



COULD we forbear dispute and practice love,  
We should agree as angels do above.—Waller.

## A Warming Frost

By WILLIAM H. HAMBY

(In *Farm and Fireside*)

I AM going to Blue Plains this morning for that new sprayer.

"Want to go along, Dutchy?"

"I am not Dutch," and she gave her brown head a little indignant toss. "Haven't I told you that the only thing I inherited from my grandfather was my nose—and it isn't turned up by a tiny bit."

"All right then, Frenchy," and Fred Cole smiled teasingly as he got up from the breakfast table. "But, anyway, do you want to go?"

"Now you are on the right limb of my family tree. I feel real Frenchy this morning—and I do want to go. I just must have a new dress, and we will get it to-day."

The one who said, "When poverty comes in at the door, love flies out at the window," was a chronic pessimist. But even where love permanently abides, the mere swish of a prospective new dress often brings on an overheated condition of the family atmosphere—followed by a chill and a general downpour.

"No, Nina, not to-day," said Cole soberly.

"For goodness sake, when then?" she flared. "So far as I can remember, I have had two dollars and forty cents' worth of clothes in the three years we have been married." There was sudden accusation, even resentment, in the tone.

"You know, Nina," he tried to keep his voice cool and patient. "what a struggle I have had; how close I have had to figure—"

"Oh, figure, figure," she caught up. "You can find money somewhere to buy old clothes and sprayers and lamps—and everything else."

"But, Nina—I have to have these things."

"Oh, yes," petulantly, "but I don't have to have anything. I haven't been home for two years—because I didn't want them to see how shabby I am."

Then he grew resentful and angry, and said those things which an angry person is apt to say, which were half true, but wholly unjust.

And she—all fire and tow—read a bill of his neglects and shortcomings which, if true and totaled, would have equalled—a brute.

Cole drove away alone. At the corner, from force of habit, he looked back; but no dainty little figure stood on the porch, waving hand or fluttering a handkerchief. Instantly a feeling of being abused, of resentment, swept over him. But in a few moments, as he drove along the north end of his orchard, he almost forgot it.

Straight as a line for half a mile, ran the rows of apple trees. The carefully cultivated soil, the healthy pink bark of the trunks, and the wide vigorous branches, indicated years of excellent care. And now, almost as far as the eye could see, was a gentle undulating billow of green and white and pink. It looked as though every

one of the thirty-two hundred trees was fairly overrunning with blossoms.

There was more than the pride of ownership in the young man's eyes as he ran them lovingly over the long sweep of his eighty-acre orchard, picking out here and there, by bark or blossom or size, the different varieties. There was more than anticipation in the young man's heart as he looked at his orchard in its first full promise of a rich harvest. Deeper than the pleasures of possession, stronger than anticipation of rich financial returns, was the joy of work well done. By skill and patience and knowledge he had grown that orchard. It was the work of his hand. With science and industry and grit



The Sp'endid Home of a Farm and Dairy Resident

The attractive brick residence here illustrated is the home of H. H. Bowley, Middlesex Co., Ont.; a fine home in a new farming district.

he had fought the scores of enemies of earth and air of the young trees, and had won. It was a beautiful victory.

Young Cole had reasons to feel proud of his accomplishment. Six years before, when he bought the run-down farms in that section of the Ozarks. It had been one of the first farms cleared in south Missouri. And since the days of Andrew Jackson, a long procession of tenants and owners had gone on making the poor soil poorer by trying in a foolish and primitive way to grow grain where grain was not meant to grow.

None of them had ever discovered—or tried to discover the real use of the land, until Fred Cole, a thinking, investigating lad of twenty, got it into his head to buy the farm. He got the eighty acres for five dollars an acre. And the man who sold it to him told him encouragingly—after the deal was closed—that he was inclined to give it away if he hadn't sold it—it was not worth paying taxes on.

But the young man went to work. He borrowed money, and set the whole eighty acres in choice four-

year-year old apple trees of the finest varieties. Then he went straight to the state university and entered the Agricultural College.

During summer vacation and by taking two weeks in the spring, he kept the young orchard in growing condition. And in his course he specialized on horticulture and put into immediate practice what he learned.

It was while in the university that he met Nina, who was a student in the academic department. Immediately after graduation they married and moved on to the farm in the Ozark hills.

The first year the trees were too young to bear much. The next year a late frost killed all the blossoms. But this year promised wonderful returns. Why, if nothing happened, they would average a barrel to the tree—and that would be—but it was not safe to count.

He had driven slowly across the end of the orchard. At the corner, where the road turned north into the woods, he looked back again. The pretty cottage just west of the orchard was on the highest point and could easily be seen. Sometimes she waved again

But no, she was not in sight. His face was hot, and he drove rapidly away, nourishing a sense of being wronged, of being badly treated.

And, man-like, the more he thought of it, the worse she seemed to be in the wrong, and the surer he was that he was entirely free from blame.

Not satisfied with that conclusion, he went on piling up arguments until he seemed to be very badly abused. He had had to borrow money—much

and keep her a prisoner for want of clothes—why, it was awful. And had been so plucky and bright. The best company in the world and the bravest little girl—and she and he went. Which also, was—

He drove on a little more rapidly. He would hurry home and tell her about it. And when the next crop was sold, she should have all the clothes she wanted, and they would sleep at least one evening in town with friends or at entertainments, so she should go home as often as she wished.

It was nearly noon when he reached Blue Plains. After he had fed the team and had had dinner, he drove out two miles to the state farm experiment station to see the new sprayer at work before he bought one for a neighboring orchard, had gone back at 3 o'clock.

The young man waited with considerable impatience, for it would make him late in getting home. It was 3.30 o'clock before the director returned.

"Whew!" shivered Cole as he walked into the orchard. "The wind has gone to the northwest. That isn't it? Don't suppose it will rain, frost, do you?"

"No danger to-night, I think," said Bains. "It is going to be cloudy and clear to-morrow, look out for tomorrow night."

"I'm fixed for it this time," said Cole. "Got four thousand chickens, burners and plenty of oil. I'll light up at the first sign of danger."

It was five o'clock by the time the young farmer had purchased his sprayer and was ready to start home.

"Whoo!" he whistled, as he climbed into the spring wagon. "It's a fine cold in a hurry. Guess I better get out my late burners to-night."

It was twenty miles home, and a very rough road. It usually required five hours, but he meant to finish in four this evening.

The wind had risen until it raced through him, and he was shivering in the trees. It felt damp, and smoky like the breath of a young blizzard.

At six o'clock the sky was thick, overclouded. Cole's teeth fairly chattered, for he had left his overcoat at home.

But when he reached the top of the next hill there was a rift in the clouds—the scurrying clouds had parted—and a cold strip of red sky showed through the trees. Cole looked at his watch. It was 7 o'clock, and he was not quite half way home.

He drove on briskly, feeling a little uneasy. When he reached the corner the sky was swept almost clear of clouds, and the wind was driving down. It was nine miles and a half home. He waited a match and looked at his watch. It was twenty minutes past eight.

Cole felt the chill in the air and the hands—and a colder chill crept through him. Now there was indeed a danger, and he was too close from his precious orchard, and the burners were empty in the orchard, and stacked in the barn were the barrels of crude oil.

He kept telling himself that he would not frost. It only seemed so because it had been so warm. Yet the wind was his nose and fingers, and the horses to an almost reckless speed.

As he passed an old clearing, he recognized, he again looked at his watch. It was twenty minutes past eight.

Nine o'clock, and still no sign of home.

As he went down into the next valley, dark from the heavy shadow of the timber there, he saw the road put out his hand and plucked a tickle-leaf.

It crinkled in his fingers.

His heart gave a flying leap, started earlier; why, it felt on this—eighty miles in the world in the barn, and creeping upon the blossoms—when

say. He was already over rocks and up steep hills, narrow valleys; and as his watch

er the horse, and surely he would

he just couldn't these years of work again snatched so

from a bush beside as frost upon their

Were they already at the thought blossoms were

capable to killing loved that he might

could not save some could not freeze.

He started down just up the north

long ridge, and when he reached to

then he was in shallow little g

cross the hard, and staid hard in

light—the water look—the horses start

the crinkle and light—d back and g

late. It was down to a w

turning now

As he came down near the corner of

straightened up—be—he had caught

pedlar smell. He sharply and galloped

to the corner of the drew up sudden

ward. For half a smoke burst from

enveloping the could scarcely see the

trees—and all down—the crude-oil

He drove along a

amared. A stir of smoke near the road

similar little figure, the old coats, hurrying to light the last

His throat contracted his eyes. He was in a minute.

"Why," she said la

they were by the fire

there is no wonder al

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He hour by sun that

Mr. Wagner and the Smith

He drove the oil w

he burners you had

and I came after

which and lighted the

fun."

He had already told

things he had thought

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at his head

"Well, you must be

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One Little thing—

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he exclaimed

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