

Good Old Times in New England.

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Grandpa and grandma are always telling of "Good old times." They honestly believe that in the gone-by days of a half or three-fourths of a century ago, every thing was better than now, not only the ways and morals, health and beliefs of the folks, but almost everything was far better, from the flavor and seasoning of the food to the climate and church. These dear old people admit that the old days were hard days, that John and I know nothing of the work and wear, the pinch and grind that they endured. But John talks hard times, too, and believes much care and fret are his, of which grandpa knew nothing.

"Good old times!" Yes, grandpa, in reference to hired help, they were good times.

Think of it, always plenty of first-class outdoor and indoor help to be had for the acceptance of "Stow," willing, faithful young men and women stood ready and eager to seize any opportunity to "hire out," and so earn the needed dollar. Little else was there for them to do, but farm and house work, unless they ventured to the cities, where cotton and woollen mills, skirt, corset and shank toys and soap factories were yet unbuild.

Blessed old days, when hired help was faithful, plenty and cheap! How passing strange it would seem to you and me, who have to scour the country for miles about to find that almost extinct blessing, or the reverse, a female who will hire to do house work, to have a dozen stout daughters of your tried neighbors, eager to work early and late for you, and then at nightfall milk a half dozen cows, and all for fifty cents a week.

Grandpa often tells how in the beginning of the

come in person to the fever-rastered home, with its work, and successfully, until great-grandma, through the worst of the siege, had seven hired girls helping her. Good times, surely, those were in contrast with the present when any family, if so afflicted and dependent on hired help, must suffer for care.

"In my day, there was wear in clothes and

the cable as kid, that bore forty years' wear with out a break, when you are mending your boy's pasteboard-stayed suspenders, bought not two months before.

And the boots! Yes, boots, and rubbers, and fells, and moccasins, and leggings, and arctics that our men folks stuck about the stove to dry every winter evening and snowy day! They clutter



A HORSE RAKE OF THE OLDEN TIME.

boots," grandpa affirms when the children clamor of holes in some new garment. "Every thing, now a-days, is cheap, made to sell."

When grandma was a little girl her two everyday summer "frocks" of homespun and woven tow and linen, and one winter dress of checked

the floor and befoul the air with their strong odor of overheated rubber, steaming leather, and sweated stockings.

When grandpa was a child, every man and boy had his one pair of cowhide boots, heavy and clumsy enough, but readily dried and capable of being kept water-tight with a secret compound of bear's oil, mutton tallow and bayberry wax. Grandfather regretfully speaks of those pliable, grease-soaked old cowhides, claiming that they kept the feet more dry and healthy than all the foot gear of the present day. Legions of them there are, dainty, buttoned, buckled, tasseled affairs, but they don't wear, and they don't last.

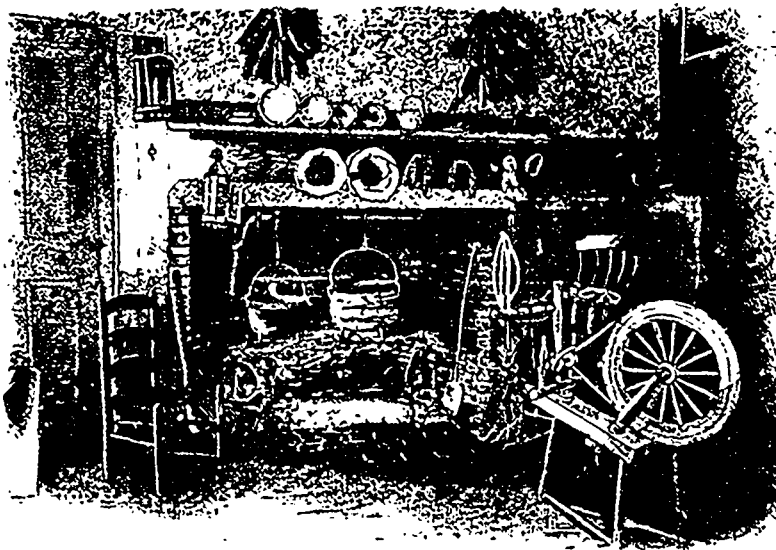
"Oh! ho!" But think of the strides ahead farm machinery has made in the past fifty years! Who wants to go back to the days when all the mowing and harvesting was done by hand? Blistered hands, they often were, too, before the last grain field was cut and cradled!

"Machinery, machinery!" grandpa said, thoughtfully, when I asked him concerning the farm helps he had half a century ago. "Why, we had plows and harrows, and our scythes and hoes, and, — yes, father had a horse rake, a straight-headed one, rigged with tugs without wheels and with big wooden stub teeth that slid along the ground, rooting it, if not hung just right, and scratched the hay into windrows. When full, the rake was boosted and emptied by hand."

"Mowers and tedders, planters and spreaders, horse hoes, grain sowers and reapers." No, child, fifty years ago we never had heard of them, no more than had your grandmother of sewing machines, clothes wringers and apple parers. Hard hand work did it all. Often it was October before the last swale was cut, and potatoes—we thought nothing of digging after the ground had frozen for the winter."

Thirty-six years ago grandpa bought the second mowing machine that ever came into the State. It was a Ketchum, and did fair work, although it had but one wheel and could not be thrown out of gear. People, for miles around, came to see it work, thinking it a wonderful affair. It must have been heavy, as well as clumsy, for years afterwards, grandpa was loading oats to haul to a distant market, and having plenty of room, thought it a good opportunity to carry the worn out machine, with a kettleful of other junk, to market as old iron.

"The horses did seem all petered out when we got to town," grandpa said, grimly smiling at the remembrance, "but I never reckoned I had on



THE FIRE-PLACE OF THE GOOD OLD DAYS.

hay seasons, sixty years ago, brawny men, with scythes on their shoulders, would come to the river's brink opposite this farm house, and lustily shout, "Want a man for haying?" And turn away with evident disappointment when the answer "No" was rung back. Haying wages were then "two and three pence" a day.

Grandma distinctly remembers when malignant typhus fever raged in her father's family when she was a child, and how the girls in that, or near neighborhoods, thinking a household so stricken might give them opportunity to secure work,

woolen, cut with plain wares and full skirt — "Gretchen," we now call the same simple old pattern—were so stout, one little girl could not outwear them, but they were handed down the line of numerous daughters in the household.

Heels and toes, elbows and knees! Why, the grandmas didn't begin to have so many to patch as do the mothers of 1881, because they lived before the day of shoddy. I wouldn't be one bit afraid to swap my mending basket for grandpa's. If she did raise ten children, and I but four.

Think of the old leather gaiters, soft and