

(Continued from last week.)

SYNOPSIS

CHAPTER L-Introducing "So Big" (Dirk DeJong) in his infancy. And his mother, Selina DeJong, daughter of simeon Peake, gambler and gentleman of fortune. Her life, to young woman-bood in Chicago in 1888, has been un-conventional, somewhat seamy, but senerally enjoyable. At school her chum is Julie Hempel, daughter of August Hempel, butcher. Simeon is killed in a guarrei that is not his own, and Selina, nineteen years old and practically destitute, becomes a school-teacher.

CHAPTER II—Selina secures a posi-tion as teacher at the High Prairie school, in the outskirts of Chicago, living at the home of a truck farmer, Klass Pool. In Roelf, twelve years old, son of Klaas, Selina perceives a kindred spirit, a lover of beauty, like heraelf.

CHAPTER III.—The monotonous life of a country school-teacher at that time, is Selina's, brightened somewhat by the companionship of the sensitive, artistic boy Roelf.

artistic boy Roelf. CHAPTER IV.—Selina hears gossip concerning the affection of the "Widow Paarlenberg," rich and good-looking, for Pervus DeJong, poor truck farmer, who is insensible to the widow's at-tractions. For a community "sociable" Felina prepares a lunch basket, dainty, but not of ample proportions, which is "auctioned," according to custom. The smallness of the lunch box excites deri-sion, and in a sense of fun the bidding becomes spirited, DeJong finally secur-ing it for \$10, a ridiculously high price. Over their lunch basket, which Selina and DeJong share together, the school-teacher arranges to instruct the good-patured farmer, whose education has been neglected.

CHAPTER V.—Propinquity, in their positions of "teacher" and "pupil," and Selina's loneliness in her uncongenial surroundings, lead to mutual affection. Pervus DeJong wins Selina's consent to be his wife.

During that winter she was often hideously lonely. She never got over her hunger for companionship. Here she was, a gregarious and fun-loving creature, buried in a snow-bound Illinois p airie farmhouse with a husband who looked upon conversation as a convenience, not a pastime. She learned much that winter about the utter sordidness of farm life. She rarely saw the Pools; she rarely saw any one outside her own little houseold. The front room-the parlor-

married Michael Arnold of Kansas City. The Arnolds were in the packing business there, you know. Michael has gone into business with pa here in Chicago and I suppose you have heard of pa's success. Just all of a sudden he began to make a great deal of money after he left the butcher busi- giggling-in clean ginghams and de- est. There were two horses-the secness and went into the yards-the stock yards, you know. Poor mamma was so happy these last few years, and had everything that was beautiful. I have two children-Eugene and Pauline.

"I am getting to be quite a society person. You would laugh to see me. I am on the ladies' entertainment committee of the World's fair. We are supposed to entertain all the visiting big bugs-that is the lady bugs. There ! How is that for a joke?

"I suppose you know about the Infanta Eulalie. Of Spain, you know. And what she did about the Potter Palmer ball. . . .'

Selina, the letter in her workstained hand, looked up and across the fields and away to where the prairie met the sky and closed in on her; her world. The Infanta Eulalie of Spain. . . She went back to the letter.

"Well, she came to Chicago for the fair and Mrs. Potter Palmer was to give a huge reception and ball for her. Mrs. P. is head of the whole committee, you know, and I must say she looks queenly with her white hair so beautifully dressed and her diamond dog-collar and her black velvet and all. Well, at the very last minute the Infanta refused to attend the ball because she had just heard that Mrs. P. was an innkeeper's wife. Imagine! The Palmer house, of course."

Selina, holding the letter in her hand, imagined.

It was in the third year of Selina's marriage that she first went into the



She Would Take Dirk With Her Into

of Empty Sacks in the Shade.

spoiling in the ground.

men won't do it."

ging.

vus would say.

fields to work. Pervus had protested

black dirt. He even made as though

still figure that had been so active, so bustling, realized that for the first time in the years she had known her she was seeing Maartje Pool at rest. It seemed incredible that she could lie there, the infant in her arms, while the house was filled with people and there were chairs to be handed, space to be cleared, food to be cooked and served. Sitting there with the other High Prairie women Selina had a hideous feeling that Maartje would suddenly rise up and take things in charge: rub and scratch with capable fingers the spatters of dried mud on Klaas Pool's black trousers (he had been in the yard to see to the horses); quiet the loud wailing of Geertje and Jozina; pass her gnarled hand over Roelf's wide-staring eyes. wipe the film of dust from the parlor table that had never known a speck during her regime. "You can't run far enough," Maartje

had said. "Except you stop living you can't run away from life." Well, she had run far enough this

time. Roelf was sixteen now, Geertje

twelve, Jozina eleven. What would this household do now, Selina wondered, without the woman who had cent square-toed shoes? Who, when Klaas broke out in rumbling Dutch "dumb" ways, would say, "Og, Pool, out to pasture for future sale as horse leave the boy alone once. He does carcass. A month of rest and pastur-nothing." Who would keep Klaas himself in order; cook his meals, wash his clothes, iron his shirts, take a pride in

the great ruddy childlike giant? Klaas answered these questions just nine months later by marrying the

Widow Paarlenberg, High Prairie was rocked with surprise. For months this marriage was the talk of the district. So insatiable was High Prairie's curiosity that every scrap of news was swallowed at a gulp. When the word went round of Roelf's flight from the farm, no one knew where, it served only as sauce to the great

dish of gossip. Selina had known. Pervus was

away at the market when Roelf had knocked at the farmhouse door one night at eight, had turned the knob and entered, as usual. But there was nothing of the usual about his appearance. He wore his best suit-his first suit of store clothes, bought at the time of his mother's funeral. It never had fitted him; now it was grotesquely small for him. He had shot up amazingly in the last eight or nine months. Yet there was nothing of the ridiculous about him as he stood there before her now, tall, lean, dark. He put down his cheap yellow suitcase. "Well, Roelf."

"I am going away. I couldn't stay." She nodded. "Where?"

"Away. Chicago maybe." He was terribly moved, so he made his tone casual. "They came home last night. I have got some books that belong to you." He made as though to open the suitcase.

Seeing her thus one would have thought that the Selina Peake of the wine-red cashmere, the fun-loving disposition, the high-spirited courage, had departed forever. But these things still persisted. For that matter, even the wine-red cashmere clung to existence. So hopelessly old-fashioned now as to be almost picturesque, it hung in Selina's closet like a rose memory. Sometimes when she came upon it in an orgy of cleaning she would pass her rough hands over its soft folds and by that magic process Mrs. Pervus DeJong vanished in a pouf and in her place was the girl Selina Peake perched a-tiptoe on a soap box in Adam Ooms' hall while all High Prairie, open-mouthed, looked on as the impecunious Pervus DeJong threw ten hard-earned dollars at her feet.

It would be gratifying to be able to record that in these eight or nine years Selina had been able to work wonders on the DeJong farm; that the house glittered, the crops thrived richly, the barn housed sleek cattle. But it could not be truthfully said. True, she had achieved some changes, but at the cost of terrific effort. A less indomitable woman would have sunk into apathy been so faithful a slave to it? Who years before. The house had a coat of would keep the pigtails-no longer paint-lead-gray, because it was cheapond a broken-down old mare, blind in one eye, that they had picked up for wrath against what he termed Roelf's five dollars after it had been turned

> Selina had made the bargain, and Pervus had scolded her roundly for it. Now he drove the mare to market, saw that she pulled more sturdily than the other horse, but had never retracted. It was no quality of meanness in him. Pervus merely was like that.

But the west sixteen! That had been Selina's most heroic achievement. Her plan, spoken of to Pervus in the first month of her marriage, had taken years to mature; even now was but a partial triumph. She had even descended to nagging.

"Why don't we put in asparagus?" "Asparagus!" considered something of a luxury, and rarely included in the High Prairie truck farmer's products. "And wait three years for a crop!"

"Yes, but then we'd have it. And a plantation's good for ten years, once it's started. I've been reading up on it. The new way is to plant asparagus in rows, the way you would rhubarb or corn. Plant six feet apart, and four acres anyway."

He was not even sufficiently interested to be amused. "Yeh, four acres where? In the clay land, maybe." He did laugh then, if the short bitter sound he made could be construed as indicating mirth. "Out of a book."

"In the clay land," Selina urged, crisply. "And out of a book. That west sixteen isn't bringing you anything, so what difference does it make if I am wrong! Let me put my own money into it, I've thought it all out, Pervus. Please. We'll underdrain the

the rush of trading was over stimulated him but little. When he reached home it was mid-afternoon. Selina put him to bed against his half-hearted protests. Banked him with hot water jars, a hot iron wrapped in flannel at his feet. But later came fever instead of the expected relief of perspiration. Ill though he was, he looked more ruddy and hale than most men in health; but suddenly Selina, startled, saw black lines like gashes etched under his eyes, about his mouth, in his cheeks.

In a day when pneumonia was known as lung fever and in a locality that advised closed windows and hot air as a remedy, Pervus' battle was lost before the doctor's hooded buggy was seen standing in the yard for long hours through the night. Toward morning the doctor had Jan Steen stable the horse. It was a sultry night, with flashes of heat lightning in the west.

"I should think if you opened the windows," Selina said to the old High Prairie doctor over and over, emboldened by terror, "it would help him to breathe. He-he's breathing so-he's



'He—He's Breathing So—" She Could Not Bring Herself to Say, "So Ter-

oreathing so-" She could not bring herself to say, "so terribly." The sound of the words wrung her as did the sound of his terrible breathing.

Perhaps the most poignant and couching feature of the days that followed was not the sight of this stricken giant, lying majestic and aloof in his unwonted black; nor of the boy Dirk, uted. One stroke of a hand sprayer mystified but elated, too, with the unaccustomed stir and excitement; nor of the shabby little farm that seemed ed shovel into a pile a to shrink and dwindle into further in- cover for five hours. Sow immedilicity turned upon it. No; it was the sight of Selina, widowed, but having no time for decent tears. The farm was there; it must be tended. Illness, death, sorrow-the garden must be tended, the vegetables pulled, hauled to market, sold. Upon the garden depended the boy's future, and hers. For the first few days following the funeral one or another of the neighboring farmers drove the DeJong team to market, aided the blundering Jan in the fields. But each had his hands full with his own farm work. On the fifth day Jan Steen had to take the garden truck to Chicago, though not without many misgivings on Selina's part, all of which were realized when he returned late next day with half the lead still on his wagon and a sum of money representing exactly zero in profits. doorway, Jan in the yard with the team. She turned her face toward the fields. An observant person (Jan Steen was not one of these) would have noted the singularly determined and clear-cut jaw line of this drably calicoed farm woman.

FARM NOTES.

-Shade is necessary to promote maximum growth in young chickens.

-For the scales: San Jose, oyster shell, and scurfy, apply the delayed dormant spray to apple trees. Use lime-sulphur that tests 1.03 specific gravity for the spraying.

-Continue feeding grain and hay to dairy cows when first turned into pasmilk flow unless given some supplementary foods.

-Keep the porkers in comfort during the summer months with protec-tion from lice. Crude oil or crank case drainings will do the trick. Apply it by hand with waste, or saturate pieces of burlap wrapped on the rubbing posts.

-Give the younger pigs a chance to get a square meal in the feed lot by providing a trough separate from that used by the bigger porkers. Fighting for one's meals is not conducive to good digestion even if something to eat is secured.

-The choice of a herd sire may make or break a man in the dairy business, say dairy specialists of The Pennsylvania State College. The future herd is dependent upon influences in operation now. Choose the herd sire carefully from producing ancestry.

-Practically every county in the State has Canada thistles. More complaints are received about this weed than any other. Weed Leaflet No. 2, sent free upon request to the Agricultural Publications Office, State College, Pa., describes this pest and tells how to eradicate it.

-There are many uses for the Narcissus bulbs as is evidenced by the many locations in which they are found. One of the most effective is among perennials and in the foreground of plantings. Select this spring while they are in bloom those that you will plant next fall.

-Insects pests are very destructive in the home gardens. Small bellows hand dusters should be on hand to greet any invasion of plant lice, cucumber beetles or other small insect pests. Prepared nicotine dust, which can be bought in small quantities in air-tight cans, is a great aid in battling some of these pests.

-Old lawns should be carefully gone over. Unsightly depressions that cannot be removed by rolling may be eliminated by lifting the sod, filling with good soil and replacing the sod. Where this is not practiced, fine loam to a depth of not more than three inches may be spread over the existing lawn and the surface seeded. The existing grass will force its way through the new soil.

-Treating oats to prevent smut often means the difference between a good crop and a poor one. Mix one pint of formaldehyde with one pint of water. This will treat 50 bushels of grain. Spray the solution on the grain as it is being shoveled over, takgrain. gives enough mist for each shovelful of grain. When all the grain is treatsignificance beneath the sudden pub- ately or allow to air thoroughly before stacking or storing in bins. Disinfect sack, bins, or drills with the same strength solution. -Fruit production can be increased greatly with the aid of fertilizerssometimes to the extent of 1,000 per cent. Experiments show that without fertilizer each tree produced 60.1 pounds of apples; with the use of four pounds of sulphate of ammonia per tree, the orchard averaged 233.6 pounds of apples per tree; with five pounds of nitrate of soda per tree, 209.2 pounds of fruit; with ten pounds of acid phosphate per tree, 209.4 pounds of fruit, and with a complete fertilizer, consisting of four pounds of sulphate ammonia, five pounds of acid phosphate and three pounds of muriate of potash per tree, 403 pounds of fruit per tree. The cost of apples per 100 pounds with four pounds of sulphate of ammonia per tree was 16.1 selina was standing in the kitchen loorway, Jan in the yard with the seventeen pounds of complete fertilizer 20.6 cents.

was usually bitterly cold, but sometimes she used to slip in there, a shawl over her shoulders, and sit at the frosty window to watch for a wagon to go by, or a chance pedestrian up the road. She did not pity herself, nor regret her step. She felt, physically, pretty well for a child-bearing woman; and Pervus was tender, kindly, sympathetic, if not always understanding She struggled gallantly to keep up the small decencies of existence. She loved the glow of Pervus' eyes when she appeared with a bright ribbon, a fresh collar, though he said nothing and perhaps she only fancied that he noticed. Once or twice she had walked the mile and a half of slippery road to the Pools', and had sat in Maartje's warm bright bustling kitchen for comfort. Where was adventure now? And where was life? And where the love of chance bred in her by her father?

The two years following Dirk's birth were always somewhat vague in Selina's mind, like a dream in which hor-

"For and happiness are inextricably blended. The boy was a plump, hardy infant. He had his father's blond exterior, his mother's brunette vivacity. At two he was a child of average intelligence, sturdy physique and marked good humor. He almost never cried.

He was just twelve months old when Selina's second child-a girlwas born dead. Twice during those two years Pervus fell victim to his socalled rheumatic attacks following the early spring planting when he was often forced to stand in water up to his ankles. He suffered intensely and during his illness was as tractable as a goaded bull. Selina understood why half of High Prairie was bent and twisted with rheumatism-why the little Dutch Reformed church on Sunday mornings resembled a shrine to which sick and crippled pilgrims creep.

Selina had been married almost three years when there came to her a letter from Julie Hempel, now married. The letter had been sent to the Klaas Pool farm and Jozina had brought it to her. Seated on her kitchen steps in her calico dress she read it. "Darling Selina :---

"I thought it was so queer that you didn't answer my letter, and now I know that you must have thought it queer that I did not answer yours. I found your letter to me, written long ago, when I was going over mother's things last week. It was the letter you must have written when I was in Kansas City. Mother had never given It to me.

"Mamma died three weeks ago. Last week I was going over her things-a trying task, you may imagine-and there were your two letters addressed to me. She had never destroyed them. Poor mamma . . .

"Well, dear Selina, I suppose you | Selina, looking down at the strangely | on her neck,

"No, no! Keep them." "Good-by."

"Good-by, Roelf." She took the boy's dark head in her two hands and, standing on tiptoe, kissed him. He turned to go. "Wait a minute. Wait a minute." She had a few dollars-in quarters, dimes, half dollars-perhaps ten dollars in all-hidden away in a canister on the shelf. She reached for it. But when she came back with the box in her hand he was gone.

Chapter VII

Dirk was eight; Little Sobig DeJong. in a suit made of bean-sacking sewed together by his mother. A brown blond boy with mosquite bites on his legs and his legs never still. Nothing of the dreamer about this lad. The one-room schoolhouse of Selina's day had been replaced by a two-story brick structure, very fine, of which High Prairie was vastly proud. The rusty iron stove had been dethroned by a central heater. Dirk went to school from October until June. Pervus protested that this was foolish. The boy could be of great help in the fields from the

beginning of April to the first of Nothe Fields, Placing Him on a Heap vember, but Selina fought savagely for his schooling, and won.

"Sobig isn't a truck farmer." "Well, he will be pretty soon. Time

miserably, though the vegetables were I was fifteen I was running our place." Selina had regained health and vigor Verbally Selina did not combat this. after two years of wretchedness. She But within her every force was gatherfelt steel-strong and even hopeful ing to fight it when the time should again, sure sign of physical well-being. come. Her Sobig a truck farmer, a Long before now she had realized that slave to the soil, bent by it, beaten by this time must inevitably come. So it, blasted by it, so that he, in time, she answered briskly, "Nonsense, Perlike the other men of High Prairie, vus. Working in the field's no harder would take on the very look of the than washing or ironing or scrubbing rocks and earth among which they or standing over a hot stove in August. toiled!

Women's work! Housework's the Dirk, at eight, was a none too handhardest work in the world. That's why some child, considering his father and mother-or his father and mother as She would often take the boy Dirk they had been. It was not until he with her into the fields, placing him was seventeen or eighteen that he was on a heap of empty sacks in the shade. to metamorphose suddenly into a He invariably crawled off this lowly graceful and aristocratic youngster throne to dig and burrow in the warm,

with an indefinable look about him of distinction and actual elegance.

to help his mother, pulling at the root-Selina was a farm woman now, neared things with futile fingers, and siting thirty. The work rode her as it ting back with a bump when a shallow had ridden Maartje Pool. In the Deroot did unexpectediy yield to his tug-Jong yard there was always a dado of washing. Faded overalls, a shirt, "Look! He's a farmer already," Persocks, a boy's drawers grotesquely patched and mended, towels of rough So two years went-three yearssacking. She, too, rose at four, snatched four. In the fourth year of Selina's up shapeless garments, invested hermarriage she suffered the loss of her self with them, seized her great coil of one woman friend in High Prairie. fine cloudy hair, twisted it into a Maartje Pool died in childbirth, as was utilitarian knob and skewered it with so often the case in this region where a hairpin from which the varnish had a Gampish midwife acted as obstretrilong departed, leaving it a dull gray; cian. The child, too, had not lived. thrust her slim feet into shapeless Death had not been kind to Maartie shoes, dabbed her face with cold water, Pool. It had brought neither peace hurried to the kitchen stove. The work nor youth to her face, as it often does. was always at her heels, its breath hot

clay soil. Just five or six acres, to start. We'll manure it heavily-as much as we can afford-and then for two years we'll plant potatoes there. We'll put in our asparagus plants the third spring-one-year-old seedlings. I'll promise to keep it weeded-Dirk and L. He'll be a big boy by that time. Let me try it, Pervus. Let me try." In the end she had her way, partly

because Pervus was too occupied with his own endless work to oppose her; and partly because he was, in his undemonstrative way, still in love with his vivacious, nimble-witted, highspirited wife, though to her frantic goadings and proddings he was as phlegmatically oblivious as an elephant to a pin prick.

Though she worked as hard as any woman in High Prairie, had as little, dressed as badly, he still regarded her as a luxury; an exquisite toy which, in a moment of madness, he had taken for himself. "Little Lina"-tolerantly, fondly. You would have thought that he spoiled her, pampered her. Perhaps he even thought he did.

That was Pervus. Thrifty, like his kind, but unlike them in shrewdness. Penny wise, pound foolish; a characteristic that brought him his death. September, usually a succession of golden days and hazy opalescent evenings on the Illinois prairie land, was disastrously cold and rainy that year. Pervus' great frame was racked by rheumatism. He was forty now, and over, still of magnificent physique, so that to see him suffering gave Selina the pangs of pity that one has at sight of the very strong or the very weak in pain. He drove the weary miles to market three times a week, for September was the last big month of the truck farmer's season. Selina would watch him drive off down the road in the creaking old market wagon, the green stuff protected by canvas, but Pervus wet before ever he climbed into the seat. There never seemed to be enough waterproof canvas for both. "Pervus, take it off those sacks and put it over your shoulders."

"That's them white globe onions, The last of 'em. I can get a fancy

price for them, but not if they're all wetted down." "Don't sleep on the wagon tonight,

Pervus. Sleep in. Be sure. It saves in the end. You know the last time you were laid up for a week." "It'll clear. Breaking now over there

in the west." The clouds did break late in the af-

ternoon; the false sun came out hot and bright. Pervus slept out in the Haymarket, for the night was close and humid. At midnight the lake wind sprang up, cold and treacherous, and with it came the rain again. Pervus was drenched by morning, chilled, thoroughly miserable. A hot cup of coffee at four and another at ten when

"I'll go myself Monday." Jan stared. "Go? Go where, Mon-

day?" "To market."

(Continued next week.)

Coast-to-Coast Mail.

In 1850 it took 24 days for a letter to go from New York to San Francisco-three days by rail and 21 days by stage coach. Ten years later this time had been

cut to 101 days-two and a half by rail and eight by pony express. In 1876 transcontinental delivery was made in 100 hours, but only by

special train. (The trainmen refused to run at night). Two years ago the time required

was still between 95 and 120 hours by ordinary mail train, depending on connections.

Last year the debut of the transcontinental air mail gave a 33-hour serv-As far as mail communication ice. goes, San Francisco is now no further from New York than Philadelphia was

a century ago.

Protection for Firemen.

Last week Governor Pinchot signed the Miller bill authorizing municipalities to expend money to insure volunteer firemen against death or injuries while going to, returning from, or

while at a fire. The measure simply means that boroughs are authorized to take out tirely. compensation insurance to protect volunteer firemen while they are discharging their duties. It will afford protection to firemen who in the past have had only what small amount is allowed by the by-laws of the Relief to produce the crop are the essential association.

-Bearing grape vines must be pruned every year if a profitable yield is to be secured.

This work is usually done while the vines are still dormant, advises J. H. Clark, instructor in fruit growing at the New Jersey State College of Agriculture. "A heavy pruning is necessary to stimulate vigorous wood growth, to keep the plant within bounds, and to leave only as many buds as can produce good-sized clusters.

"The amount of old wood left at pruning time should be no more than is necessary to act as a support to the producing canes. In the Kniffen system of training, which is recommended for New Jersey, a single trunk extends to the top wire of the two-wire trellis. Four vigorous, one year old canes, a little above the average in length and starting as near the trunk as possible, are selected to produce the crop. These should be so located that one cane can be tied in each direction along each wire. Each of these canes is cut back to eight or ten buds, depending on the vigor of the vine, making a total of 32 to 40 buds on the entire plant.

"This number of buds distributed over four canes will produce more fruit than the same number of buds on spurs, each bearing only two to four buds. Since the canes which bear fruit one year are removed the next, some provision must be made for renewal. This is provided for by selecting four other canes as close as possible to where renewal canes will be wanted a year later, and cutting them back to spurs of two buds each. All remaining canes are then removed en-

"These recommendations can easily be applied to other systems of training. The removal of as much old wood as possible and keeping 30 to 40 ing. points."