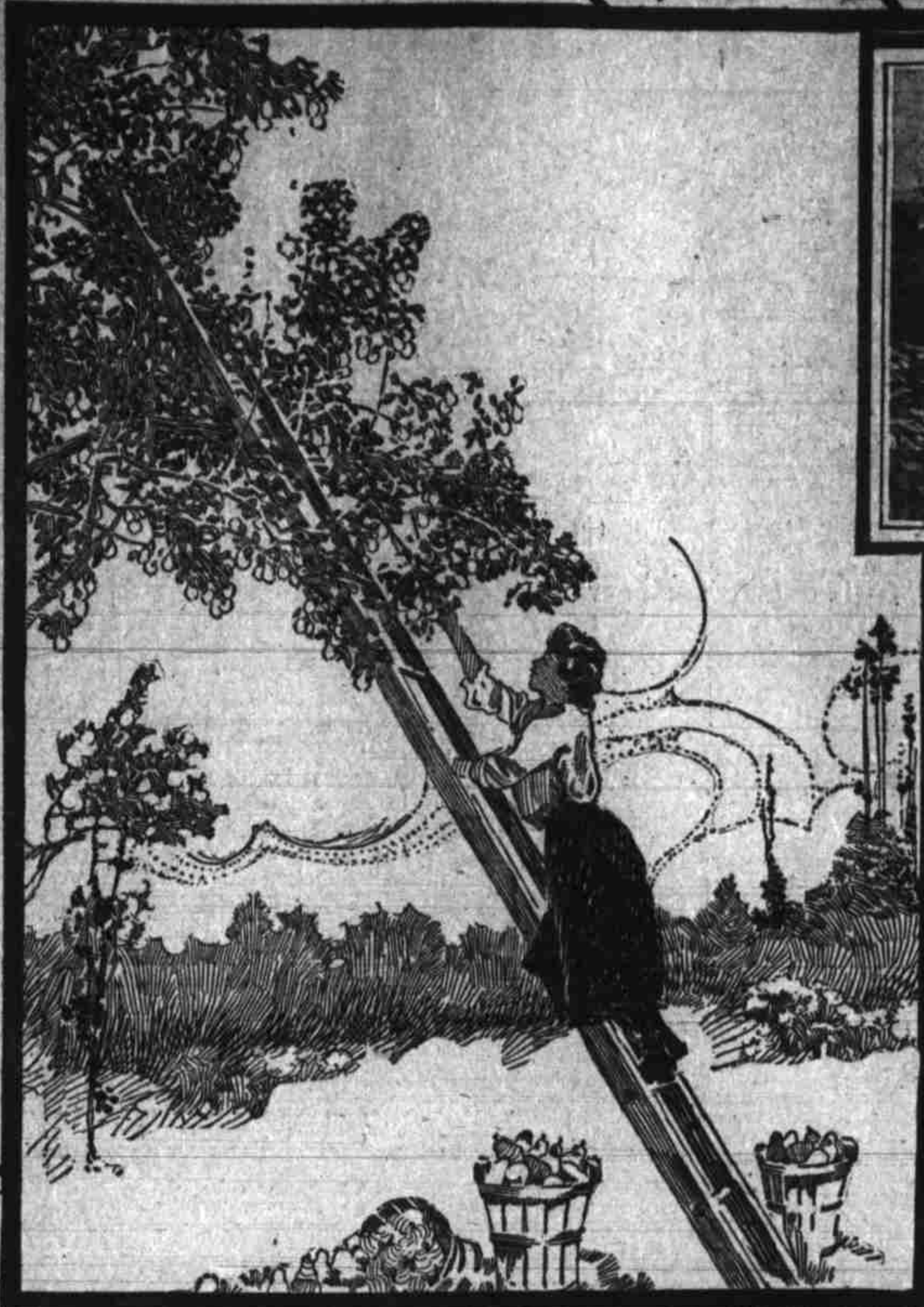
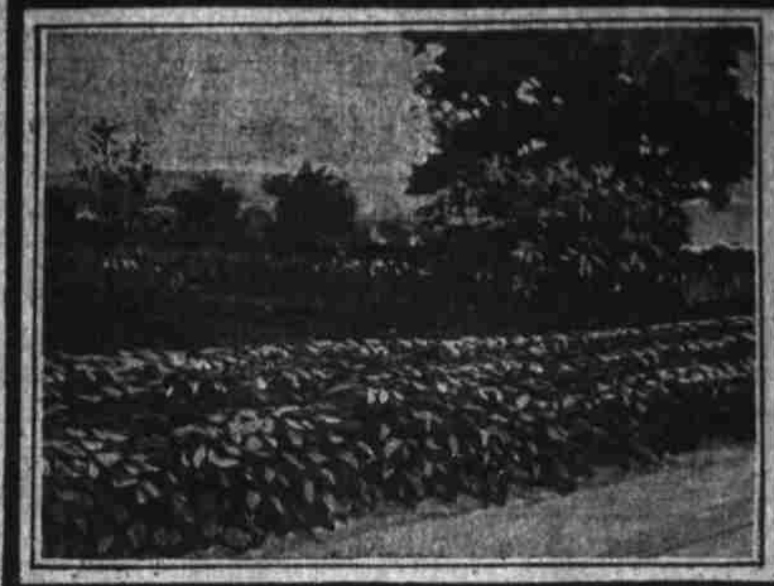
WHEN THE CITY GIRL TURNS FARMER

The Old Farm House, Comfortable though not Handsome


Gathering Pears—Healthful and Profitable


A View from the Bean Patch

"A Carefree, Healthy and Sane Life," One Declares

NOT FAR from Waterbury, Conn., on two small farms, four young women from New York have set out to earn their living in an unconventional manner.

Weary of the exhaustion and worry of city labor, these girls of education and refinement have turned to the cultivation of the soil. "It is a care-free, healthy and sane life," one of them declares.

Miss Mildred B. Fairfield and her sister, Miss Ada L. Fairfield, have succeeded so well upon their original plot of two and a half acres, and believe so fully in their ability to make a living off the land, that they have just purchased sixty-three acres additional.

Formerly school teachers in New York, Miss Florence E. Randolph and Miss Bertha Carleton have settled upon a sixty-acre farm at Bakerville, and are doing exceedingly well in the manufacture of peanut butter. They manage their farm without male help, excepting a 12-year-old chore boy.

Below Miss Mildred B. Fairfield tells of the farming experiences of herself and sister.

By Mildred Britton Fairfield.

"THOSE girls do know about farmin' after all; d'ye see that potato patch?"

That is the remark I overheard one day last June as I stood in the barn looking at the potato patch. I felt highly gratified, as the admiring farmer was the neighbor who in April came in to see the seed potatoes I had ordered from New York. After learning the price paid, he had informed me, "You're just main foolish to pay so much—just throwing your money away.

"They ain't better than you could buy at Tuttle's. Shucks! New potatoes for the Fourth? Not here; maybe in York State, but not here."

When I sent him some of the new crop for his dinner on the Fourth the message came back, "That beats me."

And, apparently, the potato patch beat others. One Sunday a man drove up and stopped, remarking, "Say, do you know, I was workin' yesterday over on Chippen's Hill and I saw your potatoes from there, and I had to come to see 'em closer. Prettiest patch in the district."

Five years ago in April my sister and I decided we could and would no longer afford to store our household goods in city storehouses and also that our summer vacations were too expensive, both as to money and the minus quantity of enjoyment.

So, after only a short period of deliberation, we bought an old red farmhouse and two and a half acres of land on the top of a hill in Litchfield county, Conn. It is just far enough from New York to escape the curse of suburbanism, and yet within an easy distance as to time and expense.

There were on the place three apple trees, two cherry and several pear trees, and the ground was (as we thought at the time) incumbered with an enormous barn.

While the house is nearly 200 years old and the views from the windows charming, the determining factor in choice was in the possibilities the location gave for successful market gardening.

The railroad station is two and a half miles away, but it is only a short distance from the village centre, and "the butcher, the baker and candlestick maker" call daily for orders.

The village, and, in fact, the country for six miles, has but one industry; men, women and children all working in the "shop," the largest of its kind in the world.

Two miles to the west is another factory village, whose supplies of vegetables and fruit come from New York. Four miles to the east is Bristol, a town of factories; Waterbury is twelve miles to the south, and Hartford only twenty miles away.

FACTORIES ATTRACT FARMERS

Factory workers are paid once a week; there is no community whose people spend money so lavishly for food, and the supply of garden truck is inadequate and poor in quality. While many farmers retain their homes, the factory offers more ready money, and the farms are not worked.

We did not start with the idea of making a business venture immediately, though we expected eventually to live in the country, and felt that there was a market when we were ready to and could give up work in the city. In the meantime, we could learn the condition of locality and have the fun of experimenting.

The first summer we had only a garden for our own use, but we sold hay and some fruit. In the fall we started a strawberry bed as our first experiment.

Next summer neither of us could arrange to take more than a month's vacation, so the only garden was what the caretaker had. We again sold hay and fruit. The fruit trees had been neglected; accordingly, the first fall I pruned the trees severely and found the quality of the fruit greatly improved the next year.

The following spring we had a new strawberry bed laid out, put out currants and raspberry bushes. Short vacations again interfered with our undertaking to do much work, but we sold, besides the hay and fruit, sixty quarts of strawberries.

Each of these three years we paid the taxes and insurance from the sale of fruit and hay, besides having vegetables for our own table while here and what fruit we wished to preserve for use in the city in the winter.

In the winter there was a caretaker in the house, so that we could come up for over Sunday at any time.

It was decided that my sister would spend the greater part of the summer of 1906 here, and accordingly we had a new bed of strawberries set out in April and had the garden planted at the same time—a fair-sized garden—expecting to sell early vegetables.

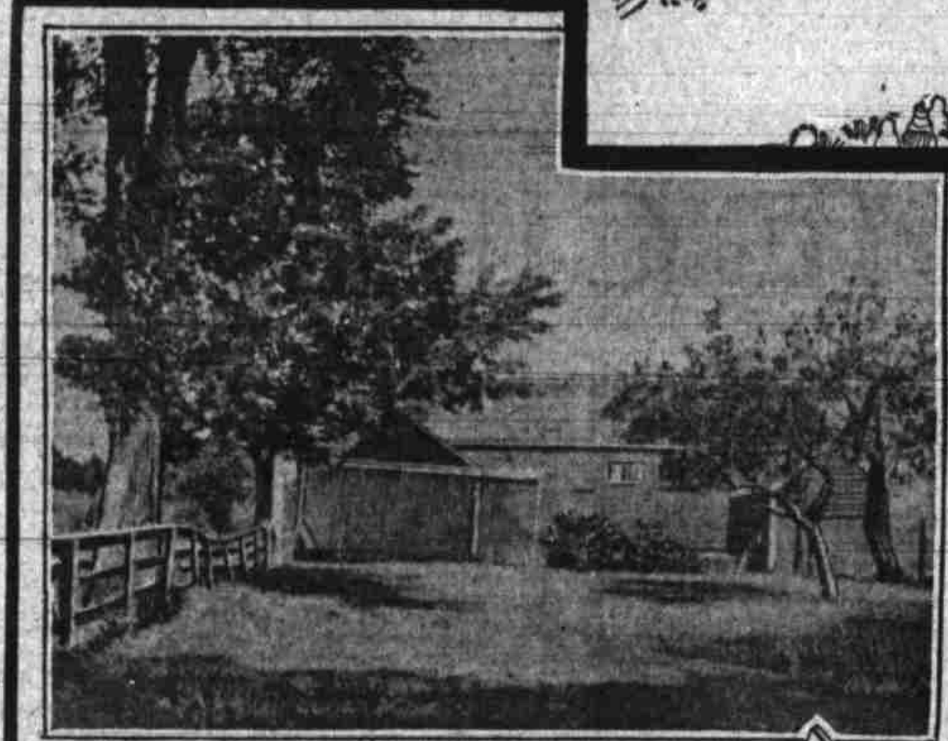
Then the trials began. The planting was done by a neighboring farmer, but for the later cultivating we were forced to get help where we could.

One man finally consented to assist, and blandly hoed up all the early beans, beets, onions and carrots. When remonstrated with, he remarked, "Well, you women folks from the city ought not to know about farmin'." He felt grieved because we hired him no more.

In June we found a man who knows how to work, prefers to work out of doors to working in the shop and who is willing to take directions, no matter how crazy they may seem—our neighbors consider many, if not all, of our methods crazy.

He now reads the farming and gardening magazines and papers as they come, and suggests experiments on occasions. This man works for us as we need him, by the hour, and does all the odd jobs, mows the lawn, makes repairs on house and barn, saws wood, etc.

With the assistance of a late garden—we sold green corn after October 20 and lettuce grown outdoors December 1—we took in $80 that summer, besides what we used for our own living.


Equipped for Chicken Raising

The strawberries were a failure, as heavy rainstorms broke the fruit from the plants just as they were in condition for picking.

Last year I determined to give the experiment of gardening a fair trial, so came up in March and started a hot bed with cabbages and tomatoes. The hay field was ploughed the fall before, and that was planted with potatoes.

There were 360 cabbage plants and 900 tomatoes, besides the corn, peas, beans, cucumbers, onion, turnip, squash, carrots, beets, melons, parsnip and salad plants.

From this we had all that we could use, including preserves and pickles; sold $90 worth and accumulated much knowledge as to good-selling crops. This includes 140 quarts of strawberries and winter vegetables, but does not include potatoes reserved for seed this year.

We have ploughed the old strawberry bed, deciding that the cost and energy required to cultivate and pick was too great to make it profitable to raise for marketing, and we have only kept enough for our own use.

As we do not own horses, having no pasturage, the expense of cultivating is greater than it need be, but our barn, which we first considered an incumbrance, has helped to cut this expense somewhat.

Two of our neighbors have barns as much too small as ours is too large, and as we allow them to store their extra wagons and hay here, they in turn loan us a horse with plow or drag, as our needs demand.

Our expense for last year's garden was for seed and labor, and came to about $60. This left but a small profit, but we feel that that is not the only one; we have the good will of our neighbors; we have had a complete change of occupation and the accompanying mental rest during our vacations; an abiding place any time we wish to come, and a feeling of intense satisfaction that we are no longer bound by the walls of a city flat.

We believe so fully in our ability to make a living off the land that we have just bought sixty-three acres down the road from us. This gives us a wood lot and wood to sell, and will allow us to keep cows and horses and do away with the necessity of hiring so much labor.

Now, we expect to reverse our mode of living by working on the farm in summer and taking vacations in the city during January and February.

We do not consider that we are strong enough to do farm work even if we so desired, therefore our expenses are heavier than is absolutely necessary, but I find we accomplish more in the end by hiring work done and saving our energies for what we can't pay any one to do.

Papers are full of accounts of the money-making qualities of chickens and bees. Personally, I know nothing of them. We keep chickens for our own use successfully and are satisfied to stop there. Bees I am afraid of.

At Bakerville a somewhat different experiment is being tried. The Misses Carleton and Randolph had created a demand for peanut butter, and they wished a place of their own on which to make it.

In June they started a search for a place, which they said must be within one and a half miles from a railroad station, and they would not buy more than ten acres of land. After numberless drives through the country, they bought a farm of sixty acres, five miles from the station, at Torrongton. They purchased the stock with the place, so they have two horses and three cows. They have started on a more ambitious scale, and expect next year to add bee-keeping and sheep raising to their venture.

If women are weary with the worry and exhaustion of city labor; if they enjoy digging in the earth and are content with less money and more leisure, with fewer demands for clothes and carfare, but with a saner life than jostling in subway trains and sky-scraper elevators, let them try farming.

But, if they are unwilling to forego the excitement of crowds, do not prefer earth roads to pavements and asphalt, and cannot wait the season's pleasure and enjoy assisting nature with hard work, let them keep away from the country for anything more than a visit.

The crowds, stores and theatres are the only things one misses—books, daily papers and magazines come here as easily as in the city, and there is much more time for enjoying them.

Oddities in Railway Laws

AN EXAMINATION of the railroad laws of the various States brings to light many features that may be considered oddities.

In Oklahoma railroads running within three miles of a county seat must build a line through the town and maintain a station there.

Railroads in Montana must maintain a station at every platted town site of 100 inhabitants, or more.

Should a railroad employe in California become intoxicated while on duty he may be convicted of a misdemeanor, and if death comes to any one as a result of the intoxication, the employe may be convicted of a felony.

The Vermont trolley company whose cars fail to come to a full stop and display a signal at a grade crossing is subject to a fine of $25 for each omission. It is believed that the law has prevented a number of grade-crossing accidents.

In South Carolina the conductor of a trolley car who refuses to separate white and colored passengers may be convicted of a misdemeanor.

California has made it a misdemeanor to transport cattle, sheep or hogs in carload lots for more than thirty-six hours without stopping for ten hours' rest. The same State makes train wrecking punishable by death or life imprisonment, at the option of the jury.

Railroad, telegraph and express stations in Minnesota must bear the local name of the community, unless this would cause confusion by similarity to the names of other stations along the line.

The Legislature of Florida at its late session passed an act intended to make railroads more prompt in settling claims. Roads failing to pay a claim for loss or damages within ninety days must pay 25 per cent. on the judgment obtained by the claimant in excess of the amount offered by the railroad in settlement.

Kentucky's Court of Appeals has decided that the mere fact that a great many people have been in the habit of using a railroad trestle as a footbridge without objection on the part of the company does not give the people special rights on the bridge, or compel the company to exercise any especial degree of care for their safety.

It has been decided by the Supreme Court of Georgia that an engineer is not justified in acting on the presumption that a child of tender years on a railroad track will appreciate its danger and use the judgment of an adult in getting out of the way of an approaching train.

California has a law making it a felony for any person to circulate false reports regarding the value of the stock of any corporation formed in the State. Punishment may be two years' imprisonment, $5000 fine, or both.

PUTS DRUNKARDS ON PROBATION; 98 PER CENT. REFORM

TO REFORM 98 per cent. of the drunkards upon whom he tries his uplifting remedy—such is the remarkable record claimed by Judge William J. Pollard, who presides in the Dayton street police court of St. Louis, Mo.

So widespread is Judge Pollard's fame, or, rather, the fame of his success as a reformer, that upon a recent visit to Great Britain he found himself lionized.

Lord Magistrates of London consulted him; he hobnobbed with members of the House of Commons, and was entertained by peers of the realm. To all these he explained his plan of setting the drinking man on his feet with a helping hand instead of sending him to the workhouse in disgrace.

Judge William J. Pollard
Photo. by Strauss, St. Louis

Putting Him on Probation

JUDGE POLLARD'S PLAN is simple. To avoid any suggestion of absurdity, it may be said at the outset that sodden drunkards, some of them women, with whom drink is considered a disease, are sent to the workhouse without loss of time.

The Magistrate considers them incurables. Their word is worthless. A pledge is meaningless. Their lives have been and will be this itinerary, with little change: Workhouse, six months; release, drunk again; sentenced to another six months, and so, year after year.

It is the man with the family, the man sometimes, probably, with "just a chance," who interests Judge Pollard. William Jones, for instance, becomes fiery on fiery whisky. He breaks the dishes at home, and takes his spite out on Mrs. Jones by striking her. Policeman Clancy tears his uniform taking him to the station house.

Jones' fighting spirit has given way to headache and meekness when he comes before Judge Pollard the following morning. The usual questions are asked. Jones is impressed with the seriousness of striking his wife.

He is given a chance that saves the wife from further abuse and allows the breadwinner to go free to make the family living.

"Jones," says the Judge, "you were drunk. You beat your wife, fought the policeman and should go to the workhouse. If you will promise me not to drink for one year and will sign a pledge to that effect, I will stay execution of the $100 fine your case warrants and give you a chance to make a man of yourself.

"If you come before me again, you will go to the workhouse to serve out that fine. If I hear of your drinking again, I'll have you in court.

"Now go over there, sign that pledge, then go home and fight for instead of against that little woman who carries your child in her arms.

"Report to me at my house every Monday, Wednesday and Friday night for two months."

In discussing his plan, the Justice said the other day: "The probationer will put on his best clothes and look pretty spic and span when he comes to my house. I show him into the parlor, put him at ease and talk with him. Say just whatever good thoughts come in my mind.

"I talk on the happiness there ought to be in bringing up a family. I sometimes compare the satisfaction down in your heart that a dollar for the baby's shoes will bring, when being what some men call a good fellow brings nothing but remorse.

"This man visits me for the required time. Soon I see a clearer skin, a finer eye, a better-dressed man. Perhaps on his last visit he brings his wife and baby—he's just as proud of the reformation as I am—and I see, although nothing is said, a trim bonnet has replaced the shawl that formerly covered the woman's head; her dress is better. In truth, he's a man now, and his wife is proud of him.

"Now, which is the better, to send that man to the workhouse, while his wife begs, starves or does worse, or to give him a chance? I know which is the better. It's no longer a question. It has been proved.

"What percentage of the men violate the pledge and go wrong again? Two per cent. that I know of. Only two men out of a hundred have ever been brought back to court, where I execute the stayed sentence.

"Others may break the pledge—I don't know; but if they do, it is done so discreetly they do not come into court and the police of my district do not hear of it.

"I first adopted the system three and a half years ago. I can't well figure to what extent it has decreased intoxication, because there is less drunkenness now from another more far-reaching cause. When Governor Folk put the Sunday lid on St. Louis a noticeable falling off in such cases in the police courts followed.

"My efforts in this line command respect. I sometimes take long chances to save a man—and save him, too. It takes an insight into human nature. But look at the loss of prestige to the Pollard pledge if I gave it to a drunkard who would go out and again become drunk, shouting how he had fooled the Judge!

"No, men of that class need a physician, not a Judge or a pledge. They are hopeless. The workhouse is their heritage. I am sorry for them. But when there is a chance of saving a man, I cannot give him a kick downhill by sending him to the workhouse.

"One man, in whose case I made an error of judgment, was intoxicated two hours after he had signed the pledge. His wife informed me. Next day he was surprised to be called into court. He denied he had been drinking. I knew differently. He was sentenced to six months.

"When he came out he thanked me, voluntarily took the pledge and has been sober since. So my first mistake in that case wasn't such a serious one.

"Twice since I returned from Europe I have been visited by men whom I saved. One is now a prosperous business man. Three years ago he was down and out. He hated himself and hated his wife. He struck her—police, arrest, court, pledge.

"It made a man of him. He came up to thank me. You'll pardon me if I tell you I felt a great pride thrill me. That's my only vanity. It did me good to see the fine-looking, well-dressed man standing there instead of being in the gutter, with the stigma of a workhouse sentence upon him. The other man's experience was much the same. He called to thank me.

"Since I returned I have had another caller. A flush-faced, clear-eyed, rather good-looking man of [illegible] called upon me. 'Judge, I want to take the pledge,' he said. 'I took it for a year two years ago, and kept it until a month ago. I fell. I'm sorry. The only thing to do is to sign the pledge again.'

"Well, he signed it. Such men need help. I am glad to devote my outside time to helping them."