

OUR FARM HOMES



LIFE like a dome of many coloured glass
Stains the white radiance of eternity.—Shelley.

In the Spy Net

By Cmet Parker in Farm and Friesland.

(Continued from last week.)

"THEN what is it? Does anyone engaged in an innocent pursuit act in this way? Think of the suspicious things he has done—telling you, after much hesitation, that his name is Carl Stackpoole, while in his bag were numerous belongings marked R. K. M. . . . No, don't say that he might have borrowed these things, for he could easily have told you that; but instead he deliberately told you that he had no hair brushes, while there were two in this bag marked with those initials. Why does he avoid all mention of his profession or his family or his home?—even the simplest questions Aunt Sarah asks him he evades. Then, to sneak out of the house at night when he thinks everyone is safely in bed! Heaven knows how many nights he has gone that you don't know about! And to-night you yourself saw him go—obviously in a boat. That proves another thing, serious to me, because anything else—whatever he is doing he is not acting alone. At least one other person shares his secret, but that person is not you."

Hour after hour she sat, wide-eyed, unable to form any plan, unable to think beyond her present moments of agony.

When Lisa called her the next morning she said with truthfulness that her head ached and that she wanted no breakfast. Having been awakened, however, she found it impossible to go back to sleep, and as she pictured her as a ghost, creeping stairs alone in the dining-room she half wished that she had decided to go down.

So deeply had the roots of her affection for him gone down into her heart, hitherto untouched by any man, that it was impossible to tear them up all at once.

"This is an unforgivable thing!" said common sense. For already Eugenia's mind was on a trail.

Shortly after nine the girl rose and went directly to her aunt's room.

"Dear me, Eugenia!" said that lady. "You look as pale as a sheet. Speaking of ghosts, I've just been reading such a terrible and yet thrilling account of the Stepham. You know the Sunday edition of the *Savannah* papers came yesterday, but I didn't have time to do more than glance over them, because you and Mr. Stackpoole came up last night—not, of course, that I wasn't glad to see you. I do think he is such a courteous young man; for all the world like poor Charlie Daingerfield. But as I was saying, I looked over the papers this morning while I was waiting for Lisa to come up, and I read an interesting letter which an Atlanta boy—Simmons, I think his name was—wrote to his family. He had enlisted in the navy, and was one of the crew of the Stepham."

Eugenia waited with breathless interest.

"What did he say?" she asked.

"He said that the Stepham had been

tried out, and on her first trip had proved to be an excellent boat—the best type of destroyer we have, as a matter of fact. That was the reason, you see, that no one could learn anything of her a short time ago. Do you remember, I saw something in the papers about her, and I was afraid that she had been sunk, and I had all those mufflers knitted for her poor sailors!"

"Was that all he said—just that she was a good boat?"

"Oh, dear me, no! The important thing was that in some mysterious



The Auto on the Farm Makes Such Pictorial Possibilities.

What is more enjoyed by the farm family than a picnic by automobile to a quiet spot by the water's edge where a picnic may be indulged in such as the one here pictured. While a hike of this nature may not be of very frequent occurrence in the busy life on the farm, for this reason it is all the more enjoyed when it does take place.

way the second time they attempted to take her out they found that she had been damaged. No one knows how. They repaired her again, and tried her out; but again she had been damaged. Of course they suspected that some member of the crew was in the enemy's service; but they can't locate anyone who is even suspicious. Although this letter doesn't say so, I judge that they have been trying her out very near here. You know there used to be a naval station south of here."

Another idea had occurred to Eugenia.

"Does Mr. Stackpoole ever read the papers when he comes here?" she asked.

"Oh, yes; always. He asks me what news there is, and then he looks over the papers himself. Oh, I do think this Stepham affair is simply terrible! Several lives have already been lost through the machinations of those fiends who are trying to wreck her."

When Eugenia went back to her room she carried with her that section of the paper which told of the Stepham's plight. She put on a dress of soft rose color, hoping that its glow would lessen the pallor of her cheeks, and tying on a wide-brimmed hat, she went downstairs.

It was partly with relief and partly with regret that she realized that her guest was not in sight; for, although

the thought of seeing him was painful, the thought of not seeing him was unendurable. She went out into the garden. As she turned the corner she saw him sitting on a bench beneath an orange tree.

"Oh, but I am glad to see you!" he exclaimed. "How is your headache?"

Never had his voice seemed so magnetically sympathetic. For the moment she could not believe that last night had ever existed.

"I am much better," she said, "let's pick some roses for Aunt Sarah."

He looked as if he would have preferred more personal conversation, but he acquiesced.

"Shall we pick red or pink?" he asked.

"Both. If we get only pink she's sure to say they are very pretty, but she has always preferred red. And if we get only red, it's sure to be pink like this. Unless, of course, you took them to her. As Lisa says, you must have her 'hyped.'"

Then she remembered that within half an hour she had discovered a possible reason for his devotion, in no way connected with a desire to please Miss Burr, and she was silent.

After her basket had been filled she sat down on the bench, glad to bask in the sun, and he sat cross-legged on the grass, smoking a pipe with an air of deep contentment. A horrible idea came to her—could he be merely pretending to love her with some possible gain in view?

she's going to name it for you, Miss, and the thought struck her. Ole Sam's most tickled to hear you.

"I don't wonder. I'm delighted too. And I shall go to see her this very afternoon."

"Isn't it too far for you to walk?" the man asked as they sat down at the table.

"No, indeed. It's scarcely three miles, there's back to the farm. She lives in one of those cottages at the end of the island, you know. The fresh air will do me good." She expected him to offer to accompany her, but he said nothing about it.

It was hard for her to reconcile his contradictions. Before she had met him, life had seemed a simple thing to Eugenia Stepham; now it seemed cruelly complex. There was no one in all the world to whom she could go for guidance, and she felt woefully alone and incompetent. She had always supposed that when love came it smoothed out all difficulties and swept away all obstacles, but her love had brought the most harassing, the most saddening problems of her life.

Unaware of how much nearer she felt to him, she went next to see him, Eugenia was started after luncheon, carrying a large basket of tributes, and she speculated idly upon his destination.

Having admired the baby until her adjectives were exhausted, Eugenia started home by a roundabout trail which led along the beach for some distance.

Suddenly her keen vision detected a small boat bobbing up and down some distance from the shore. It astonished her to see so small a craft in these waters, and she speculated idly upon its destination.

To her consternation she saw that it was heading directly for the spot from which she had seen Stackpoole disappear the night before.

Hastily she slipped behind the giant trees, confident that she had not been seen and should not be. She was sure that there was something sinister in the boat's approach, for the proper landing was some distance away, and this boat had avoided seeking instead the more hazardous and concealed landing for which it was now making.

She moved swiftly along, sheltered by the heavy growth of trees and foliage, until she had reached a secluded spot from which she could only watch the approaching boat; but also the path down which she had seen her guest come the night before.

She saw a man jump out of the boat; pull it on shore, and then pass up and down the beach as if fearful of being observed. Apparently satisfied that no one was in sight, he walked straight up the beach, as if consulting his steps. Halfway between the water and the outstanding trees of the forest he stopped, knelt down, and began digging into the sand with his fingers.

He pulled up something which seemed to the girl to be a small herb, drew something white from his pocket, placed this in the box, again knelt down, and re-covered it with sand.

He looked all around once more, then went hastily back to his boat, pushed off, jumped in, and in another second was rowing hard away from the shore.

The entire incident had not taken more than a minute by actual time; but to Eugenia it was as vivid as if she had seen it enacted over and over again. She had not and could never forget that scene in all her life.

The boat seemed to move with agonizing slowness, for she was so filled with fear that Stackpoole appeared to her to be crawling. She knew that whatever had been placed in the box in the sand had been put there by him, and it occurred to her that perhaps the reason for his not accompanying her on her visit to the end of the island had been due to his desire to receive this message as soon as it arrived.

(Continued next week.)

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