

### Opinions of a Farmer's Wife

By NINA MOORE JAMIESON

FOR one good careful farmer, you will find a score whose furrows have cramps. How many farm teams that go to town on a market day have shining coats and glittering harness? How often do you see Honest John out with his scythe, cutting weeds in the fence corners? The careless man! No doubt he will tell you he is "too busy"; there is so much said about the farmer and his busy days that you may reasonably conclude there is something in it. He is, in fact, so occupied with farming as a business that he has no time to think of the pleasure that might go with it. He has been labouring half-heartedly for years, with one eye on the crop, and the other on the house in town where he intends to live just as soon as he scrapes up enough to retire on. A farmer idealizes Heaven as a place where there are no chores to do. He has never had the ideals or the capital with which to back them, that might have made it possible to get the most out of his farm mentally as well as financially. This may explain why farmers' sons and daughters invariably cast anchor in the city. A little advertising might help our cause—but the blight of mediocrity rests upon us undeniably, and young folks yearn to excel. About the time they acquire double-chins and grey heads, their enthusiasm either achieves or wanes.

The farmer has been so long in his rut that now when the cry goes forth for increased production he is at a loss. Any other industry can mobilize men, money and machinery for the sudden demand. Why can't we? For one thing, we are dealing direct with Nature who refuses to jump at the whistle of any human demand. Some of her caprices we have studied and met. But we still find ourselves handicapped when it comes to supplying moisture in a dry season like the summer of 1916, or sunshine in a wet time such as the spring that went before it. Then farming, in this country, is probably the most wasteful industry we have. To illustrate: We pump water by hand for our stock, wasting, at a conservative estimate, 365 hours in a year, which is something over 15 days! But a water system costs a good deal of money; we have the time and we do not have the dollars. So there you are. Again, we set milk in pans, skim the cream and feed the residue to the calves. Happy day! Each calf gets as much cream daily as would put creases of fat on a baby. Cream is dear calf feed, but separators cost money, too! There was a fuel famine last winter—and here in the many bushes of this neighborhood are quantities of fallen stuff, which would warm the toes of half a city. There are trees lying by the roadside on the more remote concessions that have been there longer than a maiden lady cares to remember. Farming, you see, is a haphazard industry. We have not yet mastered the hand-book of Thrift, although we are taking lessons on it.

Meanwhile we go our way, a little more energetically, perhaps, since Peter McArthur has said that if we will put in a little extra plot of potatoes we may have the money from it—which we might have thought of, ourselves. And the "poets wreak their roundelay" as they will do while the world rolls in space. For while human beings sometimes do the necessary thing, they invariably manage to do the desired thing, and it is a caution the number of people who will chew a pen handle half an hour, hunting a rhyme for "month" when they simply could not spare the time if you wanted a shelf put up in the pantry, or a screen door hung.

### Canada's First Woman M. P. P.

By "CRAIGWORTH"

WHEN Alberta was given a feminine name it must have been prophetic. Alberta has intuition, pre-vision, sagacity; and she showed them all when a few weeks ago she elected to the Legislature the first woman M.P.P. in Canada, as a result of the first provincial woman's vote ever recorded in Canada. And, mind you, the Equal Suffrage Act was only thirteen months old when the election was held.

Claresholm was the enterprising constituency. Mrs. Louise C. McKinney was the pioneer woman-elected candidate. She was the only woman nominated, which makes one wonder what might have happened had there been more.

Now, how did it come about?

Simple. Mrs. McKinney ran neither as a Grit nor a Tory. She was the nominee of the Non-Partisan League. The battle-cry of the League was the elimination of party politics. Mrs. McKinney was chosen as the Claresholm Eliminator. And she was not elected by any fluke of a split vote either, because there was no Conservative nominee at all, her only opponent being a Liberal.

And, mind you, again, just to show how thoroughly the League, backed by the women vote, broomed the constituency—that Liberal opponent had represented Claresholm during the previous five sessions! Uncertainly is the spice of elections. Mrs. McKinney was the uncertainty. Naturally. She was, in fact, an absolute experiment, as all first things, including first babies, are.

Happily the experiment was all in the idea, none of it in the personality of the N. P. League candidate. Mrs. McKinney herself is a certainty every time; a positive, unmistakable feminine fact. You surmise that from noting her full name—

LOUISE—CRUMMY—McKINNEY.

The middle name suggests something. The name Crummy is a familiar one in the West. Winnipeg in particular knows the Rev. Eber Crummy, D.D., who, until just the other day, when he also broke out unconventionally, was Principal of Wesley College,

Winnipeg, formerly pastor of Grace Church, and before that the breezy, up-lifting genius of Bathurst Street Church, Toronto. Another brother of Mrs. McKinney has been for nine years President of New York Newsboys' Club.

This suggests the American connection; and Mrs. McKinney has it in more than a brother. But she is herself a Canadian. More

than that she is Irish. Now you have it. The Irish will come out. She was born of Irish parents, on a farm overlooking the St. Lawrence River, 18 miles from the town of Brockville, Ontario. She was educated at the High School at Athens—not in Greece, but Ontario—and had ambitious visions of a university course, but regretfully had to be satisfied with a term at the Normal College at Ottawa. The age of seventeen found her teaching in a small rural school, and, finally, in 1892, she left Ontario to take a scholastic appointment in the State of North Dakota. Here the bright, intelligent Canadian girl quickly made friends. Her wonderful abilities as a leader and organizer soon became apparent, and she was persuaded to leave the school-house and accept the post of organizer of the North Dakota Women's Christian Temperance Union.

IN 1896 she married James McKinney, and in 1903 left North Dakota with her husband for Alberta, and settled in the Claresholm district. Here it was not very long before her services were in demand, and the W. C. T. U., for the Northwest Territories, being organized in 1904, Mrs. McKinney was appointed Recording Secretary. Later she became President of the Alberta Provincial W. C. T. U. and Vice-President of the Dominion W. C. T. U., which offices she still holds.

In matters of social and moral reform Mrs. McKinney has for many years been a prominent worker, and is so known, not only in her own Province, but throughout Canada.

A clever lady, possessing much common sense and gifted with the art of taking pains, the electors of Claresholm have done themselves honour in electing her as their representative, and her career in the Alberta Legislature will be followed with much interest by her many friends in all parts of Canada. When election day arrived it was at once seen that

the Non-Partisans had an excellent organization, the hardest workers in which were ladies who were to be seen careering in all directions in automobiles of all makes and shapes. This part of the organization was entirely wanting to the Liberals who depended on mere men as workers.

The result of the election was a sweeping triumph for the Non-Partisan lady candidate, who, in a ten-day campaign, gained the support of the majority of the prairie farmers and their wives, who, rightly or wrongly, had apparently determined that Claresholm riding was to be in the vanguard of the Non-Partisan movement. Undoubtedly the female vote was the main element in returning a lady candidate, and the result of the election has been the cause of much head shaking and gloomy prognostications among old-timers of both political parties who foresee a possible time in the future when the Legislature may contain a large proportion of the fair sex.

### Can You Shoot Straight?

By EDITH G. BAYNE

OF course we are much too swift—we Western women. We admit it. In more than one place in the West women are drilling and marching and learning to shoot straight. Some began as far back as last summer. In those days we were told that we were only wasting ammunition, but one man less pessimistic than the rest said:

"Oh, let 'em go to it! If it don't do anything else it'll maybe put the fear o' the Lord into the resident Germans and Austrians."

We are not to be confused with the regular Women's Rifle Brigades. They are probably administered in a much more effective way. Yet our own particular company is not doing so badly. Our captain is a crack shot in her own right.

We are not out for prestige or praise. We have not even posed for our photo en masse—yet. "Labour before laurels" we say, and we are very modest indeed, and would curl up like a caterpillar if we saw our name in print. We exist for home defence aid, and we are all working people. During the winter we have been turning our excess energies into other channels of a patriotic nature, but now that the ground has dried up, our drill has commenced again, and muscle-tiring though it is, it undoubtedly puts "zip" and "pep" into us.

Twice a week we see the sun rise. Old Sol may not be particularly impressed with our rising, but he furnishes a fresh thrill for us each time. Out across the dewy prairie we march, in close formation, thinning out to double or single file when the exigencies of the ground demand it. We skirt the sloughs, a warm chinook in our faces, and come out upon a high level plateau where thirty years or so ago Big Bear and Louis Riel tried in vain to annihilate a sturdy little detachment of red coats.

A brisk drill limbers us up. Then in some sheltered coulee or buffalo-wallow we partake of our improvised canteen-fare of sandwiches and coffee. The waters of the tiny alkali lake ripple in the early sunlight. The first contingent of grass-birds—lend a lively orchestral accompaniment to the clatter of tin collapsible cups.

Our uniform is serviceable, natty and—cheap! It consists of coat and skirt—the latter rather abbreviated—with leggings, and a hat similar to those worn by the American army. The color scheme is sand. The material is linen.

Our captain is a cavalier-like person, broad-shouldered, straight and commanding in figure. She looks quite Joan-of-Arc-ish marching in the van and the shoulders of the rank and file instinctively straighten as we watch her.

Our brigade has its Miss Winkle and Miss Tupman, of course. At first these two were compelled to use blank cartridges owing to their marked eccentricities in gun-handling. Both are improving.

We were all very raw on the start. Bomb practice wasn't easy, and it was made harder by our having a considerable male audience. There used to be an old saw, that woman "can't hit a barn door." But then one is always learning, and isn't there another saw which goes: "Practice makes perfect?"

As for the bull's-eye, we are hitting it. We are hitting it frequently! The poor thing is beginning to feel that everybody is down on it.