

she said she wouldn't change places with me, after reading his "works", no, sir, not for a farm as good as the one I was on now.

I looked around and could see that it was a real nice farm, and not a mortgage in sight. There was a little table, too, behind the morning glories and sweet peas and lady-bugs and other climbing things; and on the little table was a tray; and on the tray were a sugar-bowl and a couple of glasses that had held milk, and a big jug, and a plate full of egg-shells. The big jug, too, had held milk, but it was now as empty as the glasses and the shells; so that I knew, before putting Doc Wilf's lonely reader through her catechism, that the sugar and the milk and the eggs were now en route in the custody of a young man of heroic mould with the receptive capacity of Friar Tuck.

Little Dough-face said that a big, handsome young man, who said his name was Brooks—and twice as big as myself, and paddling his *own* canoe, she said—had stopped at the cottage for milk. While she had been getting the milk from the pans he had foraged under the barn—her brother having gone fishing in Lost Bay—and cornered all the eggs in sight. He had made egg-nogs, and finished all the morning's milk. And the cows were milking well, too, she said, and the hens laying nicely, as I could see by the shells. While this big Mr. Brooks was making the egg-nogs, she said, and warning her against Dr. Campbell's poetry, the cows that were grazing along the bank grazed on a pair of trousers that were in Mr. Brooks' red canoe, which was pulled up on the bank. She supposed the cows, being naturally inquisitive, and perhaps near-sighted, had mistaken the trousers for a new kind of patent feed, on account of their colour, which was green. And before she had been able to rescue the trousers from the bovine brink of ventricular destruction (she said she got that out of a line of the Doctor's poetry), I gathered, by inference from her coy avoidance of detail, that the seat of the said trousers had been put out of business beyond immediate if not eventual repair.

It was nice, sitting there on that cool veranda talking literature to this pale and muslin-dotted little maid, even if there wasn't anything to drink. But I had to break away at last, with Her Niblets warning me not to get lost in the Bay, like so many strangers did, because there were two ways out. Her brother, she said, would show me the right one. I got into Lost Bay at last, anxious to tell Jimmy what I thought of his newly-acquired brand of veracity and of his appetite; and an ingenuous looking youth in a punt was so anxious to point me to the right channel that I took the left one and found it right. (Very rare old joke). I had got leery of small boys by this time. Famished and tired, for it was by now noon, I reached the lower end of Gannanock Lake, with Doc Campbell's "rolling white-riders of the

foam" all against me, and never a lee shore.

A familiar whistle call saluted me, and I saw Jimmy in the doorway of a little cottage at the end of a hollyhock path.

CHAPTER XXII.

Madame the Black-eyed.

"Well", he said, in his robust way, as I lagged leisurely up the path, "you're a precious hot one, you are! Gossiping 'poetry,' I suppose, with that buzz at the cottage the other side of Lost Bay."

From the open door where Jimmy stood, as though he were the only and original prop., issued a most delectable sizzling sound, and my sensitive nose was conscious of the aroma of the Fried. I had a little god on hand just then who was calling for attention, and I was morally in the class of the folks that Paul buzzed the Phillippians about, but I had good physical cause to be. That god was my Tummy, threatening me with dire results if I didn't apply my hands as well as mind to earthly things and lay some substantial offerings at his shrine, and on the minute, too. And just then a young, black-eyed and rosy-cheeked little woman appeared behind Jimmy at the door. He turned, and she flashed him a wireless thriller, and said something to him in French—a language I do not understand.

"Dinner's ready!" he cried, slapping me on the back with debilitating zeal, and forgetting that he had all the egg-nogs. "Entrez, and I'll tell you all the news while we eat!"

I had some news to tell myself, but as he was so anxious to gab I thought I'd let him wait for mine. There was a fresh white cloth, laundered to the nines, spread for us in the little "front" room, and on it a feast for the gods—*my* god. There was a capital cold roast of beef. There was bacon, out of Jimmy's locker, but it was sliced thin, and fried with just the right crisp. There were fried potatoes, and of course fried *eggs*; besides beautiful butter and home-made bread, and pickled cucumbers and cabbage, and horse-radish, and wild strawberry jam; and a pot of good tea—our tea, I knew at once by the flavour—but brewed just right, and in a dandy big brown pot. And the little cook and hostess moved back and forth with radiant smiles, and bright eyes—for James, of course. Gee, but it's great to be crazy!

"Married?" I remarked.

"Married? Of course she's married! And that's why she has that happy look. It's what I call the married face."

"Then where's the man of the house? I'd like to see the man who can make a woman look like that."

"You're looking right at him!" said Jimmy, swelling his chest, and helping himself to a fried egg. "For the time being