#### THE WESTERN HOME MONTHLY

Bargains in pianos, player pianos, organs and phonographs at the Winnipeg Piano Co. All are guaranteed with the further guarantee of exchanging for a Steinway, Gerhard-Heintzman, Chickering, Nordheimer, Haines or Bell piano, any time within three years, allowing full price paid.

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Heintzman piano, small model. Regular \$400, in nice condition; selling for \$210.

Haines piano, large Louis XV., mahogany case, very elaborate design. Regular \$500; taken in exchange; in very fine condition. Selling for \$335.

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ancient low-set variety with a pipe-oven. "It always did give me a crick in the back jest to look at the thing," was Nancy's mental observation. But remarking to herself that she couldn't stand there all day criticizing the place, she set to work without further delay to prepare Mely's supper and then that of the family

The little girls welcomed Nancy with delight even while their little faces sobered every moment or two at the thought of "Mama" being sick in bed. Nancy promised them one of her omelettes for supper, and very carefully she descended the treacherous cellar-steps to get the eggs, telling them, meanwhile, not to let their mother know.

"She'd worrit herself into a high fever," said Nancy, and added to herself. "She's that close! I spose she's got them eggs counted an' date-marked."

"Nance! Nance! What you doin' down cellar?" called the invalid, in querulous

"Dolly, you go in an' tell your ma for me," said Nancy quietly to the elder girl. "That I'm runnin' this here show an' that if she don't hush up I'll go in there an' tell her what for in no uncertain

"I ain't enjoyed a supper like this in I don't know when!" was Jim's verdict, as he pushed his chair back from the table that evening.
"Me, too," echoed Fred, a boy of about

thirteen, as he helped himself to the ninth pancake.

"Mother's a good cook," said Marjorie, loyally, "but she sort-of skimps us."

and the cook-stove was one of the remain any longer than you care to

"Oh, I'll stay," said Nancy, cheerfully.
"I'll 'phone Cy every day an' leave him
his orders. (He ain't a bit handy at doin' for himself, his first wife havin' waited on him hand an' foot, but maybe the experience'll do him good.) I'll stay Jim, for a little while anyway. Maybe we can git John Summers' gal, Lucy, bye-an'-bye."

At the end of a week Mely's suffering had abated somewhat. She was a wiry, energetic little body, and idleness fretted her worse than pain. She had been so long accustomed to picking up the minutes, crowding two days' work into one and dropping wearily into bed at midnight that lying helpless the long day through seemed almost like a truant's holiday. It was a novel experience for her.

Meanwhile, Nancy struggled with the many inconveniences, the battered cooking utensils, the roundabout steps, the inadequate heating arrangements. But she didn't like to ask Jim Banks why he had not written asking Estelle, the eldest daughter, who was a stenographer in the city, to come home, or even Dora, who clerked in a store in the nearest town, and who had refused to come home on a former occasion, when her mother had been laid up with grippe, saying that it was just a scheme to get her back to the deadly drudgery of the farm again.

Nancy knew that the voluntary absence of his two daughters from home was a sore point with Jim Banks. Nevertheless, one day when she and Jim were



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"She says it's good for our health not to eat too much," volunteered Dolly.

"Well, this is war time," said their father, "and we ought to remember the

poor Belgians. Economy—"
"Economy?" sniffed Nancy, cutting in upon his remarks. "Look here, Jim Banks, it's a wonder you wouldn't git them cellar-steps fixed. Your cellar ain't anything but a wet dug-out at the best an' as soon as I set foot on one of them teetery planks, the pesky thing flew up an' near hit me in the face."

"I'm goin' to have 'em attended to right away. I been goin' to, but-oh, well, you know how it is, Nancy-

"You an' Mely are plum shiftless, that's what it is! You're both to blame!" And Nancy Hartman cut up her cake

of maple sugar into generous portions and gave it to the children, who fell upon it like young wolves.

Jim Banks both feared and admired Mrs. Hartman. She was said to entertain strong views about equal rights. Jim was entirely masculine, and with a different wife might have developed, ere this, into some semblance of a broadminded citizen. But Mely was such a willing doormat of a woman that he had become a bit pompous and bullying, and while with one hand he spent money lavishly, with the other he pinched the pennies—"till the King yelled," as Cy Hartman said. The next day Jim returned home after a fruitless quest for

"They all know you're here, Nance," all agree that Mely is in the best of

alone together, Nancy broached the subject.

"There's no use. They won't come," said Jim, dejectedly.

"Why?" demanded Nancy. "That's what I'd like to know. They're a pair of ungrateful young scallywags. Rather run to picture shows an' gad the

"That doesn't sound like Estelle, Jim She was a quiet, studious sort. too, maybe she's a bit livelier than her sister, but she's got sense. Have you heard from Claude lately?"

"Claude? Why, yes, he's wounded again, you know. The doctor in that English hospital says he'll have to take up farming now because he ain't ever going to be any good at his old trade. (He was in a piano factory, you know.) So he'll have to come home an' try to agree with the old man."

Nancy didn't speak for a moment. Then she said quietly:

"Jim, wouldn't you like to have all your family back home under the one roof?

"Huh! Ask me or any father that!"

"Do you believe that this farm, owned by yourself and improved, with no debts, no need of rigid economy, is capable of providing employment for you all?" "Say! An' neither me nor Mely ever able to ketch up with the work!"

"Then, Jim Banks, it can be done! It rests with you an' your wife. Only you've got to make this farm a home, not a slave-drivin' factory. It's your he said, ruefully. "An' consequently they cheeseparin' ways—yours and Mely's that's driven your children from home hands. Of course, I can't expect you to an' that'll drive these three younger ones

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