

“ What, dad? ”

“ Why, spring, my lass.”

Gladys glanced at the calendar. It was the middle of April, and there had been no sign of a break in the wintry weather.

“ Oh, well, it will be here presently, dad. We must keep our hearts up.”

But her brave words belied her real feelings, for well she knew what was at stake. She knew that her father relied on the coming crop to pull him out of debt, and it really looked no nearer spring than it did a month ago. The seeding would be thrown late, which would make the chances poor for a good crop. A late spring means risks: if followed by frosts, coming early after the summer, the grain, not being mature, would be frozen, and its value largely depreciated.

“ That’s what you said a week ago, weather prophet. I don’t think you are better in that line than the rest of them. But you are a good girl, and I don’t know what I should do without you.”

“ Well, you know, dad, there’s no use meeting trouble half-way.”

The old man got up and went to the window again, for he saw that the slight fall of snow which had attracted his attention before had now increased. It was falling in thick flakes, drifted hither and thither by a bitter east wind that seemed likely to develop into a blizzard.