

The Farmer's Wife.

A farmer without a wife is like half a pair of scissors. No man amounts to much without one; but for a farmer a wife is one of the essentials. No sooner was Adam created than the Creator said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make a helpmeet for him." Whoever since Adam's day, has attempted to get along without a wife has found it "not good." A woman rounds out the life of a man, supplements his defects, shares his troubles, doubles his joys, sweetens his toil as well as his tea, is his truest friend and adviser—in short, is his "helpmeet." The Shakers maintain that the idea of duality extends to the Godhead, and that it runs through all animal and vegetable life there can be no doubt. Scientists confirm the Scripture principle, "male and female created He them," and extend it to every thing that has life. Whoever, therefore, attempts to live in contravention of this universal law will find that he has a hard row to hoe, and if a farmer attempts it, he may be considered, without further proof, as an odd half of a pair of shears. In the circle of our acquaintance, which is not limited, we can call to mind only two farmers—one an old bachelor and the other an old maid—who are making this venture, and awkward work they make. In a pecuniary view, both are doing well; from the standpoint of comfort, manhood and womanhood, both are doing miserably. Think of the old bachelor making his own bread and butter, and eating it in solitude; working all day, and coming home at night to his bed and board of single blessedness. There is no comfort, no manliness in such a life, unless it is the miserly happiness of hoarding wealth for heirs, he knows not whom. The farm-life of the old maid must be still more miserable. Women can do a great many things, and do them better than can a man, but she never was made to run a farm. She has various and increasing rights, but following the plow, driving oxen, managing bulls, and breaking colts are not among them. She is an indispensable helpmeet to the farmer, but her sphere is a domestic one, literally domestic, that is, belonging to the house. When she takes upon herself the prerogative of mingling with the men in the field, loading hay and moving it away, directing about the breeding of stock, and displaying her equestrian skill on the road or race-course, she unsexes herself and becomes a man in petticoats.

Solomon says: "Whoso finds a wife, finds a good thing." Some who have married shrews and slovens have been inclined to dispute the wisdom of Solomon in this proverb, but the trouble is, they married women, not wives. A wife, including all that is signified in the name, is a good thing always and to every one, and to the farmer is specially good, as she is such an important factor in his business. She does not, as in the days of Solomon, seek wool and flax, nor lay her hands to the spindle and hold the distaff, but she looketh well to the ways of her household and eateth not the bread of idleness. The farmer's wife is emphatically a partner in his business. On her devolves the care of the dairy, in addition to the ordinary routine of household duties. Her sphere of action, though strictly domestic, is a wider one than that of the ordinary housewife. As her husband, in virtue of his ownership of land which he subdues and tills, is entitled to the name of landlord, with all the cares and honors which the name implies, so she is entitled to the name of landlady, and must assume the responsibilities as well as the respect that go with this position and title. That there are unusual duties connected with the station is manifest from the fact that there are many women desiring to find husbands, but unwilling to marry husbandmen, because they dislike to do the work—drudgery they call it—peculiar to farmers' wives. All such have yet to learn that she only is a true wife "who doth her husband good all the days of her life, who girdeth her loins with strength and strengtheneth her arms, who stretcheth out her

hands to the poor, who is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed, who openeth her mouth with wisdom, and her tongue is the law of kindness, whose children rise up and call her blessed, whose works praise her." Such is Solomon's picture of a good wife, and it was evidently intended for the wife of a husbandman. We will not say that the wife of a farmer holds a position above all other wives, for we find in every occupation those who, with the relation of wife, assume great responsibilities, do honor to their husbands, are ornaments to society and bless mankind. We do say that the position of a farmer's wife is one peculiarly adapted to a life of usefulness, and we would like to ask the frivolous and fashionable girls who scorn the hand of a husbandman, whether a life spent in useful employment such as the average farmer expects of a wife, will not, in the retrospect, give more satisfaction than one spent in the gay rounds of fashionable society? The question needs no answer. The answer goes without saying.

The position of the wife of a farmer is not only one of usefulness, but it is also very stable and independent. Farmers seldom fail; we may say never, or hardly ever, if they attend to their legitimate business. Certainly, the risks of agriculture are less than those of other callings. The farmer may not have the wealth and display the style of the merchant and manufacturer, but his wife does not live in fear of panics and Sheriff's visits. The soil always responds generously to generous culture, and her cellar and pantry are never empty. She is sure of a comfortable living, let trade be ever so much disturbed. If the grain and roots can not be sold at a profit, they can be consumed in the house and barn, and the farm will be all the more productive for such consumption. Such independence and freedom from risk are far more conducive to happiness than all the wealth—with its corroding cares—which railroad stocks bought and sold have ever earned. If we had a dozen daughters, we should consider them more fortunate if comfortably settled on farms than if married to rich Wall Street brokers.

While thus appreciating the natural advantages of the wife of a farmer, we wish to add that the comfort and usefulness of her position depend largely upon the sympathy and co-operation of her husband. Some farmers, we are sorry to say, treat their wives as though they were beasts of burden, made to bear children and do drudgery. Indeed, we have known those with whom the horse seemed to be first and the wife second. Some souls are so cold, selfish and penurious that to save a few dollars in the wages of hired help they are willing to let their wives break down in health and to see their children born with feeble constitutions in consequence. Ignorance, doubtless, in many cases, may be pleaded in palliation of such cruelty, but ignorance is a sin which God and man may have winked at in the barbarous ages and portions of the world, but better things are expected of husbands in this enlightened country. The original meaning of the word wife is a weaver, and a farmer's wife, though not now compelled to throw the shuttle, should be a worker; but in her work she should have the sympathy of her husband, and it is his bounden duty to see that her ambition does not lead her to overwork. The unfeeling wretch who, standing at the coffin of his wife, said, "I would rather have lost my best cow," would very likely not have been a widower if he had been as careful of his wife as of his cow. He certainly did not deserve another wife, though he is said to have secured one in three months.

If the position of a farmer's wife involves peculiar labors and responsibilities, as intimated, then she is entitled also to peculiar consideration on the part of her husband. If she is emphatically a partner in his business, she should be consulted in all business matters, and her advice treated with all proper respect. The days have gone by when a woman has no rights in the conduct of business which a husband is bound to respect. There is none so unselfish, and at the same time so interested a counselor for any man as his wife, and we are persuaded that those business men are most successful who confide their affairs to their wives and ask their advice. If this is the case in complicated mercantile and manufacturing business, with which women are

not expected to be familiar, much more is it true in farming, with which, in some of its branches at least, the wife has much to do. When we find that a young farmer has secured a wife, and treats her as a partner in his business, we feel far more confidence in his success than when he is backed up by a rich father or large capital, and we are confident that many of the mistakes which we have known farmers to make would have been avoided if they had taken their wives into their counsels. There is no hepecking in this; it is the part of wisdom, and whatever its wisdom's part is true manhood.—*Alex. Hyde, in N. Y. Times.*

Going to Celebrate.

No cat could have walked into the Central Station more softly than did a long-waisted, low-voiced stranger about forty years old, whose hands were encased in badly-worn cotton gloves, hat brushed down clear below the nape, boots wanting new heels, and dress coat showing a cotton edge all around. He was neither a great General, statesman nor orator. He simply desired to make a few inquiries, and he softly said:

"My arrangements are such that I shall be in Detroit until after Washington's Birthday. I am a great admirer of the lamented gentleman, and I always make it a point to celebrate his birthday."

"Which is patriotic and all right," replied the Captain of Police.

"I wanted to ask what latitude the police would allow me on such an occasion," continued the man. "I shall certainly get drunk; but will I be permitted to tear down stoves, smash up bars, break windows, and kick in doors?"

"Certainly not. The first move you make in that direction will result in your being run in."

"Would, eh? Well, I simply inquired for information. I suppose it would be doing the lamented gentleman full honor if I simply got drunk."

"I think so."

"Very well; I don't want to seem captious in the matter, nor do I care to get into any trouble. I think I will get drunk early in the morning."

"Yes."

"And wave the American flag from the window of my boarding-house—wave it gently."

"Yes."

"And make a speech to my landlady on the goodness and greatness of the lamented gentleman—make it very gently and quietly, without any cheers or applause."

"Yes, that would do."

"And then go down into the back yard and hurrah about three times—not yell like a Pawnee Injun, but softly and quietly hurrah for George Washington, the Father of his Country."

"Well, don't disturb any one."

"No, of course not. After hurrahing, I will return to my room, take another drink, read the Declaration of Independence, and make a speech to myself—not a ranting, blatant oratorical effort, but a soft and mild sort of peroration, ending up with the song entitled, 'My Country, 'tis of Thee, and so forth.'"

"Yes, that's good."

"Then I'll take another drink and go to bed and lie there during the remainder of the day, unless the landlady insists on another speech, and I don't think she will. Now, then, are my terms perfectly satisfactory?"

"Yes."

"Very well, then—adieu. A mild, gentle drunk—subdued oratory—gentle waving—repressed hurrahing—harplike peroration, and you are satisfied. I am satisfied, and the lamented gentleman has got to be satisfied or provide his own brass bands. Perfectly k'reet—farewell!"—*Detroit Free Press.*

—Dr. Nichols suggests in Dr. Foote's *Health Monthly* for March that the reason fruits do not digest well when eaten after flesh is because the gastric juice secreted to act on the meat will not act well on the fruit. Perhaps on this account the better way is to eat fruit before meals rather than as a dessert.

A POINTED piece of lunar caustic, moistened, inserted in the opening and held for a few moments, will serve to close up a supernumerary orifice in a cow's teat. Grease the place after using the caustic.

Tea-tasting—A Singular Occupation.

Dr. C. L. Dana, in an article in the *Medical Record* on tea-tasting by brokers and dealers in teas, maintains that it is a healthful occupation, which is not in accordance with the conceited opinion of other writers on the subject. In support of his assertion Dr. Dana reports cases of living men far advanced in life who have followed the business of tea-tasting for periods ranging from thirty to forty years without injury to their health. But whether the writer's conclusions are correct or otherwise, the life of a tea-taster is a curious one, and the process of examining and deciding upon the qualities of the article is not generally known.

There are, says Dr. Dana, probably more than a hundred firms engaged in tea-tasting in this city. In all of their offices there are large tables with round, revolving tops. A circle of teacups is placed along the edge of these. The tea-taster sits down before the display of crockery, and tastes one cup after another, moving the table-top around. In the center of the table is a pair of scales with a silver half-dime in one of the balances. One or two large kettles are kept constantly with boiling water in them. When a sample of tea is to be tasted, as much is weighed out as will balance the half-dime. This is put in a teacup and the boiling water poured on. The tea-taster then stirs up the leaves, lifts them on his spoon, and inhales the aroma. At the same time he generally takes a sip of the infusion, holds it in his mouth for a short time, and then spits it out. Enormous brass cuspadores, holding two or three gallons, receive the tea thus tasted and the contents of the cups that have been examined. On some occasions, when a large amount of tea of a certain kind is to be bought, many samples of this are brought in from different houses. The buyers and sellers sit around the revolving table with the samples made into infusions in the cups before them. These are tasted all around, the "body," fineness, "toastiness," etc., are learnedly discussed, and the poorer specimens discarded. Then those that are left are tasted again and the number further reduced. So it goes on until the article which unites the desired quality and price is obtained.

The skill displayed at these "drawings" is quite remarkable. A tea taster will detect not only the quality of a tea as regards age, strength, flavor, fineness, etc., but he can tell in which of the numerous districts in China the tea was grown. The facts regarding the different samples are sometimes put on the bottom of the cups, where they can not be seen. The cups are then mixed up, and the infusions tasted again and sorted out simply by their flavors.

A great deal of tea may be tasted before these tea drawings are finished. It is hard to tell the amount that a tea taster takes during a day, for it varies a great deal with the activity of business. Few of the gentlemen whom I asked could give any idea. Sometimes, however, as many as four or five hundred cups are tasted in the day. It is quite the custom to have to be tasting tea steadily for the most of the day, or for hours at a time. Probably an average of 200 cups a day throughout the year is a low estimate. The poorer kinds of tea are often not sipped at all. But the sense of smell is depended on. Of the better qualities of tea some is swallowed and some spit out. Indeed, whenever the tea is taken into the mouth a little of it is swallowed. The tea gets into the system, therefore, in three ways: by inhalation, by absorption through the oral mucus membrane, and by the stomach. More tea is simply taken into the mouth without swallowing than is inhaled alone; but all the tea is inhaled, even if it is tasted also. It is only a small proportion, amounting to not more than two or three cups a day that is swallowed. A silver five cent piece weighs 1.18 grms. (gr. xviii). Estimating that an average of 200 cups of tea are tasted per day, about one-half of a pound would represent the whole amount used.

Japan tea has of late years become by far the most popular variety, and more of it is imported than of all other kinds together. Green tea, on the other hand, is much less extensively used than formerly.

BOXE meal is one of the best fertilizers for grapes. It should be applied as early in the season as possible.