



FARM AND DAIRY & RURAL HOME



We Welcome Practical Progressive Ideas.

Trac's increases the wealth and glory of a country; but its real strength and stamina are to be looked for among the cultivators of the land.—Lord Chatham

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The Emancipation of Mother

How Her Steps Were Shortened and Her Life Lengthened—S. R. N. Hodgins

IT was November, but the Indian summer seemed averse to taking flight from beautiful old Ontario. A warm hazy afternoon had given before a golden sunset. Long shadows sped away eastward from the trees and buildings, running over meadow and newly plowed field like children allowed to play in the park, but ever under the watchful eyes of their mothers. A solemn stillness had settled over the countryside. It was an evening that brought its offering of mellow memories.

James Graham leaned his arms on the top rail of the fence. He looked out over his farm and was satisfied. It was in south a goodly estate. Memories carried him back a quarter century to the day when he had brought Ruth as his bride to this farm, inherited from his father. What a change had been wrought in the twenty-five years! Fortune had smiled upon his efforts. The farm had been fenced; a goodly number of acres of the rich, clay land had been under-drained; a full equipment of up-to-date machinery had been slowly accumulated, and the whole had been lent solidity by the big bank barn equipped in fitting style for the pure bred herd that made it their home.

A cheery murmur of voices from the direction of the house caused him to turn about. The immediate dooryard was hidden by shrubbery, but he knew it was Gladys, his married daughter, who was home from Toronto for a visit, chatting with Hilda and Jimmy, younger members of the family. How good the house looked! Big and solid, it stood out against the sunset. It had been built twelve years before by money made with his own hands and those of his helpmate. But somehow it seemed to James that he and Ruth had been happier in their little, old home. It was seldom now that Ruth had time to play the piano in the evenings. She left that to Hilda, pleading lack of time. It had been good in the old days to hear Ruth sing "Love's Old Sweet Song." But James could not remember hearing those notes since the old house had been vacated. Why? This was the question that presented itself to James Graham as the sun went down behind a bank of glory. And it was a difficult one.

"Daddy?"

He turned about to have Gladys, always a tom-boy, even though "grewed up," throw herself upon him. They had always been pals. But it was such a retrospective sort of evening that even Gladys soon settled down with her father to looking over the darkening landscape.

"Daddy, do you think mother looks well?" she asked suddenly.

The question was so unexpected and so nearly along the line of his own thinking that James Graham started as if a pin had suddenly been thrust into a tender spot in his anatomy.

"Why do you ask that?"

"Oh well, she seems so tired in the evenings, and she doesn't seem as she goes about her work any more," answered Gladys, "and I think I know the cause, daddy, dear," she went on softly. "I think she has too many steps to take. Her workshop is ill equipped."

"Oh!" It was Mr. Graham that made this contribution to the conversation.

"Have you ever noticed how often mother has to run out to the pump for a pail of water?" she went on. "And we already have a windmill pumping water to the cattle barn. Mother also has to run down cellar so often before and after each meal and, oh, there are ever so many things which might be fixed up to shorten her steps."

"Yes, daddy," after waiting in vain for him to speak. "I think when you were so busy equipping the other departments of the farm with up-to-date machinery, the kitchen got pushed into the background."

"But isn't it a good kitchen? I should think it was plenty big enough and has good light," he protested.

"Oh yes, the room itself is all right, daddy, but like the other departments of the farm there are labor saving devices which may be installed in the kitchen, and now after being used to my kitchen with its city conveniences, I can see the difference—the places where mother's steps might be saved and the devices that might save mother's time for other needful things. Here's Hilda, 16 years old, and she hasn't learned much about housekeeping—mother's been too busy to teach her. And then mother would like more time to fix up things for Fred, now that he's over-seas, but she's tied down to her kitchen."

"Well, Gladys," said Mr. Graham with a gulp, for it is hard for a man to admit negligence in duty, "if you think we can do anything to make it easier for mother, give me your plans. I have just sold 14 hours for almost \$500, and if this will help, I am willing to make the investment."

"Oh, daddy, I knew you'd be glad to, if you only knew."

"Couldn't we fix things up as a surprise for mother?" was Graham's next question. His imagination was now getting under way as a solution presented itself for the problem which had been perplexing him.

"Yes, daddy, I had been thinking of that. You remember that mother was appointed delegate to the Women's Institute Convention to be held next week in Toronto. By the way, I believe that was just done to get mother interested in the Institute, for she says she never has time to go to the meetings. But mother would be the better for a trip to the city, and besides, she hasn't visited Jack and I yet, though we've been married two years."

Although the plan was unfolded so rapidly as to almost take away Mr. Graham's breath, it seemed to him a sound scheme. But another difficulty presented itself. Suppose he should attempt making improvements in the kitchen during mother's absence and that on her return they would not be found suitable. It would be mother that would have to use them.

This objection was promptly waved aside by

Thanksgiving Reminiscences

THANKSGIVING DAY has once again drawn near,
And bounteous harvests fill our land with cheer.

The corn cribs' full, the ricks high
burnt with hay—
And turns my mind to when on this glad day

Our family gathered home in days gone by,
Drawn yearly closer by this golden tie.

Two things still linger—how the fire roared!
And what a turkey graced the festive board!

(Oh, what a dinner I could then tuck in—
I sometimes wonder if 'tis not a sin
That we must turn dyspeptic as we grow,
And spend the evening of our lives in woe.)

After the dinner, ere we'd time to nod,
We all betook us to the House of God,
Where white-haired pastor offered up our thanks

That no one had been taken from our ranks
Throughout the year, and too by grace benign,
Our barns o'erflowed; our presses burst with wine.

How willingly the horse would start for home!

The air was crisp, the trees were red, the loam
Fresh turned in furrows stretching o'er the hill,
Showed that the farmers had begun to till

Their fields, preparing them for crops next year,
Trusting in God; nor doubt had they, nor fear.

That was the golden age, when such a day

Was treated with respect, and hearts were gay;
When old friends met and fed the inner man,
And through it all a real thanksgiving ran;

When congregations sang with hearts aflame;
"Let all the people bless His holy name,"

—S. R. N. Hodgins.

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