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SO BIG

By EDNA FERBER

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MARRIED

SYNOPSIS.—Introducing "So Big" (Dirk DeJong) in his infancy. And his mother, Selma DeJong, daughter of Simeon Peake, gambler and gentleman of fortune. Her life, to young womanhood in Chicago in 1888, has been unconventional, somewhat seamy, but generally enjoyable. At school her chum is Julie Hempel, daughter of August Hempel, butcher. Simeon is killed in a quarrel that is not his own, and Selma, nineteen years old and practically destitute, secures a position as teacher at the High Prairie school, in the outskirts of Chicago, living at the home of a truck farmer, Klaas Pool. In 1891, twelve years old, son of Klaas, Selma perceives a kindred spirit, a lover of beauty, like herself. Selma hears gossip concerning the affection of the "Widow Paarlberg," rich and good-looking, for Pervus DeJong, poor truck farmer, who is inseparably attached to the widow's attractions. For a community "sociable," Selma prepares a lunch box, dainty but not of ample proportions, which is to be "auctioned," according to custom. The smallness of the box excites derision and Selma is heartbroken. But the bidding becomes spirited, DeJong finally securing it for \$10, a ridiculously high price. Over their lunch basket, which Selma and DeJong share together, the school-teacher arranges to instruct the farmer, whose education has been neglected.

CHAPTER V—Continued

Selma opened McBride's grammar. "Ahem!" a school-teacherly cough. "Now, then, we'll parse this sentence: Blucher arrived on the field of Waterloo just as Wellington was receiving the last onslaught of Napoleon. 'Just' may be treated as a modifier of the dependent clause. That is: 'Just' means: at the time at which. Well. Just here modifies at the time. And Wellington is the . . ."

air of fatality. It was as if she were being drawn inexorably against her will, her judgment, her plans, into something sweet and terrible. When with Pervus she was elated, gay, voluble. He talked little; looked at her dumbly, worshipingly. There were days when the feeling of unreality possessed her. She, a truck farmer's wife, living in High Prairie the rest of her days! Why, no! No! Was this the great adventure that her father had always spoken of? She, who was going to be a happy wife, farther down the path of life—any one of a dozen things. This High Prairie winter was to have been only an episode. Not her life! She looked at Maartje. Oh, she'd never be like that. That was stupid, unnecessary. Pink and blue dresses in the house, for her, Frilla on the window curtains. Flowers in bowls.

Some of the pangs and terrors with which most prospective brides are assailed she confided to Mrs. Pool while that active lady was slamming about the kitchen. "Did you ever feel scared—and sort of—scared when you thought about marry, Mrs. Pool?"

Maartje Pool's hands were in a great batch of bread dough which she pummeled and slapped and kneaded vigorously. She shook out a handful of flour on the baking board while she held the dough mass in the other hand, then plumped it down and again began to knead, both hands doubled into fists. She laughed a short little laugh. "I ran away."

"You did! You mean you really ran—but why? Didn't you love Klaas?"

Maartje knelt briskly, with the color high in her cheeks, what with the vigorous pummeled and rolling, and something else that made her look strangely young for the moment—girlish, almost. "Sure I liked him. I liked him."

"But you ran away?"

"Not far. I came back. Nobody ever knew I ran, even. But I ran. I knew."

"Why did you come back?"

Maartje elucidated her philosophy without being in the least aware that it could be called by any such high-sounding name. "You can't run away far enough. Except you stop living you can't run away from life." The girlish look had fled. She was world-old. Her strong arms ceased their pounding and thumping for a moment. On the steps outside Klaas and Jakob were scanning the weekly reports preparatory to going into the city late that afternoon.

lapped her slim waist; her slender little bosom did not fill out the generous width of the bodice; but the effect of the whole was amazingly quaint as well as pathetic.

They were married at the Pools', Klaas and Maartje had insisted on furnishing the wedding supper—ham, chickens, sausages, cakes, pickles, beer. The Reverend Dekker married them, and all through the ceremony Selma chided herself because she could not keep her mind on his words in the fascination of watching his short, stubby beard as it wagged with every motion of his jaw. Pervus looked stiff, solemn and uncomfortable in his wedding blacks—not at all the handsome giant of the everyday corduroys and blue shirt. In the midst of the ceremony Selma had her moment of panic when she actually saw herself running shrieking through this company, this man, this house, down the road, on, on toward—toward what? The feeling was so strong that she was surprised to find herself still standing there in the Dutch wedding gown answering "I do" in the proper place.

After the wedding they went straight to DeJong's house. In May the vegetable farmer cannot neglect his garden even for a day. The house had been made ready for them.

Throughout the supper Selma had had thoughts which were so foolish and detached as almost to alarm her. "Now I am married. I am Mrs. Pervus DeJong. That's a pretty name. It would look quite distinguished on a calling card, very stately and fine."

"MRS. PERVUS DE JONG AT Home Fridays"

She recalled this later, grimly, when she was Mrs. Pervus DeJong, at home not only Fridays, but Saturdays, Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

They drove down the road to De Jong's place. Selma thought, "Now I am driving home with my husband. I feel his shoulder against mine. I wish he would talk. I wish he would say something. Still, I am not frightened."

Pervus' market wagon was standing in the yard, shafts down. He should have gone to market today; would certainly have to go tomorrow, starting early in the afternoon so as to get a good stand in the Haymarket. By the light of his lantern the wagon seemed to Selma to be a symbol. She had often seen it before, but now that it was to be a part of her life—this DeJong market wagon and she Mrs. DeJong—she saw clearly what a crazy, disreputable and poverty-proclaiming old vehicle it was, in contrast with the neat strong wagon in Klaas Pool's yard, smart with green paint and red lettering that announced, "Klaas Pool, Garden Produce." With the two sleek farm horses the turnout looked as prosperous and comfortable as Klaas himself.

Pervus swung her down from the seat of the buggy, his hand about her waist, and held her so for a moment, close. Selma said: "You must have that wagon painted, Pervus. And the seat-springs fixed and the sideboard mended."

He stared. "Wagon!"

"Yes. It looks a sight." The house was tidy enough, but none too clean. Pervus lighted the lamps. There was a fire in the kitchen stove. It made the house seem stuffy on this mild May night. Selma thought that her own little bedroom at the Pools', no longer hers, must be deliciously cool and still with the breeze fanning fresh from the west. Pervus was putting the horse into the barn. The bedroom was off the sitting room. The window was shut. This last year had taught Selma to prepare the night before for next morning's rising, so as to lose the least possible time. She did this now, unconsciously. She brushed her hair, laid out tomorrow's garments, put on her high-necked, long-sleeved nightgown and got into this strange bed. She heard Pervus DeJong shut the kitchen door; the latch clicked, the lock turned. Heavy quiet footsteps across the bare kitchen floor. This man was coming into her room. "You can't run far enough," Maartje Pool had said. "Except you stop living you can't run away from life."

Next morning it was dark when he awakened her at four. She started up with a little cry and sat up, straining her ears, her eyes. "Is that you, father?" She was little Selma Peake again, and Simeon Peake had come in, gay, debonair, from a night's gaming.

Pervus DeJong was already padding about the room in stocking feet. "What—what time is it? What's the matter, father? Why are you up? Haven't you gone to bed. . . . Then she remembered.

Pervus DeJong laughed and came toward her. "Get up, little lady bones. It's after four. All yesterday's work I've got to do, and all today's. Breakfast, little Lina, breakfast. You are a farmer's wife now."

Dirk DeJong was born in the bedroom off the sitting room on the fifteenth day of March, of a bewildered, somewhat resentful, but deeply interested mother; and a proud, foolish, and vainglorious father whose air of achievement, considering the really slight part he had played in the long, tedious, and tacking business, was disproportionate. The name Dirk had sounded to Selma like something tall, straight, and slim. Pervus had chosen it. It had been his grandfather's name.

proportionate. The name Dirk had sounded to Selma like something tall, straight, and slim. Pervus had chosen it. It had been his grandfather's name.

Sometimes, during those months, Selma would look back on her first winter in High Prairie—that winter of the icy bedroom, the chill black drum, the schoolhouse fire, the chilblains, the Pool pork—and it seemed a lovely dream; a time of ease, of freedom, of careless happiness.

Pervus DeJong loved his pretty young wife, and she him. But young love thrives on color, warmth, beauty. It becomes prosaic and inarticulate when forced to begin its day at four in the morning by reaching blindly, dazedly, for limp and obscure garments dangling from bedpost or chair, and to end that day at nine, numb and sodden with weariness, after seventeen hours of physical labor.

It was a wet summer. Pervus' choice tomato plants, so carefully set in the hope of a dry season, be-



"Farm Work Grand! Farm Work is Slave Work."

came dragged gray specters in a waste of mire. Of fruit the field bore one tomato the size of a marble.

For the rest, the crops were moderately successful on the DeJong place. But the work necessary to make this so was heartbreaking. Selma had known, during her winter at the Pools', that Klaas, Roelf, and old Jakob worked early and late, but her months there had encompassed what is really the truck farmer's leisure period. She had arrived in November. She had married in May. From May until October it was necessary to tend the fields with a concentration amounting to fury.

Selma had never dreamed that human beings toiled like that for sustenance. Toil was a thing she had never encountered until coming to High Prairie. Now she saw her husband wrenching a living out of the earth by sheer muscle, sweat, and pain. During June, July, August, and September the good black prairie soil for miles around was teaming, a hotbed of plenty. There was born in Selma at this time a feeling for the land that she was never to lose. Perhaps the child within her had something to do with this. She was aware of a feeling of kinship with the earth; an illusion of splendor, of fulfillment.

As cabbages had been cabbages, and no more, to Klaas Pool, so to Pervus, these carrots, beets, onions, turnips, and radishes were just so much produce, to be planted, tended, gathered, marketed. But to Selma, during that summer, they became a vital part in the vast mechanism of a living world. Pervus, earth, sun, rain, all elemental forces that labored to produce the food for millions of humans. She thought of Chicago's children. If they had red cheeks, clear eyes, nimble brains it was because Pervus brought them the food that made them so. Something of this she tried to convey to Pervus. He only stared, his blue eyes wide and unresponsive.

"Farm work grand! Farm work is slave work. Yesterday, from the load of carrots in town I didn't make enough to bring you the goods for the child so when it comes you should have clothes for it. It's better I feed them to the live stock."

Do Selma and her husband "live happily ever afterward"? It is obvious that there is potential tragedy in the situation.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Cruel Old Custom

There was a time when "laughing" faces were actually manufactured to meet the demand of those who wished to be amused. Up to the end of the reign of James II, human "sculpture" work was carried out by roving tribes of gypsies called Comprachios, who were of Spanish origin. They bought and even kidnapped children, and practiced a science or art of human disfigurement. Children thus treated grew up with an immovable and fantastic grin. They were an attraction at all successful traveling booths and entertainments until the custom was repressed by William III.

HOW TO KEEP WELL

DR. FREDERICK R. GREEN Editor of "HEALTH"

DIRT IN THE EYE

ONE of the commonest of human accidents is to get a speck of dust or a tiny cinder in the eye. Often the speck is too small to do an injury to any other part of the body, too small perhaps even to be seen. But the covering of the eyeball and the lining of the eyelids are so delicate and sensitive that a mere speck may not only cause intense pain but may also do serious damage.

Generally, some member of the family or some fellow employee in the shop or office volunteers to take it out for you. Sometimes he succeeds; sometimes, with a soiled handkerchief or a dirty toothpick, he not only fails to remove the cinder, but also irritates and infects the eye.

The best way to take a cinder or other foreign body out of the eye is to take a clean (that is, an unused) toothpick, twist a little clean cotton around one end so that the point of the toothpick is covered. This cotton should be rolled tight. If the cinder is under the upper lid, stand behind the patient, tell him to throw back his head and then to look down. Grasp the eyelashes of the upper lid firmly and draw the lid gently down and away from the eye, then quickly turn the edge of the lid up over the thumb-nail or over a pencil or toothpick, so as to fold the lid up and expose the eyeball. If the eye is now slowly turned up and down and from side to side, the cinder will be seen as a dull point on the shining surface and can be easily taken off by passing the cotton-covered point of the toothpick over the eyeball, with a light, brushing movement. Don't use force or rub the eyeball, as a loose cinder may easily be forced into the eyeball and become embedded.

If the cinder doesn't come out readily, don't try to dig it out. You will only damage the eyeball. Put on a thick compress made with a large, clean handkerchief, wrung out of cold clean water, tie another handkerchief around the head to keep the cold compress in place and send the patient to the nearest doctor.

Cuts or scratches of the eyeball should not be neglected. Infection may destroy the eye, or if this does not occur, the scars from infected wounds of the eye may permanently interfere with sight.

THE GORGAS MEMORIAL INSTITUTE

EVERY great idea has a personality behind it. When we think of the War of the Revolution we think of George Washington. The Constitution suggests Thomas Jefferson, our financial system recalls Alexander Hamilton; abolition and John Brown are as inseparable as are emancipation and Abraham Lincoln. Free silver makes us think of William Jennings Bryan, just as sound money recalls William McKinley; Teddy Roosevelt and the strenuous life cannot be separated any other more than the League of Nations and Woodrow Wilson.

A cause or a reform has little attractiveness to us in the abstract. It is only when it is associated with a personality that it appeals to us. Men follow men, not ideas.

One trouble with the health movement is that it has been lacking in personality. Cutting the death rate from 15 to 12.8 per thousand is a marvelous achievement but it looks to the average man like a problem in mathematics. Stamping out contagious diseases, is the greatest thing the human race has so far accomplished, but it doesn't interest anybody but health officers and vital statisticians. Increasing the average duration of life fifteen years in half a century is something unheard of in human history, but nobody but life insurance actuaries really appreciate what it means. Finding a new germ in a laboratory or making a new serum to cure an old disease gets a few bacteriologists excited, but it doesn't interest the newspaper reader like a home run by Babe Ruth, a new film by Charlie Chaplin or the latest murder or divorce trial.

Most efforts to intergart the public health have been based on ideas rather than on men.

Thousands of men and women have worked in the health field in the last fifty years. No one of them has equalled in personality and achievement the late surgeon general of the United States army, Maj. Gen. William C. Gorgas. A soldier from early manhood, one in spirit almost from birth, an Indian fighter on the western plains and a disease fighter everywhere, the man who cleaned up Havana and drove out yellow fever, who turned Panama from the pest hole of the tropics to the healthiest spot on earth, who made the Panama canal a success when every one else failed, who organized and directed the medical corps in the World war, he is easily the greatest man the health movement has produced. So the organization of the Gorgas Memorial Institute, with Calvin Coolidge as its head, is not only a richly deserved recognition of a great American but it is also the most promising attempt to organize the people for health's protection that has so far been proposed.

Help That Achy Back! Are you dragging around, day after day, with a dull, unceasing backache? Are you lame in the morning, bothered with headaches, dizziness and urinary disorders? Feet tired, irritable and dispirited? Then there's surely something wrong, and likely it's kidney weakness. Don't neglect it! Get back your health while you can. Use Doan's Pills, a stimulant diuretic to the kidneys. Doan's have helped thousands, and should help you. Ask your neighbor!

DOAN'S PILLS 60c STIMULANT DIURETIC TO THE KIDNEYS Foster-Milburn Co., Mfg. Chem., Buffalo, N. Y.

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Stunning Producer—That dress looks more suitable for revue than domestic drama. Leading Lady—Quite so—but when the detective accuses me of hiding something from him it's got to make the audience gasp.

To Have a Clear, Sweet Skin Touch pimples, redness, roughness or itching, if any, with Cuticura Ointment, then bathe with Cuticura Soap and hot water. Rinse, dry gently and dust on a little Cuticura Talcum to leave a fascinating fragrance on skin. Everywhere 25c each.—Advertisement.

IF thou wouldst be borne with, bear with others.—Fuller. CORNS Lift Off—No Pain! FREEZONE Doesn't hurt one bit! Drop a little "Freezone" on an aching corn, instantly that corn stops hurting, then shortly you lift it right off with fingers. Your druggist sells a tiny bottle of "Freezone" for a few cents, sufficient to remove every hard corn, soft corn, or corn between the toes, and the foot calluses, without soreness or irritation.