

PREMEDITATED.

By "VICTOR."

III.

THAD ON A FARM.

"Well you have got down a good lot, but before we feed it out we'll just start the windmill by pulling down this lever, and while the stock is drinking we'll work up a trifle of clover for the sheep, they like it best cut up a bit and don't waste any that way. Clover is just good for milch cows and sheep, the horses get timothy, and once in a while we'll give 'em all a taste of millet, kind of keeps them lookin' slick like, and just 'bout this time the heifers get all the corn they want, keeps 'em warm and makes them fat for the market. 'Now I've had my talk with Hetty and she seems to be agreeable enough 'bout you're workin' here, but she wants to talk to you this evening a bit, so we won't strike any bargain until she's had her say."

"I find in the long run, that it don't do any particular harm to let the women folk at least think that they've had a say, and it does do a power of good sometimes."

"The ground ain't just in the proper shape for spring plowing yet, so we'll just kinder tinker 'round and get things found and picked up like, so's that when farmin' does begin we won't have to stop a wheel for anything. I always like to be 'bout as spry as my neighbors, but ain't particular 'bout bein' first."

Thad busied himself about the stock for the remainder of the afternoon, paying strict attention to instructions of Mr. Stozor as to their care, and when all were comfortably housed for the night, they went in to supper, after which Mrs. Stozor took him in hand for "her say."

"Now Mr. Halgrave, most likely I'll ask you some pretty plain questions, and I'll tell you to start with why. You see a hired man on a farm is a good deal different from the same in town, kind of one of the family don't you see, and so we're generally a little careful that we get some one who'll be agreeable and pleasant to have around, as near as we can. Do you use cuss words any? I thought you didn't have that appearance. You don't look as though you drank, or ever got tight. Of course we haven't anything against a glass of cider now and again, but we wouldn't feel just first-rate if you made a practice of drinking anything strong. How is your temper now, do you suppose you'd get mad if a cow was to kick over the milk pail just as you were 'bout through with her? Would you sick the dog on to the sheep if one of 'em was to bump you over? Would you be right handy 'bout the house on wash days? Would you wait for your dinner a bit if the parson was here? Do you think you could help me now and again at odd times when you wouldn't be doing much 'bout the churnin' and chickens, and in keeping the front yard lookin' as tho' 'twas picked up like? and would you keep the cellar door shut, so's to keep the flies out, and be careful not to track in mud on the floors, and above all the rest, will you jest make it a rule, to have my wood box always full? Now if you can be pleasant and peaceable 'bout these few things, they ain't no reason why we can't get along first-rate."

Thad replied, that it would be his earnest endeavor to please, and suggested that perhaps a probationary period might be named so that she might be sure not to make a mistake in his selection.

Thad and Mr. Stozor then

"struck a dicker," that was to endure "till after fall plowing was done."

"Now you'll get up at half after five, Theodore," said Mrs. Stozor, "light the kitchen fire, put over the teakettle full of fresh water, and when you go through the pantry, be sure to shut the door so's to keep them pesky cats out."

"Then you can start the windmill and turn out the stock, and most likely I'll be out thar by that time," said Mr. Stozor.

After Huldah had entertained them on the piano for an half hour, they all joined in reading a chapter from the Bible, and after a fervent prayer to the Almighty, thanking Him for continued health and His bountiful goodness, and commending their souls to His keeping, not forgetting the stranger within their gates, they all retired.

Thad was shown to the south room at the head of the stairs, and although plainly furnished, he could not but notice how clean and comfortable an appearance it possessed. Thus pleasantly situated, we leave him for the time being to dream of his future as a farmer.

Al's fastidious tastes in horse flesh could not be satisfied in Richmond, so following advice, he deemed a trip to St. Paul necessary. (St. Paul being a little larger place than Richmond and situated just down the river from Minneapolis.)

After a couple of days spent amongst the commission men, learning some of the intricacies of his profession, and suiting himself in horses and vehicles, he returned to his hotel. He soon came to the conclusion that an hotel was not just the place for him to board, and it took a good deal of advice and another couple of days to make a proper selection of a place to live. At the end of this time he concluded that Mrs. Hannah Cranford's—whom our city friends would have called, "a jolly good lady"—was just the place for him, her home being well filled with school teachers, with whom an acquaintance was not in the least obnoxious from Al's standpoint.

Many inquiries were addressed to Mrs. Cranford, in a more or less guarded manner, as to general information concerning the highly intellectual appearing young stranger; to all of these she answered that he had been highly recommended to her by Dr. Wate and Mr. McToy, a local banker, and that being thus introduced, she believed him to be all that he seemed, a gifted conversationalist, a careful dresser, studiously correct in politeness and habits. She understood that he was about to become one of our business men.

Al made it a point to become quite generally acquainted among the business men of the town, and this acquaintance had soon ripened into friendship with some of them, notably Mr. E. O. Keyes—a druggist—and his family. Through the medium of the children with whom he was on especial good terms, it was but a step to gain the good will of their mother, and as she was quite the social lion of the younger element of Richmond, he knew that he had gained many advantageous steps in the right direction.

In looking over the friends he had gained, after a two months sojourn amongst them, he concluded that the young lady who had most firmly impressed him as having good sterling sense and ability as well as a natural beauty of charac-

ter, and an elegance of refinement, expression, dignity, cheer, fullness of health and unconscious beauty in form, face and intellect, was after all a plain farmer's daughter.

Having settled this much to his own satisfaction, he made a declaration that by all fair means he should attempt to win her. Perhaps it was only chance that soon after that they were seen slowly wending their way home from church. It was rather strange that each—without the others knowledge—should have been invited to Mrs. Keyes for tea; of course Mr. Keyes just brought Al home with him unexpectedly. Altogether we think that Al is progressing and for a time able to take care of himself, and so we turn once more to the tiller of the soil.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Real Spirit of Christmas Giving.

"Our hearts are usually very much larger at Christmas than our purses," writes Edward Bok of "The Christmas that Remains," in the December Ladies' Home Journal. "The desire is to remember everybody that we know. But our means do not generally allow us to do it. So we often pass entirely by at Christmas people to whom a simple 'Merry Christmas,' and nothing more, would mean a world of cheer and light-heartedness. Because we cannot give what we would like to we think that we should not give at all. The truth is, whether we choose to acknowledge it in so many words or not, that we have grown so commercially and so artificially minded in this country that thousands of us are prone to measure our Christmas presents by the yardstick of intrinsic value, or by what the recipients will think of them. We seem to have entirely lost sight of the fact that we can always give something. And if we gave that something we would really come closer to the real spirit of Christmas giving. A few cheerful words filled with that expression of strong good will, that is like sweet perfume, have a meaning that only a few realize. There is nothing so pleasant in this world as the feeling that one is remembered, and this a few written words will often convey more strongly than a gift. Yet we invariably put the gift first. Our remembrance must take some form, we think, other than a mere verbal or written expression. And that is the artificial within us: not the natural. We seem to refuse to believe that it is the simplest things we do that have the greatest influence. It is the simplest Christmas that remains."

EXCHANGES.

The chaperon is going out of style. The custom was invented by the women as a means of getting ugly old aunts in the push occasionally.—Arkansas Thomas Cat.

Judging from the divorce courts it would seem matrimony was the greatest bunco game on earth, yet people are daily going up against it.—Le Sueur News.

We don't understand this game of war but it does seem like poor judgment for the British to send out "mounted constabulary" to handle an army of 2,500 long-sighted Boers.—Goodhue County News.

An old criminal was once asked what was the first step that led to his ruin, and he answered: "The first step that led to my downfall was cheating an editor out of a two years' subscription. When I had done that the devil had such a grip on me that I could not shake him off."—Ex.

J. R. KOLLINER

DEALER IN.....

Clothing
and
Gents Furnishings

Our assortment of clothing contains some of the finest specimens in this line that is to be found west of Chicago. It will pay you to call and examine our prices and styles in

FASHIONABLE CUT SUITS

Men's and boys' Caps at clearing sale prices.

Men's black and brown stiff Hats; a guaranteed \$3 Hat, at only \$1.95. Men's, boys' and children's Suits and Overcoats at special low prices.

Guard's Uniforms a Specialty.

J. R. KOLLINER

STAPLES BLOCK, STILLWATER, MINN.

MINNESOTA MERCANTILE COMPANY.

Wholesale
Grocers.

THE ONLY EXCLUSIVE

JOBGING HOUSE

IN THE CITY.

We compete successfully with any house tributary to this territory. Our shipping facilities being superior to those of any other house in the NORTHWEST, our customers can depend on having all orders entrusted to us filled with PROMPTNESS & DISPATCH.

LUMBERMEN'S SUPPLIES A SPECIALTY.

Corner Chestnut
and Water Sts.,

Stillwater, Minn.

—AGENTS WANTED—

Every agent realizes the importance of a handsomely bound, finely illustrated, and extremely popular book at the price of one dollar. Forty thousand copies of "The Conquest of Poverty" sold in the paper binding within three months of coming out. Then there came a constant demand for the volume bound in cloth, so we bound it and illustrated it with scenes from our beautiful home surroundings. Send 60 cents for a sample copy of the book, cloth bound, and instructions "How to Work A County Successfully."

Mrs. Helen Wilmans.
Sea Breeze, Florida.

Do You Want Real Enjoyment

Then send five cents for a sample copy of the "Humorist," in St. Louis, Mo. You will become a subscriber if you read one. Address: "Humorist," St. Louis, Mo., enclosing five cents.

Subscribe for
THE PRISON MIRROR.

A young man who was married two months ago, has not yet returned to earth. His wife must be exceptionally clever, to keep him in heaven that long!—St. Louis Humorist.

Hot air was first introduced into the world by Adam when he told Mrs. Eve that there was no woman in all the world like her.—Star of Hope, Sing Sing.

MOVEMENTS OF OUR POPULATION.

Total population, 479.
Males, 477; Females, 2.
Discharged during the past week, 5.
Received, 6.
Grade standing as follows: first, 359; second, 118; third, 2.
N. Hendrickson, Pope Co. for-gery third degree, 6 months.
A. Blackman, Hennepin Co., grand larceny second degree, 1 year.
J. Patterson, Dakota Co., grand larceny second degree, reformatory sentence.

Aug. Wahapasta, St. Louis Co., assault second degree, 2 years.
Geo. Harris, Clay Co., robbery second degree, 3 years.
Wm. Rankin, St. Louis Co., assault second degree, 4 years.