BLESSINGS wait on virtuous deeds though late, a sure reward succeeds.—*Congreve.*

By Way of the Smudge-pot

(New England Homestead)

STEALING through the open window of Nadine Horton's room, the cool night air half roused the young woman from her slumbers. Drowsily she pulled the covers closely about her shoulders and snuggled her head deeper into the white pillow.

Suddenly, however, the girl was wide awake, and sat upright in bed. "Is it so cold as that?" she pondered. "I wonder if daddy has started the smudge pots in the orchard?"

The next instant her bare feet touched the floor, and she tiptoed to the window, which looked out upon a wide expanse of orchard land. Hers was an upstairs room, and from the window in the clear spring night she could see, beyond a field of cultivated land, the young trees, and discern the fences separating the various tracts.

"The Colters have fired up," she half whispered, half thought, as she caught glimpses of the little patches of curling smoke and here and there a faint gleam through the tree branches, "but daddy hasn't."

It was in the early days of orchard heating, and present-day devices had not yet been placed upon the market. Orchardists were just learning that the loss of crops from frost and freezing might be prevented by the use of the smudge-pot.

With one hand on the window frame and the other resting on her hip, Nadine stood thinking. She remembered seeing her father look at the thermometer just before retiring and hearing his remark that the temperature was so high that no smudging would be needed that night. However, it must have turned cooler, for the Colters were careful about such matters, and evidently thought it best to start theirs.

"Poor daddy; he's so tired to be roused at this time of night. Only to-day he was complaining again because all of his three children had to be girls. It started when mamma mentioned my wanting a new spring suit so badly. 'Look how the Colters get along,' he said. 'It's because there's three big boys to work the place, but here only one lone man—not as young as he once was—and four women folks to keep in clothes.' "

"I suppose it's a foolish thing to think of, but I'm not going to wake daddy; I'm going myself to look after the smudge-pots."

Nadine's sisters had nicknamed her "Fire Chief," because of the rapidity with which she could attire herself. Jestingly they contended that she had learned the art because of her inordinate desire to snatch a moment of sleep each morning after the first breakfast bell rang. It was only a few moments, therefore, until Nadine quietly crossed the back porch, seized the lantern, and calling softly to old Bounce to follow, marched down the road in the direction of their peach orchard.

Her gingham dress was of a becoming pattern and fitted her neatly, and the scarf about her head framed her pretty face in an attractive manner; but she was scared. Every creeping thing by the roadside caused her to start and tighten her grip on the lantern as though she would wield it in self-defence. Of course she had been out alone many times after dark, but to sally forth on such an undertaking near midnight was out of the ordinary for even a farmer's daughter.

It was a grand night and between the little shivers and heart flutters of fright she drank in its beauties. Not a breeze stirred. Countless millions of stars looked down upon her from the clear western sky. Straight in front of her to the east she could discern the outlines of what resembled great clouds as much as anything—the Rocky Mountains.

As she rounded a corner where she would turn into their orchard, a form emerged from the orchard on the opposite side of the road and approached. Bounce growled. At sight of it Nadine let fall to the ground the light cloak carried beneath her arm, and came near relaxing her hold upon the lantern. She seemed without a heart—hers stood so still.

The object was a man, and at sight of the lantern and its bearer he stopped, momentarily shielding his eyes from the bright light with his hand. Then he spoke.

"Hello, Nadine!"

"Harley Colter! I could kill you." But he knew from her laugh that she didn't mean it.

In an instant he had crawled through the wire fence and stepped to her side.

"Doesn't Mr. Horton know Jack Frost is about to touch him for a thousand dollars?"

"No. He went to bed thinking that everything was all right for the night."

"Well, he's off there, sure. I was just going across to start his pots for him."

"That's what I'm here for."

"You mean you came to ask me to do it."

"No. I came to do it myself."

"You!" And Harley's hearty laughter rang out upon the still night air. "What do you know about such things?"

"Oh, I've gone with daddy a few times, and they are fixed ready to touch off, you know. After that, there isn't much to do but to keep stirring them occasionally."

"Of all things! And you were brave enough to spend the remainder of the night out here alone?"

"Yes," she nodded, at the same time realizing she hadn't figured much on the long hours between eleven-thirty and sunrise.

"Well, I've a proposition to make to you. You go back home and I'll take care of the pots for your father to-night. I know he's tired out."

"I'll do nothing of the kind. You have your own to look after. Besides, you might fall asleep on duty," she concluded laughingly.

"I was getting right sleepy before you came," he admitted. "I was to call one of the other boys at twelve, but if you insist on tackling the job, I think I'll stay the night out."

"All right; I can stay up a half night if you can stay up all night."

In a Very, Very Merry Mood

The photo from which this illustration is taken, was snapped by an editor of Farm and Dairy on the small farm of L. M. Ellis, Colchester Co., N.S. In the rear may be seen a part of the rich marshes that surround the head waters of the Bay of Fundy, and in the distance, Onslow, one of the finest farming districts in Canada.

"And we'll make the round of first one orchard and then the other together," he added.

With this arrangement they proceeded. Ten thousand times ten thousand blooms filled their nostrils with sweetest perfume. At the end of each round they would sit by a little fire and talk of their school days spent together. As they walked through the fragrant avenues they sang together the old songs and the new, and the hours had fled without the happy pair's realization of their going.

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At the Horton home as the morning dawned Mrs. Horton said, "Frank, we'll let the girls sleep this morning and I'll get breakfast. You'd like some of my biscuits anyway, wouldn't you?" While she thus busied herself Mr. Horton rushed in from the side porch with the thermometer in his hand.

"Lizzie," he cried, "the thermometer is broken and not registering properly. The mercury is standing exactly where it was last night. And just look outdoors, what a frost we had! Our fruit's gone. I'll bet there's not a peach left." He tapped the worthless instrument with his finger, and dejection marked his every feature.

"Too bad, sweetheart, but it can't be helped," said Mrs. Horton, her arm about him. "Perhaps it's not so serious after all."

Just then the front gate creaked on its hinges, and Mr. Horton glanced through the window in that direction.

"Hello; where's our girlie been?"

"Didn't know any of them had stirred yet. I gues Nadine thought she would get up early on her birthday. She's nineteen to-day; hard to realize that she is grown. And isn't she a picture" concluded the mother looking fondly at her daughter approaching in the gravel path.

"Well, old sleepy-head, you're out early," said Mr. Horton as Nadine stepped into the kitchen, her face aglow with contact with the cool air.

"Early and late both, daddy. Aren't you proud of me? I woke up soon after eleven and saw the neighbors smudging, and I've had ours going ever since. The crop is all O.K."

"My child! You don't mean it! Weren't you afraid?" And the thermometer dropped to the floor at his feet.

"Not much—after—after I got there. Harley went along and helped me."

"You're a dear! Do you know you've saved us several hundred dollars? You've certainly won the new spring suit all right."

"Oh, daddy, thanks; I wanted it so much. And, daddy," she continued, blushingly burying her face on his shoulder, "you're to have what you wished, too—a—son. Harley asked me to-night if he mightn't be it."

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Ownership

By Prof. W. C. Palmer

To do something is one of the fundamentals of the human make-up. A boy or girl can no more develop normally without owning something than without fresh air or food. It has been found in orphan asylums, where children are not allowed to have even a handkerchief as their own, that these children are less active and more subject to disease and abnormal development than other children raised in a more independent atmosphere.

This is one of the important factors that needs to be considered in the bringing up of children. Let them have things of their own and let them be really their own. There is no place where this can be so well carried out as on the farm. The boy can be given a dog and some other animal as a pig or cow. The girl can have a cat, some chickens and whatever may suit her the best.

NOT FATHER'S TO SELL

When they have been given these things, do not sell them. Just as well set a meal before a child, and when it begins to eat remove it. The taking away of what one considers as one's own property from a child causes it to lose faith in the father or mother and this father or mother is looked up to by the child—is idealized by the child. To lose faith with them means the crushing of ideals, means the breaking of the strings that hold the child to the home.

Let the boy or girl have things that are their very own. It will do much to bring about a healthy normal development. It will develop responsibility and strengthen the attachment for the home. Especially should this be done on the farm.

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Much time is wasted, when sewing, searching for hooks, eyes, buttons, and small articles needed. A splendid idea is to place these articles in bottles—one for white hooks and eyes, another for black, a third for buttons and so on. The contents of each bottle is revealed at a glance, and the workbasket is kept clean and tidy.