

**The Farmer's Wife.**

HON. J. S. MORTON, SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE FOR THE UNITED STATES, GIVES AN OPINION ON THE DOMESTIC LIFE OF AMERICAN FARMERS' WIVES.

"What do you think of the way our farmers live, Mr. Secretary?" I asked. "Would it not be better if they lived in villages and not on their farms?"

"In many respects, yes," was the reply. "The farmer's wife has a dreary lot. She is in most cases little better than a slave to her work and her house. She drags out a sad existence, scrubbing and cooking, with few resources outside of herself. I can't imagine anything much worse than her condition, and it seems to me that the European system of farm villages is better than ours. And still, the most of the farmers' wives are bright women. They are as a rule industrious and good business women, but they get little for it. I believe in making women to a large extent the business partners of their husbands. They are not so in the case of most men. Take, for instance, a story I heard the other day about the family of an old farmer in Indiana. The man and his wife had lived together for 50 years. Their children had grown up and left them, and now, at 70, the farmer found the burden of his work too much for him, and he decided to sell his farm and live on the interest. It was worth \$40,000, but when the deed came to be made the farmer's wife objected. She said she had helped to pay for the farm. She had worked all her life for it, and she was bound to have some of the money that it brought before she signed the deed. The lawyer and the husband were dumbfounded. They had not anticipated such a complication, and at last one of them asked the old lady how much she thought she ought to have. She hesitated a moment, and then said that she believed she was really entitled to ask for as much as \$2. Of course she got it, but think how little money she must have had in the past to have made such a fuss about this amount.

"I am surprised how mean men are sometimes to their wives," continued Secretary Morton; "not only farmers but other men as well. Woman is naturally a self-sacrificing creature, and she submits to many a thing a man would not think of tolerating. Speaking of little meannesses, let me give you an incident that I saw myself during the days of the war. I happened to be in a store in my town one day, when an old fellow whom we will call Jones came in with his wife to buy some goods. This man Jones came from one of the most celebrated families in the United States. He settled in Nebraska when it was still a territory, and by economy and thrift he had gotten a farm of something like 1,000 acres. He was known to have money in the bank, and was considered wealthy. Well, shortly after they entered the store Mrs. Jones took up a piece of calico and admired it very much. As she looked at it she said to her husband:

"Pa, I ought to have a new dress, and I like this very much. Don't you think we could afford to buy it?"

"Oh, I suppose so," replied the old man, and he thereupon asked the clerk the price. He was told it was 50 cents a yard. Old Mr. Jones raised his eyes at this, and asked his wife how much it would take. She replied she didn't think she could get along on less than twelve yards, and he answered:

"Why, ma, twelve yards of that goods at 50 cents a yard would cost \$6. Now, don't you think that is pretty high?"

"Yes," she replied, "I do, but I need the dress."

"Well," said the old man, "times are hard, and I do wish you could get along without it just now. Couldn't you?"

"Yes, I suppose I could," replied the old lady, with a sigh, and the calico was dropped.

"A moment later old Mr. Jones asked the same clerk if he had any tobacco, and whether he had any of that good old Virginia leaf that they used to keep in stock. The clerk said:

"Yes, we have, but it's awful high. It's \$2 a pound, and I think it will go higher before it gets less. We have just one caddy left."

"You think it will go higher," replied Jones.

"Yes," said the clerk, "it's sure to go up."

"Well, you might put me up five pounds," said the old man, and a moment later I saw him carrying it out of the store. He had not \$6 to spend for his wife's calico dress, but he thought nothing of putting \$10 into plug tobacco. This is a sample of the kind of treatment some wives are receiving every day. I don't suppose Mr. Jones realized his selfishness. He probably loved his wife, but he had been brought up the wrong way."

[And farmers' wives are no better off in Canada than they are in the States. Men are as selfish and unreasonable upon one side of the lakes as they are upon the other.—Ed.]

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**Bracing a Jury.**  
 As I was plodding along the highway I was overtaken by a farm waggon with eight men in it, all armed with rifles and pistols. The driver kindly pulled up and asked me to ride into town with them, and after I was seated I inquired of one of the men:  
 "Are you people out on a hunting expedition?"  
 "No, we are not huntin' anything," he replied.  
 "After a horse thief?"  
 "No, not after a horse thief."  
 "Perhaps it's a shooting match?" I persisted.  
 "No, not a shootin' match."  
 I didn't like to ask further questions, but after a silence of five minutes the driver turned and explained:  
 "It's nothin' but a lawsuit of mine which comes off in town to-day."  
 "And these are your friends?"  
 "These are my friends."  
 I didn't like to ask why they were armed from head to heel to attend a lawsuit, but he saw me looking at the weapons and added:  
 "The verdict in this lawsuit order be in my favor without question, an' there are two or three weak-kneed critters on the jury."  
 "And your object is to brace them up?"  
 "Exactly. That's the word I was tryin' to think of. Yes, when they see the eight of us walk in and take front seats the jury will brace right up, and the verdict will be accordin' to law and evidence, and I'll git my hoss back. Couldn't think of that word 'brace' to save my life. I knew it wasn't 'intimidate,' but I couldn't think of 'brace.' Glad we picked ye up. Yes, we're a bracin' party, and we'll either brace that jury or somebody'll git hurt!"—*Detroit Free Press.*

**Polly Wants Her Way.**  
 "I wish you wouldn't," said Polly, dolefully.  
 "Wouldn't what?" I asked.  
 "Wouldn't be an editor, and have to work at night."  
 "What is it now?"  
 "What is what?"  
 "What is it you want me to take you to?"  
 "Nothing." A pause. "Only the wheelers are going to have a dance on Thursday night, and I thought—perhaps—"  
 I smoked on. Polly viewed me in aggrieved silence.  
 "I wish you would take that horrid cigar out and talk to me."  
 "My dear child," I began. (This is a form of address I invariably use when about to say something disagreeable.) "My dear child, I have many times explained to you the impossibility of my leaving the desk in the evening, even for you. On a paper like ours," I continued, lapsing into my professional tone, "with an extensive circulation and the highest standard of excellence to maintain—"  
 "Oh, bother the paper," said Polly, "you used to do it."  
 "True; once or twice—"  
 "Exactly seven times!"  
 "Or thereabouts I have disregarded my duties and left my labors to Wilson. On each of these occasions the paper has suffered. The last time the circulation fell off nearly one half."  
 Polly eyed me rather suspiciously.  
 "I don't see any fun in being engaged," she said, as I thought, somewhat irrelevantly.  
 "Then let's get married," I promptly suggested.  
 "Polly paid no attention to this, rightly regarding it as merely an attempt to change the subject.  
 "Well, I suppose I shall have to go with Mr. Weld, though he's a horrid old stick!"  
 "Has he asked you?"  
 "Still, it would make Minnie jealous, and so—"  
 I sat up and removed my cigar. "Polly, I said, rather than oblige you to undergo the torture of being with that empty-brained ass, I'll take you myself, if it annihilates the paper!"  
 Polly perched herself on the arm of my chair. "You're a dear old goose," she said softly.  
 \* \* \*

"Of course, dear," she whispered after awhile. "I wouldn't have gone with him, even if he had asked me."  
 "Polly, didn't he ask you?"  
 There was no answer. I couldn't see her face, but I noticed a convulsive movement of her shoulder and thought I heard a suppressed giggle.  
 I kissed her sternly.  
 "It seems to me," groaned the sufferer, apostrophizing the reflection of his aching tooth in the looking-glass, "that for as small a customer as you are you have lots of nerve."  
 Lover—You are getting prettier every day." Sweet Girl—Just now I am living on brown bread and water to improve my complexion." "How long can you keep that up?" "Oh, indefinitely." "Then let's get married."