

Among the Apple Trees

By Clifford V. Gregory

A Story of Farm Life
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CHAPTER VIII.
NE day shortly before time to go back to school Beth came out to see the girls.

"College life seems to agree with you," she said. "You look happier than ever, and that's a good deal."

"There's something happening every minute, and it's all so very interesting. But you look as if something was the matter, Beth. Aren't you well?"

Beth made a pitiful attempt to smile and burst out crying. After a moment she controlled herself with an effort. "I-I ought not to tell," she said, "and I wouldn't to any one but you, but it's—Harold."

"What?" exclaimed Mabel. "He isn't sick?"

Beth shook her head. "I almost wish he was," she said, "instead of this."

"The girls waited sympathetically for her to go on."

"Harold got in with a fast set at college," Beth continued after a moment. "You know how open hearted and easily influenced he was? Well, as soon as the boys found out that he had plenty of money they got him to join what was supposed the most fashionable fraternity in school, but which must have been the wickedest. Harold isn't the kind of a boy to do anything halfway. He thought he must do everything the rest of the boys in his set did, and he got to leading a pretty wild life, I'm afraid."

Beth paused for a moment and then went on. "He went into athletics and soon became a football star, whatever that is. Of course he was immensely popular—there was a note of pride in her voice—but with this popularity came more temptations to get away from all the best part of college life and go in simply for the sporty part of it. The end of it all was that he got to gambling and got into debt so badly that he was almost afraid to come home. Papa gave him a awful lecture—and Harold finally got angry himself and said he couldn't be young but once, and he was going to enjoy life while he could."

"Then mamma talked to him, and he finally broke down and promised to do better. Papa wanted to take him out of school and put him to work at something, but he finally agreed to give him one more chance."

None of the girls said anything for a long time after Beth had finished. "Harold could be such a splendid man if he would only try," said Gladys at last. "With the ability he has—why, he might be the best lawyer in the state."

the floor before the open fire—Mr. Sanders had insisted on building a little fireplace in the guest chamber—and popped corn and roasted apples and talked until the night was far gone.

Gladys had a headache—an unusual thing for her—the next day, so Mabel hitched Mollie to the cutter and drove Beth back to town. Harold came down to the gate as he saw them drive up. He lifted his cap in the same old jaunty way, and the same smile lingered about the corners of his mouth as he talked, but in many other ways he was greatly changed. He had grown and was superbly muscled. As he lounged against the gatepost with the careless grace of a young athlete Mabel could not help admiring him.

Yet there was a half wild, shifty look in his eyes as if some secret was hidden behind them that Mabel noted with quick disapproval. His mouth, too, when not curved upward in a smile had an uncertain droop that indicated weakness and a desire to be led rather than to lead.

"Where have I seen that horse before?" he asked as he helped Beth to the ground. "Oh, yes, I remember now! Gladys rode her up to Uncle Grey's one night about two years ago, and I drove her home." He hesitated a moment. "I haven't had a sleigh ride this winter," he said, looking up at Mabel with that coquishly pleading look of his that seldom failed to get him anything he wanted.

"Does that mean that you'd like to?" Mabel asked. "If it does Mollie and I are at your service—that is, if I may go along."

"Of course I want you along," he said as he stepped to the seat beside her. "A sleigh ride alone isn't much fun."

"You've changed a great deal since I saw you last," he went on after they were out in the road again. "I thought you were Gladys when I saw you drive up."

"What a compliment," laughed Mabel. "Don't you wish I were?"

Harold hesitated a moment. "No," he replied; "I don't know that I do. Gladys expects too much of a fellow, and she has such a way of making him feel so deuced uncomfortable."

"Maybe it's good for a fellow to feel uncomfortable once in awhile," said Mabel, looking at him gravely.

Harold shook his head. "Not too uncomfortable," he said. "It may make him reckless."

"What that was the matter?" asked Mabel.

"Did Gladys tell you?" he questioned.

Mabel shook her head. "No," she answered, "but I guessed. It's too bad, but do you think things like those that happened last term are going to help it?"

"Of course not," Harold answered. "But what's the use of trying to be anybody? I felt like I wanted to just cut loose and have a good time and go to the devil," he added recklessly.

"And so you cut loose," Mabel interposed, "and almost went to the fellow you spoke of. But did you have a good time?"

"A good time?" he cried. "I was crazy, and when I came to my senses enough to realize what I was doing I hated myself."

Mabel sat thinking for a long time. "You are going back," she said at last—"back to the same old crowd of fellows, the same old associations and temptations. Can you—will you—keep the promise you made your father and mother and Beth?"

Harold caught his breath sharply. A vision of the parlors of the Itau Tu Snipson house rose up before him. He could see the blue smoke curling upward to join the haze that hung over the heads of the excited forms that could hear the sneers of the fellows and their cries of "quitter" as a boy threw his cards into the fire and went upstairs to study.

Then he turned and looked into the sweet face beside him, the delicately molded, sensitive chin, the serious mouth and then into the clear depths of those questioning, trusting brown eyes.

"Do you believe I can?" he asked.

"I know you can," she answered. "Then I will," he said.

The next semester was a repetition of the first for Gladys and Mabel, with more work, more achievements and if possible more enjoyment.

Gladys, with her self-reliant, masterful way of meeting and settling all problems that came to her, quickly became a leader among the girls, and Mabel's quick sympathy and eagerness to be doing something for somebody made her the confidant and adviser of almost every girl in the dormitory.

The weeks passed quickly and soon brought June and another vacation.

The clover had killed out the winter before in the orchard, and as soon as the girls reached home they packed away their books and their college dresses and, putting on their calico aprons and broad-brimmed straw hats, set to work to kill the weeds and prepare the ground for another crop of clover.

"We can afford to take good care of it," Gladys told Mr. Pearson as he stopped by the fence on his way to town one day. "It's doing enough for us."

The top grafts began to bear that year, and the trees were loaded with a plentiful supply of fine fruit. It seemed as if every one else had plenty of apples that year, too, and the bottom dropped out of the apple market. Harvest didn't help up his attempts at

manipulating prices, however, and Gladys found no difficulty in getting the storage company to put away a hundred barrels which she and Mabel had decided to hold for a higher price.

Another school year opened, and almost before the girls realized it Thanksgiving day was at hand and the great Iowa-Minnesota football game. Jeff had written to Gladys to ask her if she still remembered their agreement, so that she knew that he must have made the team. His letters did not come very often any more, and when they did they said very little about himself. They had seen by the paper that he had been placed second in the state oratorical contest, but he never told them that sitting up with a sick roommate two nights previous was all that kept him from getting first nor that the governor of the state had shook his hand when it was over and told him that he had a great future before him as an orator.

Beth had been renewing her invitation in every letter she had written that term, and two days before the game she even went so far as to call them up over the telephone. So the day before Thanksgiving the girls packed their suit cases and took the train for Iowa City to be present at the biggest western football game of the season.

(To Be Continued.)

Foley Kidney Pills contain concentrated form ingredients of established therapeutic value for the relief and cure of all kidney and bladder ailments. McBride & Will Drug Company.

The Forrest-Macready Riot.
Astor place not only was a social center in the old days, but also the battleground of the partisans of Forrest and Macready. Forrest-Macready riot on May 10, 1849, was a spirited set-to between the partisans of the two actors, and there was a hot time in the Astor triangle while the riot lasted. The fighting occurred in front of the old opera house, which stood where the Mercantile library now stands. Now the two actors, the opera house, the social center, which was scandalized and terrorized by the riot, and the partisans who participated in it have passed away.

Narrow Conversation.
A woman lacking true culture is said to betray by her conversation a mind of narrow compass, bounded on the north by her servants, on the east by her children, on the south by her ailments and the west by her clothes.—Burton Kingsland.

Married Men, Attention!
Let me advise you when you are married to go straight home as soon as your work is done, and you will cure all the trouble of life.—Judge Willis.

Not "Snake Holes."
The holes commonly seen in the fields are not "snake holes," though commonly called such. They are made by field mice, shrews and moles, often by the larger insects, and it is very seldom that snakes even take refuge in them. Few snakes actually dig holes. They burrow in soft ground—the subterraneous species; but these live, as a rule, in soft, yielding soil.—St. Nicholas.

Slaughter of Foxes in Germany.
The average yearly slaughter of foxes in Germany is about 20,000.

Distance Too Far for Wireless.
The efforts made by the United States government to establish a wireless communication between Japan and San Francisco, by way of Hawaii, have been in the main unsuccessful, although messages have been successfully forwarded. At the present state of the art the transmission is too uncertain to be of any commercial value.

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Wanted to Exchange—Brand new surrey for one large horse or small team. C. L. Duffield.
Wanted—To buy a pair of ponies, ranging in age from 5 to 10 years. Mares preferred. Telephone 653 white, or at Stouffer feed yard Saturday.
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For Sale—Flat roll top desk, typewriter desk and large oak filing cabinet. C. L. Duffield.

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For Sale—Good business in live-growing town; snap for man with \$2,000 to \$4,000 capital. See or address A-19, care Times-Republican.

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For Sale—600 bushels late seed potatoes. E. S. Crouse, Liscomb.

For Sale—A new A. J. Clark automobile, almost new. A. J. Clark.

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For Sale—Eggs for hatching, now at half price. A single setting of 15 eggs, and I guarantee 14 chicks. Poultrymen: I will tell you my success this year from my Rose Comb Rhode Island Reds. Started with 50 hens in Oct. of 1909 and now have sold \$125 in eggs and raised 250 chicks by hens. Write for my mating list or come and see me. I can assure you some of the finest Red chicks you ever saw. Have some which weigh two pounds now. T. J. Oxfield, South Side Poultry Yard, Marshalltown, Iowa.

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"MAYBE IT ISN'T ALTOGETHER HIS FAULT," SAID MABEL.

she added, "that you would talk to Harold before he goes back. He has a whole lot of respect for you girls and your opinions."

Then the talk drifted to other things—dresses, music and that yet so far away that people call the future. Gladys brought some apples and the ears popped, and they sat down on