

Jill of the Fields

A ROMANCE
By Kennaway James

SYNOPSIS.
Motherless Jill Merridew becomes, on the death of her father, owner of a farm. She counts on Mark Hanson, head man, to assist her in the management. Mark resents remarks made by Phillip Barbour, who professes to be investigating the history of old county families. On returning to London Barbour meets two foreigners. The reason for his interest proves to be a chemical fertilizer discovered by Jill's father, which he had not made known to Jill.
On returning to the farm Phillip finds Jill upset over Mark Hanson, who had declared his love for her. Barbour commended his love for her. Barbour quarrels with Jill and old George tells Mark of Barbour's attentions. Mark quarrels with Jill but is interrupted by the news that a body of a man has been found in one of the wheat fields. Jill realizes that Mark and Barbour will clash eventually.

CHAPTER VIII.

Yes, she would appeal to Mark's better nature, even in these difficult circumstances, to keep the peace.
She little knew that Mark had already decided to do nothing of the kind. The more he thought of the matter, the more he saw that it was going to be impossible for him to continue at Stone Town. That being so, he did not intend to leave without getting a little of his own back from this man who had so unexpectedly and so inconsiderately walked across his path. His pugnacity was as elemental as that of a stag in autumn.
"I'll get even with that flashy fellow before I've done, if the police don't do it for me," he said to himself. "I wish that old devil George would let me know what's in his mind. He knows something."
But George was not yet in a communicative mood, as Mark discovered when, a little later, he tried again to get the old man to speak.
"You must leave it all to me, Master Hanson," he said. "I know what I'm a-doing. They're after summat, and I know what it is."
"Who are they?"
"A lot of 'em," said George. "That man found dead in the field was one of 'em, and you see what he got."
"Who gave it to him?" asked Mark.
"Ah, that would be telling again," said old George with a quiet cackle through his whiskers. "Dead men tell no tales and live ones have got to be careful. Anyhow, there he was in the field at a time when honest men should be abed and rogues has no business out."
"You were pretty late yourself," Mark could not resist saying as he thought of George's spying through the window of Stone Town.
"Ah, but you see I had been out after an 'are."
"Oh, confound you and your hares," Mark exclaimed, half laughing. "What about that tobacco-box of yours that was found under the body?"
"That's what I'd like to know. Why, you'd think that ossifer thought I'd killed the poor chap myself, and him coming all the way from foreign parts, too."
Mark gave a gasp of astonishment. "D'you mean to say you know what the man was?" he asked George.

"Got a good idea," said George, "but I don't do for me to say anything. That inspector will find it all out for you if you leave him alone. Clever chap, that."
"I wonder if he's as clever as you," said Mark. "It seems to me that you are holding back a great deal, and I can't understand why. You said you don't need money, and I've told you you can get as many hares as you like, so far as I'm concerned, and I've told you that you have a duty to Miss Jill. How can I persuade you to put your cards on the table? Why can't you go and tell Miss Merridew about it at once?"
"Because she's too concerned about other things—like that Mr. Barber," said George with a slight touch of malice.
"Leave him out," said Mark. "See, I'll tell you what I'll do. If you'll tell Miss Jill what you know I'll give you my cottage so that you can have it for the rest of your days. I know you've always wanted it."
A definite glimmer of interest showed on George's face.
"Well, as I told you before, Master Hanson," he said, "there's hardly any kind of bribe I could take, being an old man and wanting nothing, but your cottage do interest me. But what would you do yourself? You got to live somewhere near the farm, and I'm mortal sure you wouldn't live in mine, with all them rats in the thatch and the rain comin' through."
"Oh, I've got somewhere else in mind. You wouldn't need to worry about me."
"All right, then," said George. "I'll think it over and let you know. And don't get thinking too much about that tobacco-box. I can look after myself when it comes to that."
So saying, old George hobbled away. "And he's got another place where he can live, has he?" he muttered to himself. "Means he's not going to stay here much longer. In a way I don't blame him. She's gone and took up with that Mr. Barbour and the farm's become more like a circus than a farm, what with one thing and another. But it won't do for him to go. Farm's going down as it is, and he's the only chap who can run it round. And as for that Barbour, well, to a little affair won't last long if I know anything about it. Who'd think a frimula could cause all this trouble—burglaries, murders and broken hearts!"
And certainly it was the formula—frimula, George called it—which was at the root of all the troubles which had of late befallen Stone Town, with the exception of the decline of the farm. Even that had been accentuated since Mr. Barbour had come and had distracted the already over-occupied mind of Mark Hanson. It had been enough for Mark to love Jill without a rival. With a rival, as he put it, his brain was running on one

cylinder, and that boded ill for Stone Town.
"I could strangle that old rascal," he said as he watched George's retreating figure. "If I didn't know that he had been old Jasper Merridew's greatest confidant, I should think he was a mass of pretence. And if only I could find out what is among Jasper's papers myself, there might be a chance of solving all these happenings. That Barbour is after something is clear, and it looks as though the man in scarecrow's clothes was after the same thing, unless he was one of Barbour's crowd. And there's Jill gone and fallen in love with him. What a mess!"
The wish that he knew of the quest of Phillip Barbour and perhaps others, led his mind into a channel which alarmed him. Why should he not attempt to look over old Jasper's papers? It was an impulse which he thrust away at once, but it was one which he felt certain would return.
Whilst Mark and George had been talking, Barbour had been speaking with Inspector Norton. When Phillip had left Jill with his re-assuring words, he had gone to the door where the inspector was awaiting him. Jill had not taken his re-assurance too seriously and was filled with apprehension. She went quickly to a window which overlooked the farmyard and the meadows where Norton seemed to be doing most of his cross-examination. From here she was able to watch Barbour and the inspector as they talked.
The conversation did not take long and Jill was astonished to see the inspector smiling at the end of it. She had not thought him capable of a smile.
Presently after he had chatted a little with the inspector, Jill saw Phillip returning to the house, and found herself running eagerly downstairs to meet him. He entered the house almost with a touch of bravado.
"We've soon put that little matter right," he said airily as Jill led the way into the old farm kitchen. "I don't think he will want to ask me any more questions, but of course the chap is only doing his duty."
"Yes, only he needn't do it in quite such an obnoxious manner. What questions did he ask you?"
"Oh, just wanted to know what I was doing up here and what was my interest in Stone Town. Of course, I told him of the book I was writing about the old farms of England, and how it necessitated my seeing various documents in old farms."
"I want you to tell me more about that book some time," said Jill. Her old doubts about the existence of such a book had gone. She accepted Barbour's occasional reference to it readily.
"Yes, I'll tell you until your father comes through the door."
"Oh, quite soon," she replied. "Let us get a few of these troubles out of the way. Listen, that's the doorbell again. I shudder every time it rings." A moment later Mrs. Blore knocked on the door and entered.
"Another of those newspaper men," she said.
"Oh, bother," exclaimed Jill. "It seems as though I shall never have any peace again. Very well, ask him to wait."
"No, tell him to go," put in Barbour sternly. "You are too kind to those fellows. I can't have you worried like this."
Mrs. Blore looked from one to the other in surprise and perplexity.
"All right, then, tell him to go," she said meekly, not without some astonishment at the manner in which she was capitulating to Barbour.
Had she known it, Barbour at the moment was playing a desperate game. He had a definite feeling that others besides himself were after the formula, and he had fears that he might lose it after all. He must do something to make his chances as certain as possible and the best thing seemed to be to carry his friendship with Jill to a more definite status.
He had thought it over very thoroughly, and had arrived at the conclusion that to marry Jill would be a sweet and easy way out of his difficulties. He was partly in love with her, or so he imagined, and she was the owner of one of the finest farms in England. What more could a man want?
When Mrs. Blore had gone he stroked her tenderly on the shoulder.
"Poor little woman," he said. "You are having a rough time. You've no idea how sorry I was for you last night."
(To be continued.)

Resourceful Man

There are many ways of aiding prosperity's return and of furthering one's own business, and a Lucan baker shows himself a man of resources. Recently, being in need of a horse to carry on his business successfully, and being a little shy of the medium of exchange, he found a man who was willing to exchange a horse for a baker's products and he bartered 400 loaves of the staff of life for the animal. The payment is to be made in installments as needed by the party of the other part.—Clinton News-Record.

ISSUE No. 9-'34

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The Dominion Coast-to-Coast

Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.—Mr. W. L. Brenton, Provincial Dairy Superintendent, states that in 1933 twenty-one creameries, thirteen cheese factories, four pasteurizing plants and forty-two ice cream manufacturing plants were in operation in Prince Edward Island. The dairy industry of the province, he says, showed progress over the previous year.
Saint John, New Brunswick.—Addressing the Rotary Club at Saint John, Mr. Alex. Gray, General Manager and Chief Engineer of the Saint John Harbour Commission, said that about \$15,000,000 had been spent on harbour development since 1927, and that plans for further expansion in the near future were being studied.

Quebec, Que.—More than a quarter of the Canadian creamery butter production in 1933 was contributed to Quebec Province, the output amounting to 62,238,000 pounds out of a Dominion total of 215,917,334 pounds.
Ottawa, Ont.—During the last five years the Mandarin variety of soybeans has never failed to mature its seed crop at the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, according to an official report. It is the earliest available yellow seeded variety and matures on the average in 120 days. Five years ago twenty bushels per acre was a good average yield, but during the last two seasons the yield of a selected strain has been well over thirty bushels. This showing indicates the possibilities for improvement in the crop.

Winnipeg, Manitoba.—Preliminary studies carried out by the Canadian Society of Technical Agriculturists on the malting quality of barley at the Manitoba Barley Research Laboratory, on grain grown by the Dominion Experimental Farms, show that Canada as a whole produces the best malting quality of barley in the world. Provinces would do fairly well in British Columbia the quality is variable, depending upon the soil and climatic conditions of the different valleys. On the prairies Manitoba produces the best quality, although fair quality can be grown in the northern sections of Saskatchewan and Alberta. In Manitoba the eastern and northern parts give the best results.

Regina, Saskatchewan.—In December last cream graded higher in Saskatchewan than in the previous December, being 73.4 per cent "table," or best grade, compared with 49.0 per cent in December, 1932. The percentage of table cream throughout the year was 54.2 compared with 52.2 in 1932.
Lethbridge, Alberta.—Canadian Sugar Factories, Raymond, have finished one of the best seasons on record, the plant having run for 112 days, slicing an average of 1,175 tons of beets per day—the record day seeing 1,359 tons passed through the mill—and turning out a total of 46,000,000 pounds of refined sugar from 131,000 tons of beets. The sugar content of the beets was high, averaging 18.40 per cent.

Calgary, Alberta.—Phenomenal growth in herds and in production of Jersey cattle and milk in Alberta during the past year were reported at the annual meeting of the Southern Alberta Jersey Cattle Club by Mr. W. T. Hunter, Vernon, Western Field Representative of the Canadian Jersey Cattle Club. He referred to a marked increase in demand for Jersey milk not only in Western Canada, but throughout the Dominion. During the past eighteen months, Mr. Hunter said, 300 Jersey cows were brought into Edmonton and Calgary districts, most of them from British Columbia. Alberta now ranks fourth in the Dominion in total registration and transfers of Jersey cattle, Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia leading in that order.
Victoria, British Columbia.—British Columbia's agricultural products were worth \$34,466,000 in 1933, a slight gain over the 1932 figure of \$34,373,926, according to a year-end estimate released by Hon. K. C. MacDonald, Minister of Agriculture. In addition, it is estimated that home growers produced about \$1,000,000 worth of fruits and vegetables in their gardens.

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Cheese Problems Are Reviewed

Industry First Established In 1864—Gradual Decline Noted

The problems facing the cheese industry in Ontario to-day are many, says the Economic Annalist, issued quarterly by the Agricultural Economics Branch, Dominion Department of Agriculture. Perhaps, the most important one affecting production costs is the declining volume of business. In 1864 the 1st cheese factory is reported to have been established in Oxford County, Ontario. From then on a rapid development took place in the industry until early in this century. Since 1900-04 period there has been a gradual decline in production of cheese in Ontario (and in fact throughout the whole Dominion). In 1931, Ontario had 714 factories in which were produced slightly over \$4 million pounds of cheese. This figure represents a decrease of 36.4 per cent, as compared to a production of nearly 132 million pounds in the year 1900.

With the development of large urban centres and increased demand for milk for fluid consumption and for use in the manufacture of other dairy products, the production of cheese declined. Paralleling this development came improved means of transportation, better roads, and more suitable means of handling milk, the net effect of this combination of circumstances being increased competition and declining volume of business for cheese factories. It has been difficult for operators of these cheese factories to cope with these changed conditions and thus compete with the users of milk.

A Considerable Nugget
Melbourne, Australia.—Standard 80 lb to net weight of 7.09 ounces and \$150 value was contained in a nugget found near a seep at Sea Lake recently re-gravelled from a neighboring pit.

Gives His Paper Scoop on Suicide

Copenhagen, Denmark.—C. A. Arnfast was a newspaper man.
His life was ruled by the clock. His newspaper, the Aarhusposten, went "on the streets" at noon every day and news had to be written, set into type, and printed before that hour.
Last week the Aarhusposten had a scoop—the exclusive story of Arnfast's suicide at 6 a.m. just in time to make the edition.
The story of his death was written by Arnfast himself in a note to a fellow reporter.
"I have shot myself.
"I am no joy nor of sufficient use to anybody in these hard times when it is difficult to earn a decent living honestly.
"It is now 6 o'clock, my old paper thus getting the news of my suicide exclusively."

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