



Right and God's recompense to you will be the power of doing more right.—Robertson

The Spirit of Progress

By AMBERMAN GROVER

"BE you a born jitt, Joshua Simkins?" Aunt Mary Simkins placed a hand on either hip and gazed at Uncle Josh over the steel-rimmed spectacles.

Uncle Josh averted her eye, but grinned broadly.

"Wal, I dunno as I be, Mary. This here farm don't look like it exactly, considerin' what it was when I tuk it."

"When we tuk it, you mean," corrected Aunt Mary, with suggestive emphasis.

"Wal, when we tuk it. D'ye remember them bogs out yonder where the corn is growin' now? Didn't we drain 'em by the newest methods?"

"Yes, an' paid fer it by the newest methods, too, I reckon. The biggest gains was that that smooth palaverin' feller that talked ye into doin' it."

Uncle Josh scratched his head meditatively and let his eye wander over the rich waving cornfields.

"I ha' my doubts," he said slowly. Then he turned and brought down his fist with emphasis.

"I tell you what, Mary Jones, what we need is the spirit o' progress. It's progress that keeps this old world a-movin', an' unless we keep up with her we're goin' ter wake up some mornin' an' find ourselves left behind, trailin' along in space, like enough with no place to rest the sole o' our foot, an' th' world a-spinnin' away out o' sight."

Aunt Mary waited until he had finished. Then she sniffed audibly, and stern lines gathered around her mouth.

"Joshua Simkins, ef you ain't a born jitt, then that never was one. Who's been palaverin' to you now? Ef some idly-tongued varmint should come along an' tell you it was better to hop on one foot than to walk on two, I believe to goodness you'd go hoppin' round on one foot, you'd say it was to save shoe leather, but that wouldn't be the reason. It'd be just because the oily-tongued varmint said it was better, an' you hadn't brains enough to know any different."

Uncle Josh scratched his head slowly, but somewhat defiantly this time.

"Wal, an' automobile ain't like hoppin' on one foot," he remarked with some spirit. "It's jist the other way. You go on four wheels 'stead o' two feet, an' you go like gee whiz when you want ter. I reckon it's the best way o' keepin' up with the world yet—that is, until them flyin' machines is done. Anyhow, that there automobile's comin' next Saturday, an' ef you will be left behind, trailin'

along in space, you'll ha' ter be. Mebbe ye c'n keep me an' the Spirit o' progress in sight, but more'n likely we'll be lost to view in a few hours. You better git the spirit o' progress an' jine us."

Uncle Josh cut short any further remarks by marching off to the barn and Aunt Mary returned to her pie crust with a scornful sniff.

"Whatever could I ha' been thinkin' of to marry such a jitt as Joshua



It is the Surroundings that Make the Home

The order given to the nursery company years ago that resulted in the beautiful grounds around the home of Mr. F. R. Yokome, Petersboro Co., Ont., here illustrated, did not represent much in dollars and cents, but the results make all the difference between a house and a home. Particularly in the country home desirability of beauty no matter how expensive the house, without the grace of trees and shrubs. And they represent such a comparatively small expenditure.

Simkins," she sighed. "Some things is hard to understand, but a fool's the hardest o' all."

Saturday came clear and cool. Uncle Josh was up before day-light. He had fixed the best place in the wagon house for the "Spirit o' progress," as he insisted upon calling his new acquisition and every possible preparation for its coming had been made; but Uncle Josh could not sleep. Not since he was a boy had he experienced the delicious thrill of joyous anticipation which now swept every nerve, wave upon wave. He could just feel the wheel in his hand, and the fanning of the breeze against his cheek, like the soft-brushing wings of the spirit of progress.

Aunt Mary had refused to discuss the matter with him after the first day, but not so the farm hands and villagers. They gathered in little knots at the store and at the tavern; they leaned on fences and on hoe-handles; they paused in the midst of milking or peeing a curdy comb in the air while they discussed Uncle Josh and his prospective purchase.

And Uncle Josh had never tired of answering their questions. What he had missed of sympathy and interest at home he had found in full measure abroad. His waking hours had been filled with delicious anticipation—his sleeping hours had been crowded with delightful dreams in which he and the "Spirit o' progress" went hiking through space to unknown lands of beauty and delight.

And now the longed for day had come. He tiptoed out of the house just as the first faint colorings of dawn appeared in the east, and drew a long breath. The road over which the "Spirit o' progress" would come stretched white and still between dark reaches of woodland until it lost itself in widening curves among the hills to the east. Uncle Josh sat down on a bench under the trees and lost himself in a maze of dreams.

He was roused by a voice from the kitchen.

"Joshua Simkins, be you a-comin' in to breakfast?"

Uncle Josh rose and walked slowly into the house. For the first time a doubt had disturbed his anticipations.

"Dy'e suppose I'll be able to run it, Mary?" he asked, as he sipped his coffee.

Aunt Mary gave him a scornful glance.

"A good time to think about that,

you jest run her out agin an' give me a line of her workin's, an' then I'll try her, too."

The dapper young fellow at the wheel ran the machine smoothly out upon the road and began to examine most carefully and explicitly. Uncle Josh gave concentrated attention.

At the end of twenty minutes he drew a long breath and slapped his knees with his hand.

"Wal, that looks easy enough, young fellar; an' now ef you'll be good enough ter climb down I reckon me an' the Spirit o' progress 'll git along with this hand."

The young fellow hesitated and just then Aunt Mary reappeared in the doorway.

"Joshua Simkins," she said severely, "ef yer bound to run that thing you let that young fellar stay up the seat beside you. I ain't got no ter take care o' no broken bones."

Uncle Joshua scratched his head thoughtfully, and some of the men grinned.

"Wal," he said at last with reluctance, "sence Mary Jane's sort o' narrow, I reckon me, mebbe you'd better set up that no use of gettin' her all worked up."

The young fellow climbed up with alacrity, and Uncle Josh took the wheel in his hand.

"Whoa, there!" he said soothingly, as he pushed the throttle over, and the engine began to pound vigorously. "Seem to notice her noise more when ye have the wheel yerself, don't ye? Did she make so much noise when you was runnin' 'er?"

The young man nodded and pointed to the speed lever. Uncle Josh put his foot upon it somewhat suddenly, and the machine started on with a jerk.

"Steady there!" said the young fellow, warningly. "Now take your foot off that and throw your high-gear lever forward slowly. Be careful to take your foot off the other first, though, or you'll break your crank-shaft."

Uncle Josh performed this feat successfully, and the machine glided smoothly forward. His eyes sparkled and he drew a long breath as he grasped the wheel with both hands.

"Now, we're off! Hoop-ay fer the Spirit o' progress!"

The young fellow sat watchfully on the edge of his seat. He was feeling some of the nervousness which Uncle Joshua had ascribed to Aunt Mary.

The engine began to pick up speed, and Uncle Josh looked at the young fellow gleefully.

"Keeps goin' faster the longer she goes, don't she? How long will she keep it up?"

The young fellow pushed the throttle back and forth. "This is fast enough for you now," he remarked quietly, and a shade of disappointment crossed Uncle Josh's face.

"Pshaw! Let's hit her up when we come into the village. I want ter show them fellows what me an' the Spirit o' progress c'n do!"

It was only a mile on a straight road into the village, and the machine ran smoothly.

Uncle Josh was jubilant. As he neared the village store where several of his friends and neighbors were gathered, he spoke to his companion hastily without turning his head.

"Say, young fellar, how d'ye doo this thing? I want ter stop in front o' the store. Quick, 'fore she gits past!"

(Continued next week)