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### Farmer Bell's Speculation.

COZY, comfortable home was Farm-A er Bell's. Originally it was one of those old-fashioned farm-houses which are "pretty much all kitchen," and that kitchen as delightful a spot to pass a winter evening in as you would find in a day's ride. a modern front to his house, so that he now had a parler, where there was a mantle-piece surmounted by two gilt vases filled with dried grass, and a centre-table covered with books and daguerreotypes, and a fashionable stove with flying cupids on the sides. On great occasions, such as Thanksgiving Day and Christmas, the parlor was warmed and occupied; and throughout this goodly land there was no man who observed Thanksgiving Day more religiously than did Farmer Bell. That day had for he recognized the symptoms of the never passed over his head without its every item of customary observance-from the going to "meeting" in the morning, down to the cranberry sauce, without which no holiday turkey is a perfect success. And it was wont to be Farmer Bell's cheerful boast that Thanksgiving Day had never passed over his head in gloom. But this year the good man looked forward to the coming of that day with painful feelings, for it promised to be accompanied unfortunate.

In the spring Mr. Bell, looking forward to his son Leonard's contemplated marriage with Miss Emily Sutton, the pretty music teacher in the village, had resolved to risk his all in a great speculation that would inside of a year net him a good Leonard, for the old man has got nothing thousand dollars of clean profit, and this for you-not even a corner of the old home was to be Leonard's marriage portion. So to live in. It's hard, ain't it boy?" Farmer Bell commenced buying up lean cattle. Owing to the demand for beef, cattle were bought up very clean all over the country, and prices were very high. about it, and leave it to her to trust herself At that time there was a good prospect of to a young man with nothing but a strong an advance, and even if prices held on as arm and willing heart. It would be a pity they were he would make an excellent if we could not live comfortably by our own profit. He mortgaged his farm to Squire exertions. Don't be so downcast, father. Gripe, a hard old fellow in the village, who refused to take a mortgage for a full year on the house, but agreed to transfer it to the cattle in the fall if the farmer was not ready to pay ; and Farmer Bell was not the kind of man to trouble himself about such a matter. Though I call his enterprise a "speculation," it was not of that precarious order of enterprise which flourishes in Wall street; it was simply the turning of all the energies of his farm in one direction -that is to say, the feeding of lean cattle for the market. Few mundane things could be more certain than that the prices of beef would ere long rule high; and as the farmer went about the country picking up one "creature" here and another there, and paying cash down for each, he soon got together as fine a herd of lean cattle as you will often see in any pasture-fifty of them, bought for something less than two thousand dollars cash, and certain to sell for at least three thousand when fattened. Three thousand dollars was an immense sum of money to Farmer Bell, as it is to many a well-to-do farmer who never knew want and never expects to.

As prices continued good, and even improved. Farmer Bell considered his boy's fortune as good as made; and so the time for the wedding was set, and due preparations begun. It was to be on Thanksgiving Eve-eve of the happiest day of the whole year, in Farmer Bell's opinion.

Leonard Bell was a fine young farmer of twenty-five, of an intelligent, well-read mind, who had intended to adopt a professional life, but had found by a little experience that his robust physique would not endure so much confinement, and so had resolved on following out his father's line of life. He sang bass in the choir of the Methodist church in the village, where of Squire Gripe he had been expecting

there he had formed the acquaintance with her which had ripened into love and proposal.

Emily was an orphan, born and reared in a distant State, who, after her parents died, came to Reyton and resided with an aunt, and supported herself by giving lessons on the piano-forte, and playing the organ for a salary of \$60 a year. Notwithstanding she had a very pretty face and a lively disposition, Emily was a remarkably sensible little woman, as she sufficiently showed by her appreciation of Leonard Bell. Farmer Bell was quite delighted with his son's choice, and was never tired of animadverting on her excellences.

"No matter if she is poor, Leonard," he would sometimes say, with a great ostentation of contempt for wealth, "that's no more than your mother was when I married her. She never brought me a cent, but she brought me what's a thousand times better, a tender heart and a sensible head and a busy hand. And look how I have prospered." For Farmer Bell considered himself decidedly a wealthy man.

Along in October his cattle were all in shed, and his heart glowed at sight of But as he prospered Farmer Bell had built them. But one morning after he had been feeding them, and was looking them over with an admiring eye, his attention was attracted by the curious behavior of one of his best "creatures," who had her legs drawn under her as if she was cold, while the muscles of the neck and shoulders twitched spasmodically. He did not know at first what it meant; but when he saw a peculiar discharge from her nose; and found that her ears and legs had become as cold as ice, a chill of terror ran through him, rinderpest, the new cattle pestilence. The frightful disease ran like wild-fire through the herd, and was conveyed to his horses too, so that the whole were swept away in a fearfully short time; and Farmer Bell was a ruined man.

This, then, was his condition as Thanksgiving Day drew nigh. Of course the mortgage could not now be transferred to the cattle, and he knew Squire Gripe too well to hope that he would give him an extenwith little comfort. Farmer Bell had been sion now that his property was gone. And even if he should, what hope was there?

> "It would take me half a lifetime to get two thousand dollars together, Ruth," he said to his wife. "Every thing will have to go. I don't know what will become of us. You'll have to put off your marriage,

"I shall not put it off, father," said Leonard, "unless Emily wishes it, and I don't think she will. I shall tell her al I'll have a home of my own yet, and a corner in it for the old folks, too, if they need it. People don't starve to death in this country."

"Bless your generous heart, Leonard," said Farmer Bell; "I shan't balk you if Miss Sutton don't; but you'll have hard pulling for a while, I'm afraid."

When Leonard told Emily about it her bright eyes first flashed with light, and then dimmed with tears, at the picture of the old folks' desolation, which her sympathetic heart beheld; but she said:

"My selfish soul is glad, Leonard, for now I can help you. Our home will want for nothing. You have no idea how much money I can earn with these little fingers; and if that ugly Squire Gripe takes their home away from them, your father and mother shall live with us, Leonard."

"Darling girl," said the delighted young man, "you are a prize indeed, and worthy of a better man than I am. I haven't had any fears of my own, Emily, from the first, and with you at my side I'll defy fortune's

"Spoken like a soldier-boy," said Emily. For Leonard had served his three years in the war, the reader must know-which helped the pretty music-teacher in her efforts to fall in love with him.

So the preparations for the wedding went on just as before, and when the night before Thanksgiving came they were married at the old farm-house, in the presence of a merry party of friends. But Farmer Bell's face was not a cheerful one. The consciousness of his impending fate hung over him continually like a pall, and it was impossible to keep him in good spirits. The mortgage was past due-had been for several days-and knowing the hard character

made him as nervous as a woman, and robbed him of his rest. The mysterious behavior of Gripe in holding off so long as he had, helped to puzzle the old man's mind and increase his anxiety. He felt a peculiar thrill of pleasure, it must be confessed, when Emily went up and put her hand in his and called him father, for Farmer Bell had never had a daughter of his own; but it was momentary.

"We anticipate such a glorious Thanksgiving dinner to-morrow, father," said she. "I hope you have killed the fattest turkey."

"Yes, yes," Mrs. Bell answered for him, "the turkey is all stuffed and ready for basting. John always relishes his Thanksgiving turkey more than all the other dinners of the year. Don't you John ?"

"Thanksgiving Day has always been a happy day with me, and wife," said Farmer Bell, as if striving to appear cheerful; "and I'll do my best toward making tomorrow happy I promise you," But through his mind that same moment ran the thought where will we all be come this time next year?

But when they gathered about the old table in the great roomy kitchen, the next day for one brief hour Farmer Bell's gloom was dissipated by the joyousness of the scene and its pleasant associations .-Leonard's bright-eyed young wife was in abounding good spirits, and laughed and chatted till Farmer Bell forgot the mortgage and everything else but the genial pleasure of the hour. Emily complimented everything on the table and declared it the nicest dinner she ever sat down to in her life. The turkey was done to a turn; the pumpkin-pie was a marvel of culinery perfection. It was while they were discussing the pies that Farmer Bell began to tell a laughable reminiscence of his youth, in which a pumpkin jack-'o-lantern figured, and which caused great merriment around the board; and as he was in the midst of the funniest part he glanced out of the window his face suddenly paled, and he uttered an exclamation of terror and consternation. Squire Gripe's well-known rusty old horse and chaise were at the hitching-post by the gate, and Gripe himself was limping up the walk toward the house.

"He can't be coming to serve the notice on Thanksgiving Day!" cried Leonard, anxiously.

"Why not?" said Farmer Bell in a bitter tone; "he keeps no holidays. Probably some business brings him out of his road, and he's for saving the sheriff's fee, and an extra journey at the same time."

The Squire's nervous rap was heard at the door, and Farmer Bell asked all to rehimself. So he left the room.

"How are ye-eh-Mr. Bell?" asked the Squire, in his peculiar piping treble. 'Coolish-eh-coolish out?"

"Yes, sir," said the farmer, showing his guest into the parlor, where the Thanksgiving fire was burning. "Well, sir," he added, as soon as the Squire was seated. "I suppose you're on business?"

"Yes-eh-but not with you, Mr. Bell," was the answer. "It's Miss-eh -Sutton I want to see. She's here, ain't

"Yes," said the farmer, "or rather Miss Sutton that was. She's my son's wife

now.' "Oh, then it's-ch-come off, has it? Heard something about it but didn't know when-ch-it was to come off. Congratu-

"I'll send her in," said the farmer; and he went into the kitchen to do his er-

"Oh, it's me he wants, is it?" said Emily, rising from the table.

"Do you want your husband?" asked Leonard, curiously.

"No," said she, laughing ; "I'll do with out my protector this time. If I scream you can come, you know." And then she tripped out of the room.

A few minutes after Squire Gripe limped down the garden path, and drove off, as Emily came into the kitchen again and sat down to finish her dinner.

"What does make you all so gloomy?" she asked; "I declare, father, one would think there had been a funeral instead of a wedding. Mother, I must have another piece of that delicious pie."

"Ab, Emily," said the farmer, "you've got a cheerful heart. You'll be a blessing to Leonard. Nothing can damp your spirits."

"A blessing to all of you, I hope," said Emily, in a low and thrilling tone, as tears started into ber kind brown eyes. "Dear, dear !" she added in a half-vexed voice,

Squire Gripe wanted with me? Have you no curiosity in the Bell family?"

The father, mother, and son exchanged embarrassed looks; for all conversation on the subject of the dreaded mortgage had been avoided among them by common consent since Emily came; and they could not speak of the man who held it except with direct reference to the subject. The sudden words they had uttered at the sight of the Squire at the gate had been evoked by the excitement of the moment, and forgotten as soon as uttered.

"Well, if you won't ask me," said Emily "I'll tell you without asking. Or rather I'll show you. Come in the parlor, please."

She took hold of farmer Bell's muscular arm with her two little hands, and they all went in. There was a folded paper lying on the table. Farmer Bell started as if it were a ghost. The word "MORTGAGE" was printed on it in large letters, and there was some writing underneath.

"He came to bring you that, father," said Emily.

"Bring-me-what?" stammered Farmer Bell, with white lips, his eyes moving from the paper to the young woman like a man in a dream. "What is it?"

"Look at it and see," said Emily, "you ought to know it. You have seen it be-

Farmer Bell took the paper from the table with trembling hands and opened it. He looked at the top and read "This Indenture ;" he looked at the bottom and saw his own signature, and under it, that of his wife Ruth Bell, and opposite each a little round seal, with blue edge.

"It is yours, father," whispered Emily ; "tear it up."

"What !" cried the farmer, finding his voice at last. "Mine? where'd you get it, Emily? You can't have wheedled old Gripe out of a two-thousand dollar mortgage for all you're the winningest bit of womankind alive. Mine, Emily?" Why this is the mortgage on my house ! 'Ha, ha, ha! Mother what are you crying about? God bless you daughter, I can't understand it, but I know you're-"

The old fellow broke down in spite of himself when he got so far, and drew out his red silk handkerchief and wiped his moist eyes that he might bend over and look again at the mortgage, he had put back on the table as carefully as if it were made of gold leaf.

How Emily explained the presence here of the mortgage was very simple : she had bought it some time before, in fact on the day of its expiration, and as part of the bargain had stipulated that the paper should be delivered to her, at Farmer Bell's by Squire Gripe himself, on Thanksgiving Day.

But to her present auditors this explanation only served to create a deeper mystery; where should Emily get so much money?

"So the time has come," said she, "when I must expose my secret—a secret that I have kept for three long years without a solitary confidant. When my mother died she left me property worth a few thousand dollars which my father never disturbed, and though he died insolvent, you see I had something. But as my property was in Reyton here, and was managed by an agent who never used my name to tenants, it was supposed I was penniless. When I saw what a difference my property made in the manner of the bigger sex toward me, I concluded not to dissipate their delusion, so that if I ever did marry, I'd marry an honest man, who loved me for myself; and that is just what I have done," she said putting her hand contentedly in Leonard's.

"You blessed little humbug !" murmured Leonard.

"And now," said she, "what is to be done with this ugly bit of paper?" pointing to the mortgage on the table.

'It is your's, daughter, ' said Farmer Bell; "you have bought it with your money, and I will pay it off yet. You'll give me plenty of time, I know, and plenty of time is all I ask."

"Ob, don't be so sober !" cried Emily, impatiently; and then she added, "how much-ch-time do you call-ch-plenty of time ?" in such a surprising imitation of Squire Gripe's piping, hesitating voice that it was irresistibly laughable, and Farmer Bell nearly choked himself over it.

Emily patted the farmer on the broad back with mock solitude, and when he was quite recovered and stood wiping his red face with his silk handkerchief, Emily quietly took the mortgage from the table with the stove tongs, and holding it off at arm's length carried it and put it in the

Miss Emily Sutton played the organ, and notice of the foreclosure daily, till it had "why don't some of you ask me what that thing. And now, father, I'm dying to hear the end of that story you were telling at the table about the pumpkin jack-o'lantern, when Squire-ch-Gripe interrupted you."

> If there was a morrier Thanksgiving group in the land than that at Farmer Bell's fireside for the rest of the blessed day I should like to know of it.

The Idea of the Spinning Jenny.

James Hargreaves dropped upon his knee and rolled upon the floor at length. He lay with his face toward the floor, and made lines and circles with the end of a burnt stick. He rose and went to the fire to burn his stick. Then he sat upon a chair and placed his head between his hands, his elbows on his knees, and gazed intently to the floor. Then he sprang to his feet, and replied to some feeble question of his wife, who had not risen since the day she gave birth to a little stranger, by a loud assurance that he had it; and, taking her in his sturdy arms in the blanket, the baby in her arms, he lifted her out and held her over the black drawing on the floor. These he explained, and she joined in a small, hopeful, happy laugh with his high-toned assurance that she should never again toil at the spinning-wheel; that he should never again "play," and have his loom standing for want of weft.

"Our fortune is made when this is made," said he, speaking of his drawing on the floor.

"What will you call it?" asked his

"Call it? What and we call it after thyself-Jenny? They called thee 'Spinning Jenny 'afore I had thee, because thoubeat every lass in Stanchill Moor at the wheel. What if we call it the 'Spinning Jenny ?' "

The Spinning Jenny could spin twelve threads, instead of one, as by hand-spinning.

The populace broke the machine to pieces, and poor Hargreaves' heart at the same time.

Richard Arkwright, a common barber, caught the idea of Hargreaves, improved upon it, realized half a million sterling, and became Sir Richard Arkwright, whose son, in 1843, died the richest commoner in England.

The Southern negroes have a superstition that if, when upon the road, a rabbit crosses the road before them it is a sign of bad luck. A crowd of girls and boys were on their way to a country school, when a hare being frightened from its burrow, ran across the road in front of the party. The girls instantly, and with one accord, turned quickly around three times on their heels, pulled of their sun-bonnets. spat in them, turned them inside out, and, placing them again on their heads, wore them thus to school, congratulating themselve on the way that by these very essential manœuvers they had averted some species of bad luck that was about to befall them. The boys likewise turned on their heels and spat in their hats. One of the boys who had never before witnessed such a silly proceeding, was very much amused and laughed heartily at his companions. The girls looked upon him with an expression of horror and with clasped and wringing hands implored him to follow their example. This he refused to do, and they set upon him with violence, pulled his hat from his head, and made him spit in it.

## Tough on the Fish.

A devout clergyman sought every opportunity to impress upon the mind of his son that the falling sparrow attracts his attention, and that His loving kindness is over all His works. Happening one day, to see a crane wading in quest of food the good man pointed out to his son the perfect adaptation of the crune to get his living in that manner. "See," said he "how his legs are formed for wading! What a long slender bill he has! Observe how nicely he folds his feet when putting them in or drawing them out of the water ! He does not cause the slightest ripple ! He is thus enabled to approach the fish, without giving them any notice of his arrival. It is impossible, my son, to look at that bird without recognizing the goodness of God in thus providing the means of subsistence."

"Yes," replied the boy, "I think I see the goodness of God, at least so far as the crane is concerned; but after all, father, don't you think the arrangement a little tough on the fish ?"

(3) While vanity is a weakness which we are inclined to pity, self-esteem, if not excessive, at once elicits our respect and ad-