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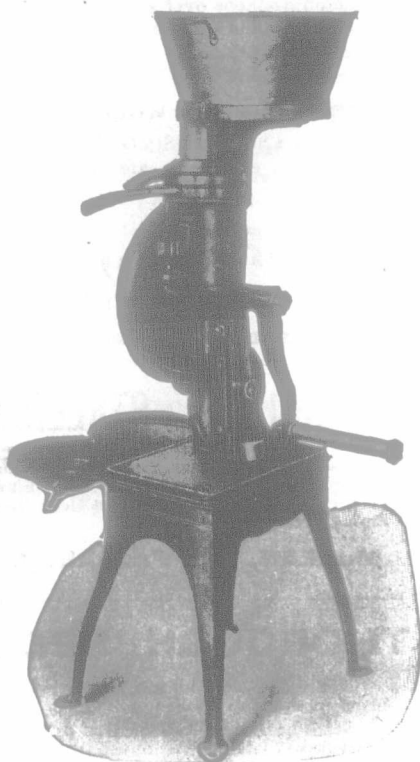
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WRITE FOR PARTICULARS

The Farmer's Advocate of Winnipeg, Ltd., Winnipeg, Man.

There was no word spoken for some moments after the prayer. With people like the Finches it was considered to be insult to the Almighty to depart from "the Presence" with any unseemly haste. Then Thomas came to help his mother to her room, but she, with her eyes upon her husband, quietly put Thomas aside and said, "Donald, will you tak me ben?"

Rarely had she called him by his name before the family, and all felt that this was a most unusual demonstration of tenderness on her part.

The old man glanced quickly at her from under his overhanging eyebrows, and met her bright upward look with an involuntary shake of the head and a slight sigh. Comfort was not for him, and he must not delude himself. But with a little laugh she put her hand on his arm, and as if administering reproof to a little child, she said some words in Gaelic.

"Oh, woman, woman!" said Donald in reply, "if it was yourself we had to deal with—"

"Whisht, man! Will you be putting me before your Father in heaven?" she said, as they disappeared into the other room.

There was no fiddle that evening. There was no heart for it with Thomas, neither was there time, for there was the milking to do, and the "sorting" of the pails and pans, and the preparing for churning in the morning, so that when all was done, the long evening had faded into twilight and it was time for bed.

Before going upstairs, Thomas took Hughie into "the room" where his mother's bed had been placed. Thomas gave her her medicine and made her comfortable for the night.

"Is there nothing else now, mother?" he said, still lingering about her.

"No, Thomas, my man. How are the cows doing?"

"Grand; Blossom filled a pail to-night and Spotty almost twice. She's a great milker, yon."

"Yes, and so was her mother. I remember she used to fill two pails when the grass was good."

"I remember her, too. Her horns curled right back, didn't they? And she always looked so fierce."

"Yes, but she was a kindly cow. And will the churn be ready for the morning?"

"Yes, mother, we'll have buttermilk for our porridge, sure enough."

"Well, you'll need to be up early for that, too early, Thomas, lad, for a boy like you."

"A boy like me!" said Thomas, feigning indignation, and stretching himself to his full height. "Where would you be getting your men, mother?"

"You are man enough, laddie," said his mother, "and a good one you will come to be, I doubt. And you, too, Hughie, lad," she added, turning to him. "You will be like your father."

"I dunno," said Hughie, his face flushing scarlet. He was weary and sick of his secret, and the sight of the loving comradeship between Thomas and his mother made his burden all the heavier.

"What's wrong with yon laddie?" asked Mrs. Finch, when Hughie had gone to bed.

"Now, mother, you're too sharp altogether. And how do you know anything is wrong with him?"

"I warrant you his mother sees it. Something is on his mind. Hughie is not the lad he used to be. He will not look at you straight, and that is not like Hughie."

"Oh, mother, you're a sharp one," said Thomas. "I thought no one had seen that but myself. Yes, there is something wrong with him. It's something in the school. It's a poor place nowadays, anyway, and I wish Hughie were done with it."

"He must keep at the school, Thomas and I only wish you could do the same." His mother sighed. She had her own secret ambition for Thomas, and though she never opened her heart to her son, or indeed to any one, Thomas somehow knew that it was her heart's desire, to see him "in the pulpit."

"Never you mind, mother," he said, brightly. "It'll all come right. Are'n't you always the one preaching faith to me?"

"Yes, laddie, and it is needed, and sorely at times."

(To be continued.)

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