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Some time in December a Boston letter again found its way into Lucy McDougal's hands, which her sister had written in jubilant spirits. "Yes, indeed," she wrote, "Nellie has been quite rejuvenated since her visit with you and I believe has secured Aunt Priscilla's approval without sacrifice of her own affections. It happens in this way. A college friend of Tom Herbert's has been visiting him (you know how Aunt admires the Herberts), Dr. O'Neil by name and has laid siege to Aunt's heart who now showers favors upon this tactful and fortunate young man and when Nellie arrived for Thanksgiving

with Aunt, she found that no one could compare in the old lady's eyes with this same Dr. O'Neil. Now it seems he is none other than your jolly favorite, Jerry, and Nellie confesses to this all being arranged during her Norton visit.

Jerry, who now was a practising physician in a nearby town found his practice increasing, consequently invested in a handsome stone house nearby.

None were therefore surprised when invitations reached Norton relatives that all should be present at the marriage of Helen Staunton, to Dr. Jerome Kenwood O'Neil, early in the New Year.

## A Saskatchewan Harvest Home

by Edith G. Bayne.

These are the days when the Western farmer looks out across his broad acres, now shorn of their fine crops, with a glow of immense satisfaction at heart. It is his turn to rest now. His grain is garnered, his fall ploughing finished, and he proposes to play a little, and as he jingles a handful of coin in his pocket (and remembers the neat little figure in his bank-book), an immeasurable breadth of smile spreads over his countenance. Do you know what a Western smile is? This is the time of year when you see it oftenest.

Like watchfires of medieval times the blazing strawstacks on the Canadian prairie beam out in the dark autumn nights with a seeming desire to lessen the vast distances between neighbors. And beside each gleaming light there is generally a party of merrymakers. There are nuts and jokes to crack. There is a big dinner in course of preparation. The biggest space in the barn has been marked out for a "hoe-down" and scores of jack-o-lanterns hang from the beams and rafters. All the young folk, middle-aged folk and elderly folk from within a radius of thirty miles are gathered at the harvest home. No particular day or date is adhered to, each farmer entertaining in turn and on the evening which best suits him. For many weeks past, especially since harvesting operations ceased, the bachelor homesteader has been practising the waltz step on the barn floor so that he may acquit himself creditably at the harvest dances.

The threshing season is a strenuous one. For weeks everybody has been working at high pressure. All available help is "spoken for" days ahead and it is now, if at no other period, that members of the voteless sex are at a premium. The women folk have manufactured pies by the dozen lot and arrayed the pantry shelves with a regiment of jam and pickle jars. There are thirty-two freshly-baked cakes reposing on these shelves and a peep into that row of wash boilers in the cellar would reveal almost as many loaves of bread. The girls have imparted an artistic touch to the long tables by placing bowls of late prairie flowers at short distances down the centre. Meals are about all that occupy the women at threshing time, but truly they have time for nothing else. From daylight until midnight these brave industrious souls work at meals, meals, meals. (Let us not mention the dish-washing.) At many up-to-date farms paper plates and cups are used and thrown into the fire after each meal. The meat supply, like the other edibles, is on a vast scale, but of the best. Some of the meat is freshly cooked for dinner and at supper cold sliced meat is served. The harvester generally fares well. The girls have also prepared vegetables enough to fill three or four large agate vessels—in any one of which the proverbial fatted calf might be boiled. When the harvest hands, hungry but good-humored, swarm in at the call of the dinner horn, the girls wait upon the tables and an observer may note that almost every nationality except the Chinese is represented. Here are a couple of tall Swedes, there a Poleander, further along is a swarthy Italian and a Scot who informs you that he hails from Glasgow. "Three dollars a day and all found" is no small drawing card for him. An Englishman from Leeds occupies the head of the board and makes a valiant

attack on his portion of the roast beef, at the same time telling the man next him, a Canadian, that "we 'ave better beef at 'ome."

The men sleep in a caboose outside and as soon as the first streak of daylight arrives, a shrill whistle from the traction engine arouses them to the stern realities of life. Breakfast despatched, they are at work by six and have the threshing well under way by the time city folks are turning over for "five minutes more." By half-past ten appetites are clamorous and the blare of the horn falls with sweeter music on the ear than would a melody from Faust. At four in the afternoon the girls carry "hand lunches" out to the fields and for a quarter of an hour the gang again refresh themselves. This repast consists of sandwiches and buttermilk. Work is again resumed and continues until darkness falls. At seven o'clock a fine hot supper is ready at the house and the threshers retire directly afterwards to their sleeping quarters, where John D. Rockefeller might envy the quality of their repose.

But the course of threshing does not always run smoothly. Occasionally there is a breakdown in some part of the machinery, or perhaps the foreman has neglected to lay in a sufficient quantity of gasoline. Or it may be that a son of Italy in that cosmopolitan company has taken French leave and the farmer finds himself a man short. At any rate "all hands" have a welcome lay-off, their wages running on while the worried farmer rides into the village or telephones and awaits supplies.

Everybody in the West knows that the bachelor homesteader's piece de resistance is flap-jacks. Perhaps it is for this reason a single man hires willingly to a married brother at threshing time. As one young fellow puts it: "You get some decent eats and home-made bread instead of flap jacks."

Now flap jacks are a sort of glorified pancake and if well made are very palatable. But like the little maid with the curl "down the middle of her forehead," when a flap jack is bad—it is "horrid." It differs from the ordinary pancake in that no such artificial means as fork or knife are used in turning it in the pan. The chef must possess a supple wrist and an accurate eye and if possible have had some training on a lacrosse team. A quick jerk of the pan, up flies the cake, turning a simple somersault in the air, and then it falls back with the brown side uppermost.

So, for many weeks while the noise of the thresher is heard on the land, the prairie farm is a scene of tremendous activity and the harvest moon shines down upon many a gang working overtime, utilizing the moonlight and the rays from the head-light of the traction engine combined.

"A fine harvest! Yes since—a bumper crop it was!" says the farmer as he basks in the warmth of Indian summer and jingles his pockets containing the silver with as much frequency as a small boy consulting a new watch. His complacency reminds one of "Cy" Pettingill. "Cy" Pettingill fell asleep at church one Sunday morning shortly after the harvesting was over and remained "dead to the world" until it was intimated that the choir would render "an old favorite, suitable to the season," viz.: "What Shall the Harvest Be?"

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