me about drainage, and raises such a hullahaloo, and then takes it upon his shoulders to call in an engineer who puts me to a hundred and fifty dollars' expense and a lot of slavish work, he's a mighty mean man, and I'm not going to have another word or deal with him as long as I live. No sir! And what's more, you and Harold have got to mark them off your books. Don't you dare to speak to any of them from this day

Mrs. King now put aside her berries and looked up with blank astonishment into the red, angry face of the man she had loved enough to marry. In all the twenty years of their wedded life, though he had often exhibited an irascible temper toward others, he had, on the whole, been kind to her. In fact, he was one of these who, when in good humor, was the gentlest and most tender-hearted of men. Impulsive though he was, he had never before spoken to

her by way of command. Nevertheless the little woman's astonishment did not assume the attitude of fear.

"Listen, Robert." she said with un usual firmness. "I have always tound Winnie Williams a sincere friend, and I know she feels badly about this ditch business. And you know that while this has cost you one hundred and fifty dollars, it has cost Dave Williams just as much or more. You know, too, that every time we have a wet season, the water stands on those low fields of ours as well as on his; so that the ditch is going to benefit you fully as much as it will him. The whole trouble with you, Robert, is that Dave took the matter up before you had decided upon it; and just to be -"

"Contrary, I suppose," interjected her

husband spitefully.

Well, if you say so, yes, to be con-trary, you opposed him, though you than he was in the right,—and, Robert, right wrongs notody."

wrongs me !" snapped the man, stamping about the kitchen, and growing more and more florid at every "I tell you, Dave Williams and stamp. I are quits, and I won't have you and Harold balking me either. Do you hear?"

His wife, quite undisturbed, looked up and answered in tranquil tones;

"Yes, Robert. I hear; but I cannot promise you not to speak to Winnie, for we are friends. I don't know how I could get along without her. We have so much in common."

"In common, yes! Well, if you think more of Dave and Winnie Williams than you do of me, why you'll have to take our choice, that's all. But as for Harold, he's simply got to quit chumming with that young high-head of a Ray. Won't he crow now? Won't the old man crow about this ditch business ? Drat the ditch! And what do you think I heard this morning at Water-

"I don't know. Robert, what?" "Why Dave Williams has bought that

young pup an automobile !"

Mrs. King could not suppress a smile. "Well, my dear man," she said, let them have an automobile if they want one. They don't have to mortgage the farm to get it. If anyone can afford an auto. Dave can. And somehow, I am being converted to the belief that if a farmer can afford an auto and a telephone and a well-stocked library and such things, his boys wouldn't be so eager to hie away for the city. can't blame Dave at all, and I'm sure neither he nor Ray will crow about this ditching one bit. and you know it too. And as for Harold chumming with Ray, I certainly see no harm in it. They have grown up from childhood together, and they are so much alike in temperament. And you know. Ray's extra year at the Agricultural College at Guelph has been a wonderful help to Harold, for it see as if he's told our boy about everything he learned there."

Mr. King was just muttering something about it all having to be stopped now, when Harold came in.

If ever there was a conscientious fellow in the world, it was that same Harold. Tall, straight, broad-shouldered, and with a face, comely, though tanned as brown as a well-smoked ham, he now stood resolutely before his parents looking alternately into their countenances out of large, interesting blue eyes.

"Well, son," said his father with me little emphasis, as he turned abruptly upon him, "you have heard what I said about you and Ray Williams. It's to be all off. Do you understand?"

The young man, though he had always obeyed his father to the letter-when his conscience did not prick him too hard,was now a picture of momentary perplexity,-but only momentary. "Yes, father, I understand," he an-

swered frankly, "but it can't be all off between Ray and me-unless he insists upon it-and I know he won't. Why do you ask me to do this? I was just thinking as I was cultivating corn while you were gone, that had it not been for that ditch, we could not have had the ground in fit shape for planting-even by this time-and here the corn is up a good four inches. It's going to mean hundreds of dollars in our pockets in the next ten years. And, besides, see the time Ray put in over there helping meditch. I calculate we owe him about twenty dollars wages to square the-



7951 Cutaway Coat, 34 to 42 bust. 7888 Two-Piece Skirt, 22 to 32 waist.



DESIGN BY MAY MANTON. 7822 Girl's Coat with Deep Tucks, 8 to 14 years