

"Well, young lady, this old farm has got to get up and hustle after this to provide for your future."

I did not regain my usual buoyant health that summer. Before baby was two months old my cook had left me. She said she was sick; but the fact was she had learned enough from me to seek a place in town, which she promptly did. We were too busy to hunt for another, feeling—as we did—that the search would be long, if not altogether fruitless.

Had we lived near town, I could have sent out the washing and the sewing and had a woman in once a week to help me clean. As it was, the nearest laundry was twelve miles away, and no woman within five miles of us was poor enough to do other people's work.

#### When Family Privacy is Impossible

My husband had thrown himself into the farming with great vigor; and a sense of fairness, if nothing else, would have spurred me to keep even pace with him and do my part. So I made a study of systematizing my work; I made every movement count, as far as possible, toward some definite end.

My first care was baby. Nothing ever prevented me from keeping her immaculately clean, healthy and happy. That I did not have leisure to enjoy her loveliness, and watch her little mind and body develop hour by hour, grieved me; but I told myself that this was the common lot of mothers. That some who did have the leisure chose to spend it in social dissipations instead was to me unthinkable.

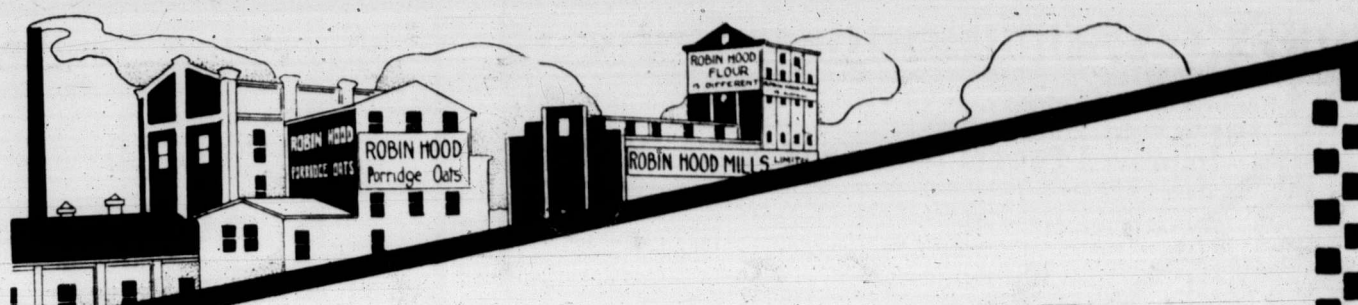
Besides doing the housework as I did the summer before, I was also trying to raise chickens enough for our own use. A man born and bred on the farm would as soon think of buying champagne for his table as chickens, though nobody likes to eat them better than he. Louis had bought me an incubator and a brooder, and I was highly successful with them. They took up more of my time than the old setting hens, but were less unpleasant to handle.

The young fruitvines we had planted the last year were now bearing. Abundant strawberries, raspberries and blackberries were to be picked. What we could not eat I must can or preserve. When I say I canned or preserved fruit I am dealing in terms of gallons and bushels—not the tiny glasses or pint jars town women mean when they talk of canning. Moreover, it was all done over a hot wood range; and the carrying of wood and water necessary was not the least part of the work. Though Louis usually filled the wood-box and the water-bucket before leaving the house, they both seemed to be empty always.

"If the house were to catch fire this bucket would be the first thing to burn," he would sometimes good-naturedly grumble as he picked up the empty pail and started for the well.

Some of the men in the community were not so considerate of their wives. I had one neighbor—a second wife—whose husband, an ex-legislator called "highly educated" because he was a university man, was reputed to be worth seventy thousand dollars. Their cook-stove was so old and dilapidated that three of its four legs were gone and had been replaced by bricks, and it leaked ashes at every pore. He would never have her wood cut and she was too proud to cut it herself. I have been in her kitchen when she had one end of an old tree-branch stuck in the stove for fuel, the rest of the branch projecting halfway across the room and supported by two chairs. As the end in the stove burned off, the remainder was gradually fed into the fire until the supporting chairs could be safely removed. Then another branch was brought into requisition. Poor woman! She is now dead, like her predecessor; and their well-preserved husband is industriously seeking a third wife.

I went absolutely nowhere that summer. The spring was late, and during the first rush of plowing my buggy horse was impressed—and somehow it was never convenient to restore her to me. On Sunday Louis professed to be too tired to go to church and I did not insist on going. Secretly I preferred to spend this precious leisure in the intimate companionship of my baby or in reading when she was asleep. Louis spent the day in riding over the farm and planning the week's work. We had to give up reading together in the evening as my work was never done before bedtime. My work-hardened hands refused to do my bidding at the piano, so I scarcely ever attempted to play. I passionately loved music, and to have to give it up was one of my most disheartening experi-



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ences. Of course, we never had time for the pleasant walks in the woods and along the hedgerows now. We had a large, shady yard, and for her health's sake I kept baby out-of-doors most of the time; but neither of us ever got outside of the yard.

That winter Louis bought the adjoining one hundred and sixty acres that he had often spoken of needing. The next spring, when hiring the new hands, he said to me:

"Eleanor, can't we let two of the men eat in the house for the next three months? They can sleep over the toolshed and you will not be bothered with them except at mealtime. I can get all the men out earlier if part of them are right here with me." At my dismayed look, he continued: "You know we have got to work harder to pay for that land."

So we took to getting up at four o'clock and there were four extra men to feed instead of two. They brought mud and bad odors into the house; they only half washed their faces and hands and wiped the rest of the dirt on the kitchen towels, so I was obliged to change them after every meal. They ate in a slovenly manner, so my table no longer presented its usual attractive appearance. What little conversation they held was about crops and crop conditions. Our dining room had become only a part of the farm workshop.

I had begun to suggest modern improvements for the house immediately after starting housekeeping and mentioned them again and again as the work grew

heavier, but was always told to "wait until we get out of debt." Now it is a fact that hardly any of the big farmers are ever out of debt. When they nearly approach that happy state there is always a new piece of land to buy or new improvements in farm buildings or equipment to make. Rarely indeed is a sum large enough to provide bath, kitchen sink, furnace and lights forthcoming for the home. The farmhouse is really the most important workshop on the place and invariably the poorest provided with labor-saving machinery—this in spite of the fact that the women of the family must do the work in the house, while that elsewhere is done by hired laborers.

I began to look pretty bad. Aside from the fact that I no longer had the time to dress as carefully as before, to arrange my hair becomingly or fix the little accessories that add so much to a woman's appearance, I was so tired all the time that I looked positively ill. Louis felt called upon to remonstrate.

"You work too hard by trying to keep things so clean. Let things go more. Eat off an oilcloth. Let the men eat their dessert on their plates. That is better than they are used to."

That we should have to eat off the oilcloth, and mix our pudding with the meat and vegetables on our own plates, did not seem to occur to him to be an objection to the plan.

We had an unusually good crop that year. We nearly paid for the one hundred

and sixty acres in the fall, and Louis promptly bought eighty more, three miles from home. He also went to market and bought feeders—cattle to fatten on the abundant corn we had raised that summer. This necessitated keeping hands in the house all winter, as feeding requires great care—else much money may be lost. Of course the men could not sleep over the toolshed in winter; so I had to prepare two extra bedrooms for them. After the democratic manner of farmers, they sat in our living room when not at work. The farm had now invaded the whole house. We had not so much privacy in our family life as boarding-house keepers.

Continued Next Week

#### MASSEY-HARRIS PROFITS

Moose Jaw, Sask., May 1.—In a district court case today it transpired that when John F. Lindsay, of the Massey-Harris company, went to collect a bill of some \$200 from Mrs. Harris she replied that there were better times coming. "When?" asked Mr. Lindsay. "Do you mean that there will be more money?"

"No," replied the witness, "when the Good Lord takes me to heaven."

"That would not greatly help the creditor," said the judge, and he eventually reserved judgment. Mr. Lindsay admitted that his company bought wagons for \$30 or \$40 and sold them for \$108.