

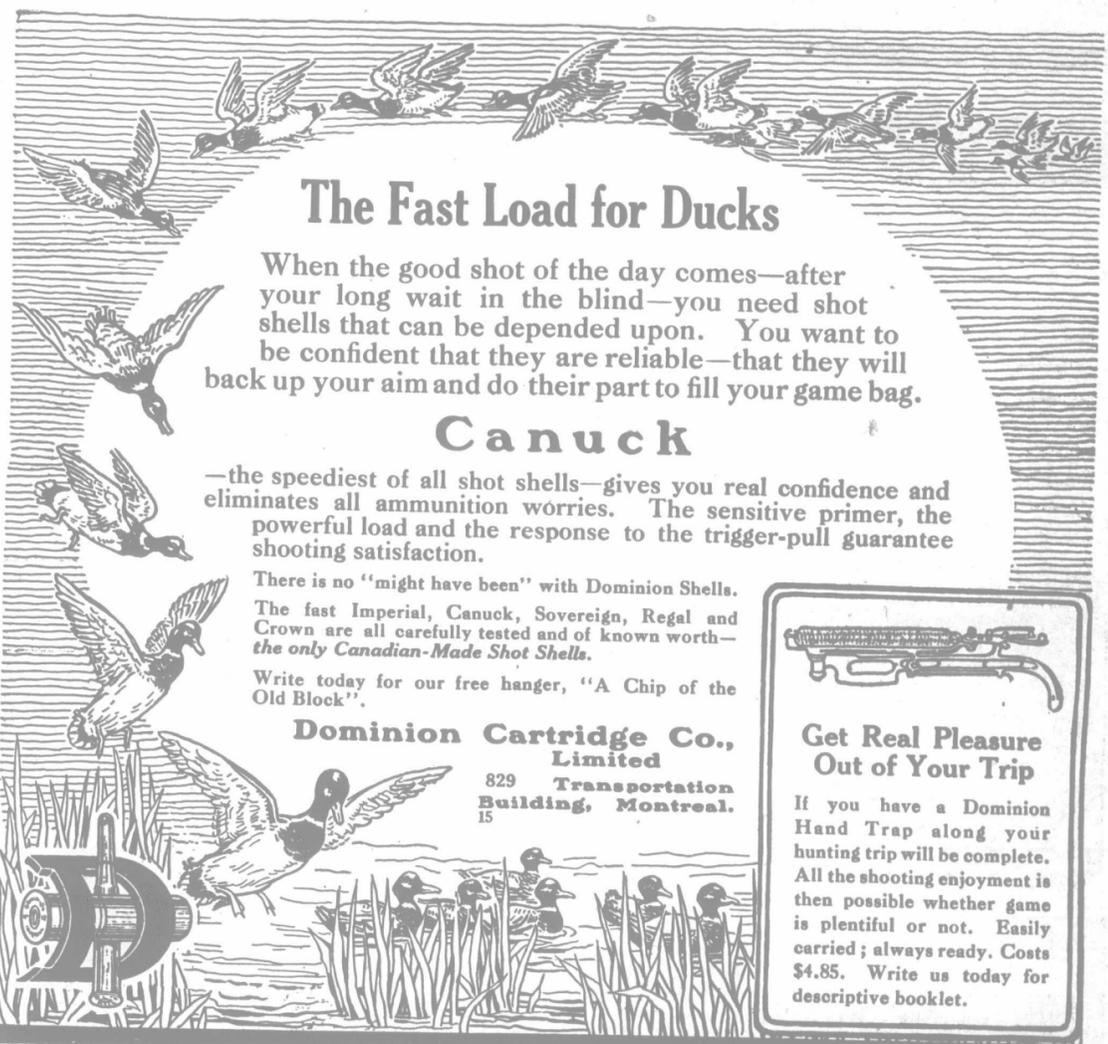
The Farmer's Wife's Holiday.

EDITOR THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

How many farmers' wives ever have a real good holiday? I do not mean a day off to the city or the cattle show, but a good fortnight's or a month's vacation. There is no better tonic. The farm woman would derive much benefit from it morally, mentally and physically. Think of it! Away from the cooking, dish-washing, scrubbing, dusting and chicken-feeding for a whole fortnight or more. "How can I get a holiday?" she will say. Well, hired help is hard to find, and, like the man's horse which was difficult to catch in the pasture, is not much good when you do get it. However, where there's a will there's a way.

This summer I was working on a farm, doing carpenter work and any odd jobs about the place. The farmer's wife wished to go away for a few weeks. She asked me to take her place as cook and house-keeper. I was rather reluctant to tackle the job, as, being a mere man, I am not a great hand at house-keeping. "All right," says I, "I'll try it, but they will only get one plate for all the courses." That saves a deal of washing. She had baked a lot of loaves and pies, and boiled a large piece of meat before she left. These lasted a good many days. Then we had to buy bread. The bought bread was so dry and tasteless that I called it "puffed sawdust." I am no pastry baker, so I made puddings. The two men I catered for were very fussy about what they ate. One liked his pork boiled; the other, fried. Now, frying is the most indigestible way of cooking meat that I know of. If I had my way, I would tie 99 frying pans to 99 dogs' tails, and head them off for the St. Lawrence, for only one dog out of every hundred is worth its grub, and about one per cent of the frying pans is used judiciously. I worked away as best I could, till one day both my boarders were "off their feed." Evidently, my cooking did not agree with them.

I looked in the Cookery Book for recipes for infants and invalids. I found something that I thought would suit. This was plain "Cream of Wheat Pudding" (no eggs in it, as the book said eggs in puddings made them indigestible). Did my men eat it? Not they. I might as well have labelled it "Poison." This was not encouraging by any means, seeing that I took particular pains in preparing it. Served with Maple Syrup and milk, it was first rate. I had the lot to eat myself, and am alive yet. I looked at the Cookery Book again, and found something high-class, as I thought. This was entitled "Mock Cream." I took more pains than ever in preparing this. I thought it surpassed anything I had ever cooked. I expected they would devour it all in a twinkling. Not so, however. They eyed it suspiciously, and seemed to draw their chairs away from the table. I proposed tying a fork-handle on to their spoons, seeing they were somewhat nervous. This had a good effect, for they began to eat a little, and by-and-by had their plates empty. I did not offer a second helping. "It is very evident," said I, "that you have not been accustomed to high-class cooking." One day, I thought I would make some drop scones or pancakes. I found all the ingredients except the soda and cream of tartar. I looked in a cupboard and found two tins with white stuff in them, and guessed they were what I wanted. The soda was there all right, but I had my doubts about the tartar. However, I put half a teaspoonful in my pancakes, feeling sure that there was no arsenic or other white poisonous substance in the pantry. I was just putting some of the newly-made scones on a plate when the hired man came in. "Taste these, Mike," I said. "I am not sure if I put cream of tartar in them or some other white stuff." I made the latter remark after he had eaten a mouthful. "For the Lord's sake, don't poison us," says he. I remarked that he would die a natural death. (N.B.—These pancakes were mostly eaten by the cook.) Another day, being in a hurry, I made Scotch brose. This dish is excellent for outdoor workers, especially when well stirred and steamed and served with cream. We had good old-fashioned oatmeal and the best of cream from the separator. "What's this?" says Mike, when he had sat down to the table. I told him, and apologized for not writing out a menu card for the day. They seemed both to relish the brose, for their bowls



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