(Continued From Page 3.)

said as she reluctantly handed him the saw.

"Where did you learn to be so polite?" asked Jeff.

Gladys smiled a little. "I'm not being very nice, am I?" she said. "But boys are such nuisances"—

The sentence ended in a half stifled cry as the limb on which she was sitting suddenly gave way with a loud crack. It was not very far to the ground, and the fall did not hurt her in the least—that is, nothing but her pride.

"That was the finest branch on the whole tree," said Jeff regretfully as soon as he saw that she was unhurt.

"If it hadn't been for you, Jeff Pearson, it would never have happened. I don't care if I break them all off now," and, grasping the broken stub, she swung herself up and sat down on another branch.

"I don't believe there's any danger of this one breaking," said Jeff teasingly as he sat down beside her. He seemed to be rapidly getting over his diffidence.

Gladys turned her head away and did not deign a reply.

"Say, Gladys," spoke up Jeff after a few moments, "I don't know what you're thinking about, but I've just thought of a scheme to get double pay out of the old orchard."

Gladys turned quickly toward him. "What is it?" she demanded.

"Plant something else in between the trees. Take cabbage, now. You could raise—let me see—about 11,000 cabbages on an acre. At 10 cents apiece that would come to $1,100. It will be a lot of work, but I'll come over after supper evenings and help you hoe them."

"And leave all your chores for some one else to do?" queried Gladys.

"I guess they'd manage it some way," he replied.

"And I guess they wouldn't. I've a good notion to try raising cabbages, but if you say anything more about helping us I'll get mad, Jeff—honest, I will. You see, father told us we could have all that we could get out of the old orchard ourselves, and it wouldn't be fair to let any one else help."

"I don't see why," objected Jeff. "But you'll let a fellow come over and watch you once in awhile, won't you?"

"Y-yes; I don't suppose we can help your looking at us if you want to, but— Oh, there's the supper bell! Good night!" And she leaped to the ground and hurried toward the house.

CHAPTER III.

THE girls eagerly read over the books and bulletins Mr. Pearson had lent them, and cover crops, cultivation and bordeaux mixture were their chief topics of conversation. As soon as the ground was in shape in the spring they plowed it and harrowed it until it was reduced to a fairly fine condition, certainly better than anything it had known since it was first set out.

The trees blossomed freely, and the orchard with its waving sea of pink flowers was an inspiration to the girls, for it held the promise of a bountiful harvest to come. As soon as the blossoms closed the girls set to work to spray the trees. They were hard at work one day mixing a barrel of bordeaux mixture when they were startled by the sound of an automobile coming up the driveway.

"It's Harold and Beth!" cried Mabel. "Oh, what'll we do?" She looked down at her spattered dress in dismay.

"You might dive into the barrel," said Gladys ironically as she poured in another pail of water. "I'm not afraid of the Du Vals even if they have got an automobile."

The car was close upon them by this time. Harold brought it to a stop with a jerk and leaped lightly to the ground. He lifted his hat as he advanced toward the girls and held out his hand. If he was in any way surprised at their appearance or occupation a slight lifting of the eyebrows was the only manifestation of it. Harold Du Val prided himself upon his ability to maintain his composure under the most trying circumstances.

Mabel's face was red as she returned his greeting, and she hurried over to the car to hide her confusion.

Beth greeted her effusively. "I'm so glad to see you!" she cried. "We were out trying our new car, and I made Harry come around this way. We hardly ever see you any more since you left school."

"We—we don't get to town very often," replied Mabel, who had not yet quite recovered from her confusion.

"Never mind your dress," said Beth, quickly guessing the cause of her embarrassment. "I wish I lived in the country and could wear old clothes. But what in the world are you doing, anyway?"

The same question had evidently just occurred to Harold. "Just mixing up swill for the pigs, are you?" he inquired in his most polite accents, indicating the barrel with a sweep of his hand.

Gladys laughed outright. "I'm afraid the pigs would be rather blue after a dose of that," she replied.

"Well, what is it, then?" persisted Harold.

"It's bordeaux mixture, if you must know. We are going to spray the apple trees to kill the bugs."

"Rather hard on the bugs, I should say," Harold remarked as he leaned over to brush a speck of dust from one of his tan oxfords. "But, say, when did you start in the horticultural business, anyway?"

GLADYS WAVED HER HANDKERCHIEF AT HIM.

"We've just started," she answered as she filled a pail with water and poured it into the barrel.

"Aren't you afraid you'll spoil your complexion?" Harold asked teasingly as the mixture splashed up into her face.

She shook her head as she wiped a spattering drop from her nose. "I don't know that bordeaux mixture is any worse for my complexion than talcum powder would be," she said.

"You are certainly an attractive advertisement for the bordeaux mixture," Harold answered.

Gladys did look charming as she stood there in her spatters' dress, with her unruly hair blowing across her face—she never could keep those stray locks where they belonged—and the rose hue of her cheeks looking all the rosier in contrast to the spots of lime on her nose.

"I thought you had outgrown those foolish speeches," she said reprovingly as she turned to the tank for another bucket of water.

"Oh, I say!" cried Harold. "Can't you come for a little auto ride? Let the bugs enjoy life a little longer—just to please me," he persisted coaxingly as Gladys hesitated. The comically pleading look in his brown eyes was irresistible.

"I really ought not to go," she said, "but I would like an auto ride. I guess we can go for just a little while, can't we, Mabel?"

"If we can have time to put on clean aprons and wash our faces first," Mabel answered.

"Yes, we'll wait," Harold answered, "though clean dresses can't make you look any prettier than you do just now."

Mabel made up a little face at him as she turned toward the house. "If you're going to talk like that I won't go," she called back over her shoulder.

In a few moments they reappeared, looking as fresh and dainty as though they had never held a spray nozzle or a plow handle. By skillful maneuvering Harold relegated Beth and Mabel to the back seat and helped Gladys up in front.

"Now for a spin!" he cried as he seated himself beside her and pulled back the starting lever. The machine bounded forward. Gladys clung to the seat, her eyes shining with the exhilaration of the swift motion.

"Isn't it glorious?" Harold cried as he increased the speed to a still faster gait.

Mile after mile was quickly covered by the tireless machine and they were almost to town when Harold finally turned around and started back at a somewhat slower pace.

"We went so fast that I was almost lost," confessed Mabel. "That's Pearson's just ahead, isn't it?"

Gladys nodded. "And there's Jeff over in the field plowing," she said. She leaned out and waved her handkerchief at him.

He waved his whip in dazed surprise and stood watching the automobile until it was out of sight. He paid so little attention to his plowing the rest of the afternoon that the patient horses turned to look inquiringly at him now and then as if to ask what the matter was. But Jeff was thinking, and his train of thought, though by no means comparable in speed to a fast mail, had all the ponderous inertia of a double headed time freight.

By the time he had finished milking he had come to a conclusion. "I'm going to do it," he said half aloud, slapping his knee. "I'll beat that stuck up Du Val yet." And he went into the house and wrote to an automobile company for prices.

But if Jeff had known the trend of the conversation in the touring car he might have been better satisfied with everything in general and with one or two things in particular.

"Who is that fellow?" inquired Harold as they passed Jeff.

"That's Jeff Pearson, one of my best friends," promptly replied Gladys.

"So you like plowboys, do you?" Harold asked, with a quizzical smile.

"I like any one who has ambition enough to do something," Gladys returned. "Did you ever do any work in your life?"

Again Harold smiled that exasperating smile, though it was a trifle less self confident this time. "What's the use?" he inquired. "Father's got plenty of money."

"If I were a boy," the cold contempt in Gladys' voice jarred Harold out of his accustomed self assurance, "I'd be ashamed to have no ambition but to spend my father's money. You don't have to work for a living, but the very fact that you don't makes it possible for you to accomplish much greater things."

"I don't think you're hardly fair," Harold answered. "I'll probably settle down and go to work at something after awhile."

"Probably!" cried Gladys. "What are you going to do?"

"Oh, I don't know," he replied. "I suppose father will find me something."

"That's it—father, father, all the time. Why don't you learn to depend on yourself a little? Why don't you go to college and learn something and then start out for yourself and do something?"

Harold gave the lever a vicious jerk by way of reply, and neither of them said anything more until they reached home.

"Thank you ever so much for the ride," said Mabel as she stood leaning on the gate.

"Thank you ever so much for going," replied Harold. "And you, too," he added, turning to Gladys. "And the lecture—I'm afraid thanks won't pay for that."

"Indeed they won't," she answered. "The only thing that will pay for that is to see it have some effect, and I guess there isn't much hope of that."

"Thank you anyway, Miss Icebox," he said, with his old self confident smile, as he started the machine. "Goodby."

"Goodby," answered Mabel. "Come again."

"And come in and see us," cried both over the back of the car.

CHAPTER IV.

THE days that followed were busy ones for Gladys and Mabel. The apple blossoms faded and the petals fell, leaving tiny apples in their places. And down the rows of trees stretched smaller rows of cabbage plants—thousands of them. The girls kept the cultivator going tirelessly. The weeds had not been kept down very well the season before, and the ground was so filled with seed that it often seemed as though the cultivating only made two weeds grow where one grew before. But by dint of an inexhaustible supply of stick-to-it-iveness they kept ahead, and at last the weeds gave up. The fight was too hot for them, and they succumbed and allowed the cabbages to grow to unmolested maturity.

One day in early August as the girls were helping their mother set the dinner table their father came in with a letter in his hand and a worried look on his face.

"It's Lon," he explained in answer to his wife's inquiring look. "He got his leg broke in a runaway. Carrie wrote for me to come awhile if I could. There isn't any one they can get to do things, and with all those cows to milk"—

"Of course you must go," broke in Mrs. Sanders. "The girls and I will look after things here."

"Yes; do go, papa," spoke up Gladys. "I'd like to try my hand at running this farm awhile."

Mr. Sanders smiled. "Running a quarter section is a bigger proposition than running an acre," he said. "But I guess you'll have to try it for a few days."

Mabel was picking up some windfalls one hot afternoon a couple of days after her father left to take care of his brother when a well dressed stranger drove up to the fence and called to her.

"A fine crop of apples you have here," he remarked as he approached. "a little the finest of any I've seen yet. I understand that you and your sister are the best apple growers in the neighborhood."

Mabel flushed with pleasure. "I don't know who could have told you that," she said. "This is the first crop of apples we have ever raised."

"I didn't need to be told. The orchard speaks for itself. You haven't sold them yet, have you?" he added.

"Sold them?" said Mabel inquiringly. "Why, they won't be ready to sell for a month yet."

"You mean they won't be ready to pick for a month yet," corrected the stranger. "There's nothing to prevent your selling them now, is there?"

"N-o, I suppose not, only it seems queer to sell apples a month before they're ripe."

"Not at all. Lots of business is done that way. I'll tell you what I'll do," he went on. "You have a fine lot of apples here, and if you'll agree to let me have all that you have to sell I'll see that you get $1.50 a barrel for them."

"A dollar and a half a barrel isn't much for apples, is it?" said Mabel doubtfully.

"It is when they are as plenty as they are this year. Why, I'll bet there'll be 10,000 barrels in this county alone."

"Well," said Mabel, "I'll ask father about it when he comes home."

"But I can't wait," objected the man. "By the time your father gets home I'll have contracted for all the apples I can use and you'll have to sell yours for a dollar a barrel or less. Just figure a moment. Here's at least fifty trees"—

"Thirty," corrected Mabel.

"Well, thirty, then. There'll be about ten barrels to the tree, or $15 worth. That will be $450 from the whole orchard. Not bad, eh?"

Mabel opened her eyes in astonishment. "Four hundred and fifty dollars!" she cried. "I'll"—

"Oh, no, you won't, not till you tell me about it," said a voice behind her, and she turned to see Gladys standing beside the half filled apple basket. Her face was stern.

"Tell her about it," said Mabel, turning to the stranger, and he once more explained his proposition.

Gladys smiled quizzically. "Then you'll give us $450 for our apple crop?" she said inquiringly.

"Well, not exactly, but I'll agree to give you $1.50 a barrel for all you deliver to me in good condition. There'll easily be 300 barrels."

"IT'LL BE A COLD DAY WHEN YOU SELL THOSE APPLES."

"We'll be lucky if we get half that," Gladys broke in. "We may get twice as much a barrel, though."

"You won't get 75 cents a barrel if you don't sign up a contract pretty soon," the buyer said, reddening. His mouth hardened.

"Maybe not from you," replied Gladys, "but with the apple crop almost a failure in New York I guess we'll be able to sell them to some one."

"Who said the apple crop was a failure in New York?" exclaimed the stranger.

Gladys held out the paper toward him. "Read it for yourself," she said.

The buyer gathered up his reins, with a scowl. "It'll be a cold day when you sell those apples in this county," he said as he drove off.

"Why didn't you let him have them?" cried Mabel, turning to her sister. "That surely was a good enough price for us."

"Good enough if we can't get more," replied Gladys. "But we're going to get more."

"How do you know?"

"Mr. Pearson said so. He just phoned over and told me about this fellow. He sold his apples to him last week before he found out anything about it. Then he began to get suspicious, and he found out that Mr. Snyder, or whatever this fellow's name is, is trying to corner the apple market in this county and sell them for two or three times as much as he is buying them for."

"But what do we care what he sells them for as long as we get our money?" persisted Mabel.

"Why, don't you see, as soon as he gets the price up we'll sell ours and get twice as much as we would if we sold them now. Let's go to dinner."

They stopped at the mail box on the way and found a note from Beth inviting them to a picnic the next Saturday.

"A picnic!" cried Mabel joyfully. "We haven't been to a picnic this year. I'm going to do my hair up on top of my head. Shall we wear our white dresses or our blue skirts?"

"I think you'd better wear your blue skirt," said Gladys judicially. "White dresses are such a bother to do up. I'm not going."

"Not going!" cried Mabel, staring at her blankly. "Why not?"

"I promised papa to do the chores and look after things."

"Well, so did I. But we can get some one to milk for us at night, can't we?"

Gladys shook her head. "I don't care about going anyway," she said, and Mabel knew it was no use to coax her.

Harold and Beth came out after the girls the morning of the picnic.

"Gladys isn't going," explained Mabel as she handed her lunch basket to Harold and climbed up beside Beth.

"Where is she?" asked Harold. "Let me see if I can induce her royal highness to change her mind."

But Gladys was down in the back pasture salting the sheep and refused to be found, so the others were forced to start off without her, much to Harold's dissatisfaction.

Mr. Sanders had just started his fall plowing when he was called away and he had intended to finish it when he came back. But to Gladys the long stubble field with its one narrow streak of turned earth was a challenge, and ever since her father had left she had been longing to try her hand at the plow.

So today, after Mabel was safely out of the way and her mother too busily engaged with her Saturday's baking to notice what was happening outside, Gladys hitched the three horse team to the sulky plow and started out to the field. One of the three, a colt which Mr. Sanders was breaking for one of the neighbors, was a little skittish at first, but after a few rounds he settled down and pulled quietly along with the older team.

Everything went well, and Gladys was enjoying herself immensely. Then all at once, as they were coming down the east side of the field, the point of the plow unearthed a bumblebees' nest. With an angry "zipp-p-p" one of the enraged insects shot past Gladys' ear and planted its sharp sting between a couple of the colt's ribs. He lashed back viciously with both hind feet and started to run.

At the same instant two or three of the bees began to jab the older horses, and the whole team started on a mad run across the field, followed by a dozen of the outraged insects. As soon as they turned so as to bring the furrow wheel up on the solid ground the plow cut only a thin slice—not enough to retard the speed of the frightened team. The colt's first kick had jerked the lines from Gladys' hands, and now she clung helplessly to the seat while the plow bounced up and down as it was jerked along over the rough ground.

In a moment more the horses had reached the road that led to the house and with a quick turn that almost upset the plow headed toward home. There was a field of corn that hid the road ahead for a few rods. The team, scared out of their senses by the banging of the whiffletrees against their heels and the clatter of the plow, were running at full speed. A moment later they turned the corner of the cornfield and made straight for the barn. As the road ahead came in view Gladys gave an exclamation of horror. There, standing in the middle of the road not ten rods ahead, was Don, her little five-year-old cousin. He stood directly in the path of the frenzied runaways, too frightened to move.

Gladys tried to shout to Don, but the words stuck in her throat. Then she became aware of a confused shouting and saw Jeff Pearson running with all his might across the pasture. What was it that he was saying? The lever? She looked at the big lever curiously. What did that have to do with it? Poor little Don! He would be ground to pieces beneath the cruel hoofs of the flying horses, and it would be her fault. She shuddered and put her hand up to her eyes to shut out the awful sight.

Then Jeff's cry came again, more distinct this time. "The lever! Drop the lever!"

In a flash she understood. With a quick jerk she grasped the big lever and sent the point of the plow down into the hard road. With a sharp crack the stout whiffletrees snapped, but the shock threw the runaways to their knees and checked them for a moment.

An instant later Jeff had them by the heads and was speaking reassuringly to them, while Gladys clasped the wondering child in her arms.

"Weren't you scared?" asked Jeff after Gladys had told her story.

"I didn't have time to be," she replied. "All I could think of was to hang on. I was frightened when I saw Don, though. What if you hadn't been here?"

"I didn't do anything," said Jeff in an embarrassed tone. "I'm going to plow the rest of the forenoon, though. Father gave me a day off, and I was going down to the creek to fish, but I believe I'd rather stay here and plow."

"WEREN'T YOU SCARED?" ASKED JEFF.

Gladys laughed outright. "If you'd rather plow than go fishing you may," she said. "You'd better come up to the house and get some new whiffletrees, though."

While Jeff was fixing the whiffletrees Gladys went into the house and came back with a couple of fresh doughnuts.

"Boys are never happy unless they are eating," she remarked with the wisdom of her sixteen years' experience. "You can't guess what we're going to have for dinner," she added.

Jeff straightened up in sudden fear.

"I can't stay to dinner—not with your aunt here," he cried.

"Oh, yes, you can." Gladys smiled mischievously. "If you won't eat you can't plow."

"I'll stay, then," announced Jeff resignedly as he drove away to the field.

That dinner was a torture for the awkward boy, for Gladys had told the story of the runaway, giving Jeff most of the credit, and both Mrs. Sanders and her sister showered him with praise until his face was as red as the tablecloth and he was forced to wipe the self conscious perspiration out of his eyes with his napkin. He [illegible]

(To be continued.)

VERDICT FOR DEFENDANT.

Plaintiff Asked $4675 Damages; Threatens Further Litigation.

The case of John Schrieber et al. vs. Frank Mueller, which occupied the time of Circuit Court Thursday and Friday of last week, was a contention for damages as the outcome of a fire alleged to have been set by defendant. The defense set up two pleas for exoneration—1. That Mueller had leased his farm to his two sons and hence was not responsible for the fire. 2. That the fire did not originate on the farm owned by him but was carried into the plaintiff's woodlot from a fire raging more than a mile away. The verdict was for the defense and the plaintiff now threatens to bring suit against the young men who were in possession of the farm unless settlement can be made out of court. The farm on which defendants live is at Clarks. Damages asked were $4675.

Will Move to the Madras Country.

C. B. Hyson, a local real estate dealer, has decided to move to Madras, Or., going to his new field of labors the first of the year. Mr. and Mrs. Hyson will take possession of a farm which C. B. Hyson, Sr., has recently purchased at Madras. In addition to managing the farm he will open and operate a photo studio at Madras. The elder Hyson will follow the son in the spring.

Slightly Injured at Pulp Mill.

Charles Wieland was painfully injured in the sawmill of the Willamette Pulp & Paper Co. this week. His arm was caught between a log on the carriage and the head block and his left wrist was bruised. He will will be able to resume work in a few days.