

but on the generous fare of a plentiful Canadian farm table, which the Madam saw was set before she retired to the inner room to her own repast. She liked John Strong, because he had served her loyally for medium wage, and because to his observant eyes and knack of management she owed many a successful venture and crop; and she sometimes held him up half-admiringly as a contrast to the lads about, who were not blessed with his physique, or knowledge of farm lore, much, be it confessed, as she would have spoken of her kine as superior to her neighbours.' But as if the blatant bull in the third meadow had gored her youngest born, his journey to the butcher would have been swift and sure, so, had she in her wildest dreams had an inkling of the words spoken in the grain barn, she would likewise have been "fain to kill" her favorite servingman. She was too proud to regret his departure, or do more than curtly ask him if he wanted higher wages.

"For you won't get them about here, I can assure you!"

"I didn't think of that," said John, musingly. "I just want to farm a bit of land for myself, and there's a little tidy farm, a mile or two back, that I've been thinking to buy."

The Madam looked interested. "Where is it?" she inquired.

"Back of Ainslie's bush, Madam. It's only a hundred acres." "How much do they want for it?"

John named a very moderate sum, and proceeded, encouraged to confidence by the Madam's question, to explain to her the advantages of the purchase.

He told of the richness of the soil, and its capabilities, under good farming, of the spring and the dairy, the bee house and the large new barn, and, half shamed, having always in his mind a wild dream of fatuity, he described the bit of garden and the quaint little vine-covered log house. Then, John asked for a day's holiday, and the Madam, finding he wanted to visit the neighboring town, told him to get out the gig next morning and drive her in, and so long as he was on hand by six o'clock to drive her home again, he might disport himself as he pleased the long day through. Very chatty was the Madam, as they drove through the fruitful country, about the kine and the crops, and the prospects of good weather, and John's heart was in his mouth half the time, as she graciously inquired about fields and barns and market prices; and he wildly longed to make an open confession, and take her by storm, as it were. But one glance at her steely eyes always quenched the rash impulse, and still his prudent tongue guarded warily his precious secret.

About three o'clock in the afternoon, when madam had shopped, and bargained, and lunched, and filled the gig with a heterogeneous collection of parcels, she made her stately way to her attorney's office, on the main street.

"I want to buy that little farm back of Ainslie's bush. I hear it is for sale," she said, in her shortest manner.

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