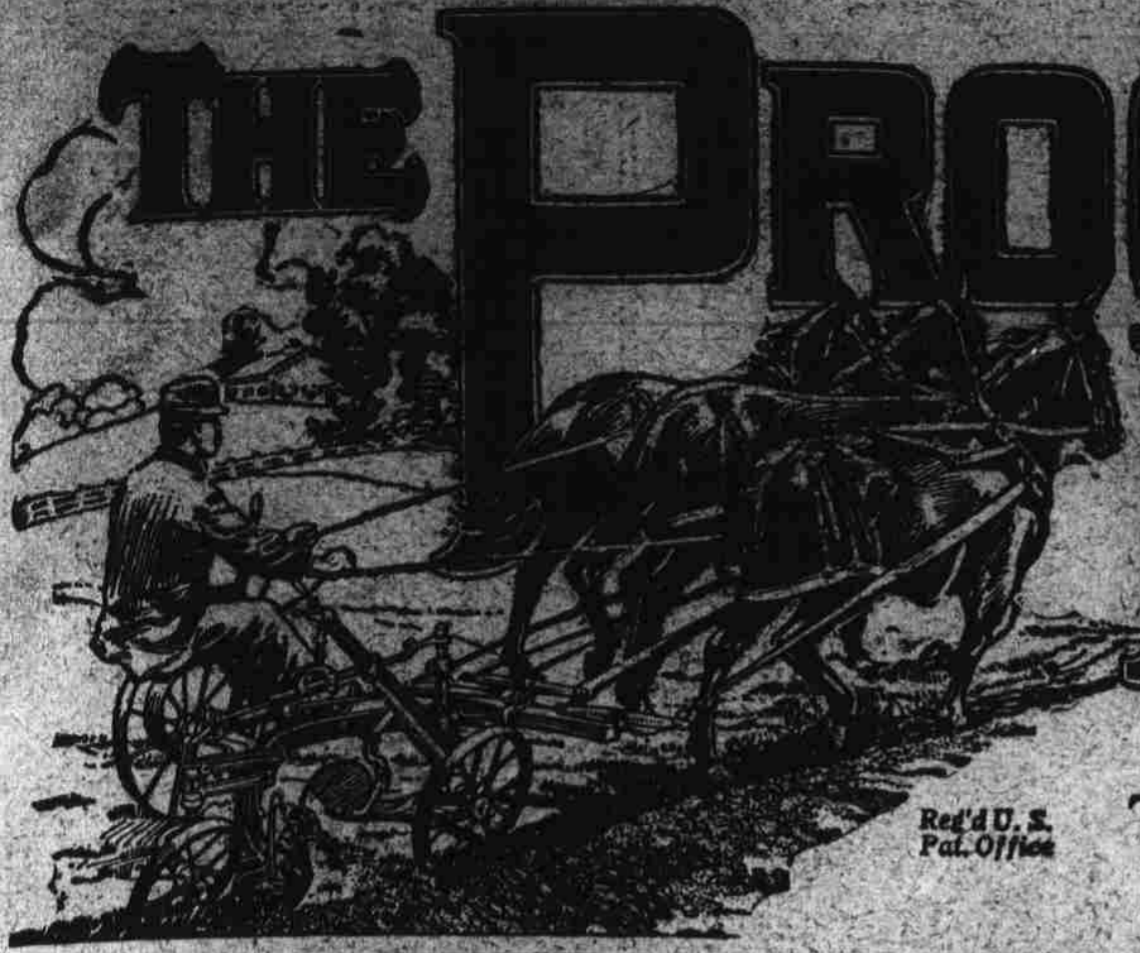


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THE FARMER'S WIFE

BIRD-LIKE she's up at day-dawn's blush,
 In summer heat or winter snows—
 Her veins with healthful blood aflush,
 Her breath of balm, her cheek a rose;
 In eyes—the kindest eyes on earth—
 Are sparkles of a homely mirth;
 All vanished in the brief eclipse!
 Hark! to the sound of wedded lips,
 And words of tender warmth that start
 From out the husband's grateful heart!
 O! well he knows how vain is life,
 Unsweetened by the farmer's wife.

Their laughter rings like elfin bells,
 Till with a look 'twixt smile and frown
 The mother lays her infant down,
 And at her firm, uplifted hand,
 There's silence 'mid the jovial band;
 Demure, arch humor's ambush in
 The clear curves of her dimpled chin,
 Ah! guileless creature, hale and good,
 Ah! fount of wholesome womanhood,
 Far from the world's unhallowed strife;
 God's blessings on the farmer's wife.

Ye dames in proud palatial halls—
 Of lavish wiles and jeweled dress,
 On whom, perchance, no infant calls,
 (For barren oft your loveliness)—
 Turn hitherward those languid eyes
 And for a moment's space be wise;
 Your sister 'mid the country dew
 Is three times nearer heaven than you.

—PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE

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