

OUR FARM TOMES

THE best portion of a good man's life is his little nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and love.—Wordsworth.

The Washerwoman's Son

By DEBORAH DREW

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(Continued from last week)

At the end of the evening Dan had for the hall, to secure a cheap lodging, and to buy a breakfast for himself and his dogs. But he saved the price of the lodging by sleeping on the ground back of the hall, with his dogs beside him.

All that summer Dan tramped from town to town. In time he had printed some handbills which read:

"Dan Black and his dogs to be seen at—", with the name of the place left to be filled in upon arrival at the town.

Gradually his cause was helped by the reports of the local newspapers.

Dan Black and his dogs began to be known.

Back in Haytown, Moll D. was washed and ironed and fluffed round the corner as of old. She hired various ones to deliver the clothes on the hill. She had had several postal cards from Dan stating merely that he was well and safe.

But a day came when she received a letter in which a five-dollar bill was folded.

"Dear mother," it read. She straightened visibly.

She had been "Moll D." all her life and "Ma" to her relatives ever since her first baby had learned to talk.

At "Dear mother," she felt a thrill of self-respect now to her.

"I am sorry it is only a five I am sending you; but if things go on as they are going now I know I can do more for you some day. I wish you could spend it for something you like; but I suppose you need it more than ever, now that I am away."

The summer had passed.

It had grown to be of weekly occurrence that Moll D. received her letter containing a five-dollar bill; and gossip was rife in the village that Dan Black had two more dogs now and was a "towerin'" the country just like "a circus man."

Then a year passed.

Moll D., with the weekly letter in her hand, was fitting around the corner from the post-office.

A little girl was waiting at the rickety gate to hear the letter read. She was breathless from her surreptitious run down the long hill. She had evidently been there before, for Moll D. led her in without comment.

As Moll D. opened the letter and money-order for ten dollars dropped into her lap. She read aloud:

"Poor, tired Mother: Can't you get something you want—some little thing that I do not know how to send?"

Moll D. put her parboiled hands over her tired face and cried. She who was not given to tears.

The little girl threw her arms around her and they finished the

letter together. Then the girl sped onward up to the hill.

And still Dan tramped from town to town, from city to city, and was

Disipation had no temptation for him; he needed no temperance lecturer to draw glowing pictures of its effects. He had been familiar with them in their bare, hard, unromantic aspects, robbed of all picturesque or sentimentalism.

All unconsciously he had been reared in a great university of



Progressive Home Making in a Western Province

One of the sights of the district around Starbuck, Man., is the garden of Mr. and Mrs. Thos. Blake whose fine farm home may be seen in the illustration. This is surely a model farmstead, one that would do credit to anyone!

thought and feeling and observation. There had been humor, too; the quaint, dry humor which his mother disseminated on her hurrying way as though others might have it if they liked, but as for her she had not time to laugh at it.

And the blood of her sturdy perseverance was in his veins. He was fortified against the attack of the world.

After much tramping, much sleeping in folds of doors, many scanty meals, he awoke as from a dream to find himself in demand at vaudeville houses throughout the country.

In five years, when his popularity had increased and he needed an assistant, he remembered the brown-legged, one-suspender boy, and sent for him.

"Never mind about your clothes," wrote Dan, "come on, if you want the work; I'll send you a ticket and we'll go to see some important things when you get here." And the boy went.

As time wore on and the boy proved resourceful and teachable, Dan found time for study, occasionally looking up a needy tutor and paying him more than he asked for a few hours' study.

Ten years had come and gone. The big tent which had formerly exhibited "Baker and Jeffries' Big Show," and later "Jeffries' Big Black's," but now simply "Dan Black's Trained Animals," was lighted up to the utmost and all alum with

It was filled with human beings, from the peanut-eating, gum-chewing boys on the front seats to the groups of plump old ladies and gentlemen who had come to guard some small child, so they said!

They had still transported through the performance of the fearful polar animals, and roared with merriment at educated elephants and dancing bears, chuckled at the monkeys, guffawed at the clown, and still were in a state of high expectancy.

All that had gone before was secondary to seeing the man who owned the show come on with his dogs.

The man who owned the show was at that moment in his dressing-room reading a letter from his mother.

It was pleasant to know that his mother now had time to write letters—such new letters—mis-spelled, but full of the things he wished to know.

He learned from them that Margaret Haines was still Miss Haines. He learned also that she need not have been, for among the fashionable set that visited her father's house she was most popular. Why did she remain Miss Haines?

At such times as this a wild hope made Dan's heart beat fast, and the home-calm was strong.

Some one was announcing to him that the last performers had left the stage.

One would hardly think that human throats could make such a noise as broke forth when the man who owned the show stepped upon the stage.

One marvelled at his power—this

though he was a mere risen, but, re-

membering his own at a still, "Jack!" Another responding yawn, and from out the group emerged a little black dog that ran to the back of the stage and sat down, all attention still.

So on through the group went Dan quickly until they were all lined up at the back of the stage, awaiting orders.

It was a memorable performance! There were long-legged dogs that made wonderful leaps, and short-legged dogs that danced, irresistible things. Dogs that said their prayers; dogs that danced the minuet; dogs that died at the mere suggestion; dogs that did the fire-drill; and not once did Dan drill them to the point of fatigue.

If confusion greeted him when he came on the stage, bedlam broke loose when he prepared to leave. But when, with Tim gathered in his arms and his dogs following him, he stepped close to the front and bowed familiarly with the boys, they gazed up at him, as with one pair of eyes, in a rapturous silence.

If he had offered to adopt them all, there would have been a number of bereft parents in the city that evening.

When it was all over a group of men were surrounding Dan's assistant, who was no longer a boy, and was "Charlie" to Dan, and sneezed himself if he crawled under the old table and sneezed himself if he yawned to tell me to in that soft way. Ye ain't afraid; ye know nothin' 'll happen to ye, except he might get disappointed if ye don't give ye up. An' I guess that's the way the dogs feel—they don't want to be give up; for I tell you he's on the square to live with 'em. Why, thunderin', I'd rather be bossed by him than to lord it over anybody else!"

The years are too many to recount them all separately.

But there came a day when Dan Black and his trained animals were known

the world around; when Jim Black had ceased to truck, and Moll D.'s washings were only a memory.

It was fifteen years since Dan had started on his duty road to fortune.

Among the aristocratic homes of Haytown, standing well back from the road, was a quiet house, with fine, straight lines and a spacious veranda, upon which were awnings and wicker chairs.

In the yard at the rear a slender, gray woman, instead of her habit of energy, acquired by long years of labor in cultivating roses in her garden.

Up the road some distance, in the president's office of the Avery Bank, was a tall man who, though there were gray threads in the closely cropped hair, was still young.

There was an old-time candor in the blue eyes, but firm lines had formed around the mouth. He had the bearing of one who had seen the world.

People who passed in and out of that bank lifted their hats to this man, but the slender gray woman at the quiet house still called him "Daddy."

Margaret Haines was still Miss Haines. The Haines residence, upon the shaded avenue, wore the same prospect as of old. It still had awnings and wicker chairs.

(Continued next week)

"Tim!" And old Tim responded with a little yap and a movement as

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