

The Ransoming of Mother By MELVA IONA GREGORY (Successful Farming)

962

(10)

years in the last twelve months." Eleanor's eyes filled with tears. "I know. She's simply worrying herself to death, and that's telling on dad.

He feels that he is to blame for 1. There's no question but that it all. he did get pretty badly trimmed in the trade. What to do that would mend matters though, I cannot see. Mend matters though, I cannot see. Of course, I believe, in time, the old farm can be made to produce sur-prisingly, and—" "But, Phil," Eleanor broke in,

"But, "what about mother in the meantimo

Phil sighed. "That's the trouble. I don't know."

The Hallowells had moved to the farm the spring before. For sev-eral years Mr. Hallowell had dreamed of buying had dreamed of buying a farm and turning far-mer. He pictured the ease and quiet of a country home surround-ed by green fields in which cattle grazed and fat hogs lay in lazy luxury. So one day when a stranger offered to trade an improved farm of 120 acres for his property and business, it seemed his chance had come at last. Mrs. Hallowell had not been enthusiastic, but

he had enough enthusiasm for both. this on He went to see the farm, and although it was mostly hills the scenery was picturesque and appealed to him so strongly that he closed the deal at strongly that he closed the deal at once. Never having farmed, it did not occur to him that to wring a living from the poor, wornout soil would be a difficult undertaking. When Mrs. Hallowell reached the farm she saw the things her husband had not and she despaired of ever makseen, ing the farm pay. She broke down and cried.

To Phil and Eleanor it seemed like a glimpse of another world compared with the dirt and grime of the city, but after a time their mother's dissatisfaction cast a shadow over them all. To see her face taking on lines when it should have been young looking, was a trial, indeed. At first their father had tried to be gay and prove to her that the trade was for the best; but even he had come to see that unless the farm was run differently it would be hard to make both Gradually his cheerful-ed. This was why the ends meet ness vanished. young people felt that there must be a

Next evening after supper Phil call-ed to Eleanor, "Come, let's watch the sunset."

She caught up a scarf and hurried after him. The March air was sharp with frost. It never ceased to fascin-

**SOMETHING has just got to be ate them to see the large red disc journey ourself. Mother has aged ten trees. This evening the flame of the years in the last treelve months." afterglow as it lit up the wintry aky Eleanor's eyer filled with tears. They waited until it died out, then turned to descend the

"I have a plan, Phil, if it will only ork — and I believe it will. I've work racked my brain and it just came to me how we can make the old farm pay well until we get a chance to sell and go back. You know that's what mother wants to do. Good old dad is too honest to unload it on anyone else like it was unloaded on him.

'What's your plan?'' lessly. They had Phil asked listlessly. had discussed 80 many and rejected all as so useless that he felt no particular interest in

"It's parcel post dinners," Eleanor exclaimed excitedly. "I'm sure it would be a success."

would be a success." Phil looked "Parcel post dinners?" Phil looked blank. "I don't understand." "Ut sthis way. We raise everything "most to eat and there's always a sur-plus as it is, but we will raise lots and lots more this year. Then there's the

cows and chickens and flowers - and

in the world what you were talking about. What connection cows and

flowers have I cannot see. often closely related when soratching up the beds."

"You never do see! It's like this. We have all these extra things that

no market in the village, and to ship

every detail—even to the flowers for the table. In the city there are plenty of people who would buy, I'm

Phil was interested. It sounded

feasible. "By parcel post, you mean?"

"You're on!" Eleanor dropped into slang. "I read of a woman in Eng-land, who had her dinners sent in from her country place. If she could,

should bring in something.

small amounts would not pay.

idea is to furnish meals complete

. I just know we can make a go of

"We might-if I had the least idea

would be a success.

all

it!

BUT

he asked

"I'm sure it

We have different regulations here, but we're in first zone of Indianapolis. The rate will not be Indianapolis. prohibitive."

They planned to raise all kinds of garden stuff, and flowers suitable for cutting. Fruits were plentiful on the old farm, and with a little extra care would be quite a factor in their pro-posed business. Owing to their mothposed business. Owing to their moth-er's belief that nothing could make the farm pay, they decided to only tell her that they intended to market the surplus vegetables and fruits.

Through the next two months they orked industriously, using plenty of fertilizer and spraying according to approved methods. They did not go at it blindly, but studied and profited by what others know. By June they felt they were ready to try it out. Phil wrote a catchy little advertise ment offering to furnish country dinners complete, including the floral de-corations, by parcel post. This they sent to each of the daily papers in Indianapolis. They purchased con-tainers such as the law required, and got ready to fill orders when they

"I'm glad we took dad in on this He's as excited as we are - though that's saying a great deal," Eleanor laughed nervously

If we shouldn't get any orders we're out considerable for those containers and the advertisements. Moth-er would be worried to death if she knew. But we're bound to get them. City people are anxious to do away with the middleman;" Phil was no "It's only just time to get pessimist. "It's only just time to get orders. We may get one to-day when

Hallowell called from the kitchen. 9 believe they will succeed

"We're to send in a dinner for four people, to-morrow, to a Mrs. Gray on North Meridian Street. She left in She left it to us to send what we thought best Said she was curious to see it tried and if it was a success we could count

on her taking two dinners a week on her taking two dinners a week, at least. She wants a pound of butter. Now we could send fifty pounds if we cared to, for only fifty-four cents What shall we send?"

September 17, 1914

Mrs. Hallowell grew interested in pite of herself and was soon helping lan the dinner. "There are those plan the dinner. "There are those young chickens that were hatched early; why wouldn't one of them make They would a nice broiler? a mee oroner? They would weigh about a pound and a half when dress ed." "Who said mother couldn't beat us all planning?" Phil queried. "That would be dandy. There's two pounds and a half. Next."

"Some shelled pease with a those early potatoes would be fine. smearcase and a bottle of rich crean to go over it and season the peas. Eleanor enumerated rapidly.

"Some of those cherries would look good," Mr. Hallowell suuggested.

"A few of those strawberry preserves we canned so many of, might add a dainty touch."

Eleanor smiled in delight at her mother's display of interest. "Indeed they would-and flowers, there's the old thousand-leaf roses. Won't they be splendid as decorations for the table? I can almost see our dinner Now is that all? A pound of butter, a quart of shelled peas, a few young potatoes, one broiler, a pint of straw berry preserves, a pint

smearcase, of of cream, a quart of cher-tries and a lot of roses."

"We could send a loaf of my salt-rising bread if you think it would please," Mrs. Hallowell suggested half doubt

Eleanor clapped her hands. "And some of the angel-food cake I bak-Won't it be a splen dinner? Mrs. Gray ed! did dinner? cannot help but be much pleased

The most attractive feature of the fine farm of W. Templeton, Chateauguay Co., Que, are the spiendid eim trees that surround the buildings. This is one of the pleasing characteristics of the country is rendered attractive farm home are located in groves such as this. Hence a rather fat country is rendered attractive 'And it's only the be ginning !" Phil exclaim-ed. "Still there's more to follow. We'll all help and it won't

be hard on anyone." Containers were brought out and inspected

"We didn't tell you, mother, until we were sure," Phil explained apole petically

"You thought I would worry-and I guess I would. Though somehow i does seem like you might suucceed." The family felt cheered for that was Though somehow

quite an admission from mother. The careful study they had made d city markets enabled them to prise each article intelligently. Next more ing amid much excitement the dim was neatly and tastefully prepared for mailing. After it was finished Mn Hallowell seated herself on the bad porch to rest, for it had been rath an exciting morning. Eleanor drop ped into the hammock beside her. "Wasn't it fine, mother?" she as ed with shining eyes.

Her mother looked at her proud "My little girl has a business head am tempted to believe," she said.

Soon other orders came, for th novelty of their business appealed a a great many people. In a couple days their first check arrived and with it a letter of appreciation from M Gray. She gave her order for the dinners each week.

"A pleased customer means much," Eleanor exulted. "She will tell others and they will give us

September 17,

trial I see vision trade and of a lit happy back in a c The Hallowell fa happy in their not had all the orders more. They made send out anything class, and kept o the bill of fare. O for the table gave then again wild da dred took a breath the tired city dwe The listlessness t customed to in their gave way and she h as any of them in Even with the ext d stronger and the ing out. Phil and

It's because she of getting away frais going to be all ransomed," Phil de "I'm sure of it. eorn pone. it to be filled to-n ent about her worl The summer pa Eleanor, r

and health, came fr arms filled with in meet. "See what for decorations this Isn't it lovely?" "It is, indeed,"

d a spray with its

Eleanor glanced What's the matter, "Nothing-that om has come soone

"What do you me

You know that (up here in August? ur business looks e has made me an farm

The bitter sweet f heeded. And you accepte ed breathlessly.

"Provided the res tell mother." Eleanor gathered weet and started to

fields had never seen and as she balanced the fence and looked illage lay in the cle there was a catch in the lawn Phil and

aiting for her. "Father told you How happy it will "I've seen happ mrself." Eleanor ext moment.

"I feel like a cad," ably, "I can't want t are really started, ar I love every foot of Ottis." The intellig ed up at the mentio "He would be miser own with no stock his business, you kno "Oh, Ottis," Elean must you go with e

A tear dropped on to mat. "We must th Phil, I'm going this Forcing herself to b

to her mother. "Hurrah!" she she

Mrs. Hallowell look on't understand." As Eleanor explain

"And so," Eleanor is just waiting for the accept his offer."



the mail comes

by

tified

i4.

There's

My

"There goes our ring on the tele-phone. Mother's answering. Listen! It's long distance! It may be an order!" Eleanor dashed up the steps.

with Phil a close second, and landed

"Here, you take the receiver-I dis-like answering toll calls," Mrs. Hallo-

four you say. Very well. You shall not be used pointed.—To-morrow morning in time for your delivery.—That will be intifactory.—We hope to

quite satisfactory.—We hope to have you for a regular customer and will certainly try to please you.— Yes.—Good-bye."

Mrs. Hallowell was completely mys-

"What in the world were you talk-

"What in the world were you tak-ing about, Eleanor? Who was it any way?" ahe aaked as Eleanor turned excitedly from the telephone. "An order," she cried. Then snatch-ing Mrs. Hallowell up she whirled her gaily round the room. "We're going

Explanations came thick and fast. Mrs. Hallowell shock her head. "I don't like to discourage you, children; but it is not practical—you cannot do

way, it will never come." "Oh, mother, let them try," Mr.

If my ransom has to come that it will never come."

to ransom you, little mother."

her astonished mother's side.

well said in a tone of relief. Well said in a tone of "Hello!—Yes, Eleanor took it. "Hello!—Yes, this is Breezy Heights.—Yes. For four you say?—Leave it to us?— Very well. You shall not be disap-