ain't for womans.

"There's no one to do it for me, except Jan. And he's worse than nobody. Just through September and October. After that, maybe—" Her voice trailed off. It is hard to be hopeful at three in the morning, before breakfast.

She went to the little wash room at the rear, felt better immediately she had washed vigorously, combed her hair. She returned to the wagon to find a panic-stricken Dirk sure of nothing but that he had been deserted by his mother. Fifteen minutes later the two were seated at a table on which was spread what Chris Spanknoebel considered an adequate breakfast. A heartening enough beginning for the day, and a deceptive.

The Haymarket buyers did not want to purchase its vegetables from Selina DeJong. It wasn't used to buying of women, nor to selling to them.

Selina had taken the covers off her vegetables. They were revealed crisp, fresh, colorful. But Selina knew they must be sold now, quickly. When the leaves began to wilt, when the edges of the cauliflower heads curled ever so slightly, turned brown and limp, their value decreased by half, even though the heads themselves remained white and firm.

Down the street came the buyers—little black-eyed swarthy men; plump, short-sleeved, greasy men; shrewd, tobacco-chewing men in overalls. Stolid red Dutch faces, sunburned. Lean, dark foreign faces. Shouting, clatter, turmoil.

The day broke warm. The sun rose red. It would be a humid September day such as frequently came in the autumn to this lake region. Garden stuff would have to move quickly this morning. Afternoon would find it worthless.

The peddlers looked at her bunched bouquets, glanced at her, passed her by. It was not unkindness that prompted them, but a certain shyness, a fear of the unaccustomed. Her wares were tempting but they passed her by with the instinct that the ignorant have against that which is unusual.

By nine o'clock trading began to fall off. In a panic Selina realized that the sales she had made amounted to little more than two dollars. If she stayed there until noon she might double that, but no more. In desperation she harnessed the horses, threaded her way out of the swarming street, and made for South Water street farther east. Here were the commission houses. She knew that Pervus had sometimes left his entire load with an established dealer here, to be sold on commission. She remembered the name—Talcott—though she did not know the exact location.

The boy had been almost incredibly patient and good. At the wagon he had stood sturdily next his mother, had bustled himself vastly assisting her in her few pitiful sales; had plucked wilted leaves, brought forward the freshest and crispest vegetables. But now she saw that he was drooping a little as were her wares, with the heat and the absence from accustomed soil.

"Where we going now, mom?"

"To another street. Sobig—"

"Dirk!"

"—Dirk, where there's a man who'll buy all our stuff at once—maybe. Won't that be fine? Then we'll go home. You help mother find his name over the store. Talcott—T-a-l-c-o-double t."

William Talcott had known Pervus, and Pervus' father before him, and had adjudged them honest, admirable men. But of their garden truck he had small opinion.

In his doorway, he eyed the spare little figure that appeared before him all in rusty black, with its strained anxious face, its great deep-sunk eyes.

"DeJong, eh? Sorry to hear about your loss, ma'am. Pervus was a fine lad. No great shakes at truck farming, though. His widow, h'm? Hm." Here, he saw, was no dull-witted farm woman; no stolid Dutch-woman truckster. He went out to her wagon, tweaked the boy's brown cheek. "Wa-al now, Mis' DeJong, you got a right smart lot of garden stuff here and it looks pretty good. Yessir, pretty good. But you're too late. Ten, pret near."

"Oh, no!" cried Selina. "Oh, no! Not too late!" And at the agony in her voice he looked at her sharply.

"Tell you what, mebbe I can move half of 'em along for you. But stuff don't keep this weather. Turns wilty and my trade won't touch it. . . . First trip in?"

She wiped her face that was damp and yet cold to the touch. "First—trip in." Suddenly she was finding it absurdly hard to breathe.

He called from the sidewalk to the men within: "George! Ben! Hustle this stuff in. Half of it. The best. Send you check tomorrow, Mis' DeJong."

One hand on the seat she prepared to climb up again—did step to the hub. You saw her shabby, absurd side boots that were so much too big for the slim little feet. "If you're just buying my stuff because you're sorry for me—" The Peake pride.

"Don't do business that way. Can't afford to, ma'am. My da'ter she's studying to be a singer. In Italy now, Carline is, and costs like all get-out. Takes all the money I can scrape together, just about."

There was a little color in Selina's face now. "Italy! Oh, Mr. Talcott!" You'd have thought she had seen it. From her face. She began to thank him, gravely.

"Now, that's all right, Mis' DeJong. I notice your stuff's bunched kind of extry, and all of a size. Fixin' to do that way right along?"

"Yes. I thought—they looked prettier that way—of course vegetables aren't supposed to look pretty, I expect—" she stammered, stopped.

"You fix 'em pretty like that and bring 'em in to me first thing, or send 'em. My trade, they like their stuff kind of special. Yessir."

As Selina gathered up the reins he stood again in his doorway, cool, remote, unlighted cigar in his mouth, while hand-trucks rattled past him, barrels and boxes thumped to the sidewalk in front of him, wheels and hoofs and shouts made a great clamor all about him.

"We going home now?" demanded

As She Gathered Up the Reins He Stood in His Doorway, Cool, Remote.

Dirk. "We going home now? I'm hungry."

"Yes, lamb." Two dollars in her pocket. All yesterday's grim toil, and all today's, and months of labor behind those two days. Two dollars in the pocket of her black calico petticoat. "We'll get something to eat when we drive out a ways. Some milk and bread and cheese."

The sun was very hot. She took the boy's hat off, passed her calloused hand over the damp hair that clung to his forehead.

She made up her mind to drive east and then south. Pervus had sometimes achieved a late sale to outlying grocers. Jan's face if she came home with half the load still on the wagon! And what of the unpaid bills? She had, perhaps, thirty dollars, all told. She owed—four hundred. More than that.

Fear shook her. She told herself she was tired, nervous. That terrible week. And now this. The heat. Soon they'd be home, she and Dirk. The comfort of it, the peace of it. Safe, desirable, suddenly dear. No work for a woman, this! Well, perhaps they were right.

Down Wabash avenue, with the L trains thundering overhead and her horses, frightened and uneasy with the unaccustomed roar and clangor of traffic. It was terr'bly hot.

The boy's eyes popped with excitement and bewilderment.

"Pretty soon," Selina said. The muscles showed white beneath the skin of her jaw. "Pretty soon. Prairie avenue. Great big houses and lawns, all quiet." She even managed a smile. "I like it better home."

Prairie avenue at last, turning in at Sixteenth street. It was like calm after a storm. Selina felt battered, spent.

Then another thought came to her. Her vegetables, canvas covered, were fresher than those in the near-by markets. Why not try to sell some of them here, in these big houses? In an hour she might clear a few dollars this way at retail prices slightly less than those asked by the grocers of the neighborhood.

Agilely she stepped down the wheel, gave the reins to Dirk. She filled a large market basket with the finest and freshest of her stock and with this on her arm looked up a moment at the house in front of which she had stopped. The kitchen entrance, she knew, was by way of the alley at the back, but this she would not take. Across the sidewalk, down a little flight of stone steps, into the vestibule under the porch. She looked at the bell—a brass knob. "Pull it!" said the desperate Selina. "I can't! I can't!" cried all the prim Vermont Peakes in chorus. "All right. Starve to death and let them take the farm and Dirk, then."

At that she pulled the knob hard. Jangle went the bell in the hall. Again. Again.

Footsteps up the hall. The door opened to disclose a large woman, high cheek-boned, in a work apron; a cook, apparently.

"Good morning," said Selina. "Would you like some fresh country vegetables?"

"No." She half shut the door, opening it again to ask, "Got any fresh eggs or butter?" At Selina's negative she closed the door, bolted it. Well, that was all right. Nothing so terrible about that, Selina told herself. Simply hadn't wanted any vegetables. The next house, and the next, and the next. Up one side of the street, and down the other. Four times she refilled her basket. At one house she sold a quarter's worth. Fifteen at another. Twenty cents here. Almost fifty there.

Twenty-third street. Twenty-fifth. Twenty-eighth. She had over four dollars in her purse. Dirk was fretty now and hungry to the point of tears. "We'll go home now," Selina promised him. "The very last one. After this one we'll go home."

The last house. She had almost five dollars, earned in the last hour. "Just five minutes," she said to Dirk, trying to make her tone bright, her voice gay. Her arms full of vegetables which she was about to place in the basket at her feet she heard at her elbow:

"Now, then, where's your license?"

She turned. A policeman at her side. "License?"

"Yeh, you heard me. License. Where's your peddler's license? You got one, I s'pose."

"Why, no. No." She stared at him, still.

"Well, say, where d'ye think you are, peddlin' without a license! A good mind to run you in. Get along out of here, you and the kid. Leave me ketch you around here again!"

"What's the trouble, officer?" said a woman's voice. A smart open carriage of the type known as a victoria, with a chestnut horse, whose harness shone with metal. "What's the trouble, Reilly?" The woman stepped out of the victoria.

"Woman peddling without a license, Mrs. Arnold. You got to watch 'em like a hawk. . . . Get along wid you, then." He put a hand on Selina's shoulder and gave her a gentle push.

There shook Selina from head to foot such a passion, such a storm of outraged sensibilities, as to cause street, victoria, silk-clad woman, horses, and policeman to swim and shiver in a haze before her eyes. The rage of a fastidious woman who had had an alien male hand put upon her. Her face went white. Her eyes glowed black, enormous. She seemed tall, majestic even.

"Take your hand off me!" Her speech was clipped, vibrant. "How dare you touch me! How dare you! Take your hand!—" The blazing eyes in the white mask. He took his hand from her shoulder. The red surged into his face. A tanned comfortable-bosomed tall-corn woman, her abundant hair skewered into a knob and held by a long gray-black hairpin, her full skirt grimed with the mud of the wagon wheel, a pair of old side boots on her slim feet, a grotesquely battered old felt hat (her husband's) on her head, her arms full of ears of sweet corn and carrots, and radishes and bunches of beets; a woman with bad teeth, flat breasts—and then Julie had known her by her eyes. And she had stared and then run to her in her silk dress and her plumed hat, crying, "Oh, Selina! My dear! My dear!" with a sob of horror and pity. "My dear!" And had taken Selina, carrots, beets, corn, and radishes in her arms. The vegetables lay scattered all about them on the sidewalk in front of Julie Hempel Arnold's great stone house on Prairie avenue. But strangely enough it had been Selina who had done the comforting, patting Julie's plump silken shoulder and saying, over and over, soothingly, as to a child, "There, there! It's all right, Julie—it's all right. Don't cry. What's there to cry for? Sh-sh! It's all right."

Julie lifted her head in its modish black plumed hat, wiped her eyes, blew her nose. "Get along with you, do," she said to Reilly, the policeman, using the very words he had used to Selina. "I'm going to report you to Mr. Arnold, see if I don't. And you know what that means."

"Well, now, Mrs. Arnold, ma'am, I was only doing my duty. How cud I know the lady was a friend of yours. Sure, I—" He surveyed Selina, cart, jaded horses, wilted vegetables.

"And why not?" demanded Julie with superb inconsistency. "Why not, I'd like to know. Do get along with you."

He got along, a defeated officer of the law, and a bitter. And now it was Julie who surveyed Selina, cart, Dirk, jaded horses, wilted left-over vegetables. "Selina, whatever in the world! What are you doing, with—" She caught sight of Selina's absurd boots and she began to cry again. At that Selina's overwrought nerves snapped and she began to laugh, hysterically. It frightened Julie, that laughter. "Selina, don't! Come in the house with me. What are you laughing at? Selina!"

With shaking finger Selina was pointing at the vegetables that lay tumbled at her feet. "Do you see that cabbage, Julie? Do you remember how I used to despise Mrs. Tebbitt's because she used to have boiled cabbage on Monday nights?"

"That's nothing to laugh at, is it? Stop laughing this minute, Selina Peake!"

"I'll stop. I've stopped now. I was just laughing at my ignorance. Sweat and blood and health and youth go into every cabbage. Did you know that, Julie? One doesn't despise them as food, knowing that. . . . Come, climb down, Dirk. Here's a lady mother used to know—oh, years and years ago, when she was a girl. Thousands of years ago."

Chapter IX

The best thing for Dirk. The best thing for Dirk. It was the phrase that repeated itself over and over in Selina's speech during the days that followed. In this period of bewilderment and fatigue Julie had attempted to take charge of Selina much as she had done a dozen years before at the time of Simeon Peake's dramatic death. And now, as then, she pressed into service her wonder-working father and bounden slave, August Hempel.

"Pa'll be out tomorrow and I'll probably come with him. I've got a committee meeting, but I can easily—"

"You said—did you say your father would be out tomorrow? Out where?"

"To your place. Farm."

"Why, why should he? It's a little twenty-five-acre truck farm, and half of it under water a good deal of the time."

"Pa'll find a use for it, never fear. He won't say much, but he'll think of things. And then everything will be all right."

A species of ugly pride now possessed Selina. "I don't need help. Really I don't, Julie, dear. It's never been like today. Never before. We were getting on very well, Pervus and I. Then after Pervus' death so suddenly like that I was frightened. Terribly frightened. About Dirk. I wanted him to have everything. Beautiful things. I wanted his life to be beautiful. Life can be so ugly, Julie. You don't know. You don't know."

"Well, now, that's why I say. We'll be out tomorrow, pa and I. Dirk's going to have everything beautiful. We'll see to that."

It was then that Selina had said, "But that's just it. I want to do it myself, for him. I can. I want to give him all these things myself."

"But that's selfish."

"I don't mean to be. I just want to do the best thing for Dirk."

It was shortly after noon that High Prairie, hearing the unaccustomed chug of a motor, rushed to its windows or porches to behold Selina DeJong in her mashed black felt hat and Dirk waving his battered straw wildly, riding up the Halsted road toward the DeJong farm in a bright red automobile that had shattered the nerves of every farmer's team it had met on the way. Of the DeJong team and the DeJong dog Pom, and the DeJong vegetable wagon there was absolutely no sign. High Prairie was rendered unfit for work throughout the next twenty-four hours.

In the twelve years' transition from butcher to packer Aug Hempel had taken on a certain authority and distinction. Now, at fifty-five, his hair was gray, relieving the too-ruddy color of his face. In the last few years he had grown very deaf in one ear, so that when you spoke to him he looked at you intently. This had given him a reputation for keenness and great character insight, when it was merely the protective trick of a man who does not want to confess that he is hard of hearing.

Selina's domain he surveyed with a keen and comprehensive eye.

"You want to sell?"

"No."

"That's good. Few years from now this land will be worth money." He had spent a bare fifteen minutes taking shrewd valuation of the property from fields to barn, from barn to house. "Well, what do you want to do, heh, Selina?"

They were seated in the cool and unexpectedly pleasing little parlor, with its old Dutch luster set gleaming softly in the cabinet, its three rows of books, its air of comfort and usage.

Selina clasped her hands tightly in her lap—those hands that, from much grubbing in the soil, had taken on something of the look of the gnarled things they tended. The nails were short, discolored, broken. The palms rough, calloused. The whole story of the last twelve years of Selina's life was written in her two hands.

"I want to stay here, and work the farm, and make it pay. I can. I'm not going to grow just the common garden stuff any more—not much, anyway. I'm going to specialize in the fine things—the kind the South Water street commission men want. I want to drain the low land. Tile it. That land hasn't been used for years. It ought to be rich growing land by now, if once it's properly drained. And I want Dirk to go to school. Good schools. I never want my son to go to the Haymarket. Never. Never.

"My life doesn't count, except as something for Dirk to use. I'm done

"My Life Doesn't Count, Except as Something for Dirk to Use."

with anything else. Oh, I don't mean that I'm discouraged, or disappointed in life, or anything like that. I mean I started out with the wrong idea. I know better now. I'm here to keep Dirk from making the mistakes I made."

Aug Hempel's tone was one of meditation, not of argument. "It don't work out that way, seems. About mistakes it's funny. You got to make your own; and not only that, if you try to keep people from making theirs they get mad." He whistled softly through his teeth following this utterance and tapped the chair seat with his finger.

"It's beauty!" Selina said then, almost passionately. Aug Hempel and Julie plainly could make nothing of this remark, so she went on, eager, explanatory. "I used to think that if you wanted beauty—if you wanted it hard enough and hopefully enough—it came to you. You just waited, and lived your life as best you could, knowing that beauty might be just around the corner. You just waited, and then it came."

"Beauty!" exclaimed Julie, weakly. She stared at Selina in the evident belief that this work-worn haggard woman was bemoaning her lack of personal pulchritude.

"Yes. All the worth-while things in life. Work that you love. And growth—growth and watching people grow. Feeling very strongly about things and then developing that feeling to—to make something fine come of it." She threw out her hands in a futile gesture. "That's what I mean by beauty. I want Dirk to have it."

"For pity's sake!" pleaded Julie, the literal, "let's stop talking and do something. Pa, you've probably got it all fixed in your mind long ago. It's time we heard it. Here Selina was one of the most popular girls in Miss Fister's school, and lots of people thought the prettiest. And now just look at her!"

A flicker of the old flame leaped up in Selina. "Flatterer!" she murmured.

Aug Hempel stood up. "If you think giving your whole life to making the boy happy is going to make him happy you ain't so smart as I took you for. You go trying to live somebody else's life for them."

"I'm not going to live his life for him. I want to show him how to live it so that he'll get full value out of it."

"Keeping him out of the Haymarket if the Haymarket's the natural place for him won't do that. How can you tell! Monkeying with what's to be. I'm out at the yards every day, in and out of the cattle pens, talking to the drovers and herders, mixing in with the buyers. I can tell the weight of a hog and what he's worth just by a look at him, and a steer, too. My son-in-law, Michael Arnold, sits up in the office all day in our plant, dictating letters. His clothes they never stink of the pens like mine do. . . . Now I ain't saying anything against him, Julie. But I bet my grandson Eugene"—he repeated it, stressing the name so that you sensed his dislike of it—"Eugene, if he comes into the business at all when he grows up, won't go within smelling distance of the yards. His office, I bet, will be in a new office building on, say Madison street, with a view of the lake. Life! You'll be hoggin' it all yourself and not know it."

"And I suppose," retorted Selina, spiritedly, "that when your son-in-law, Michael Arnold, is your age he'll be telling Eugene how he roughed it in an office over at the yards in the old days. These will be the old days."

August Hempel laughed good-humoredly. "That can be, Selina. That can be." He chewed his cigar and settled to the business at hand.

"You want to drain and tile. Plant high-grade stuff. You got to have a man on the place that knows what's what, not this Rip Van Winkle we saw in the cabbage field. New horses. A wagon. I will get you the horses, a bargain, at the yards." He took out a long flat check book. He began writing in it with a pen that he took from his pocket—some sort of marvelous pen that seemed already filled with ink and that you unscrewed at the top and then screwed at the bottom. He squinted through his cigar smoke, the check book propped on his knee. He tore off the check with a clean rip. "For a starter," he said. He held it out to Selina.

"There now!" exclaimed Julie, in triumphant satisfaction. That was more like it. Doing something.

But Selina did not take the check. She sat very still in her chair, her hands folded. "That isn't the regular way," she said.

August Hempel was screwing the top on his fountain pen again. "Regular way? for what?"

"I'm borrowing this money, not taking it. Oh, yes, I am! I couldn't get along without it. I realize that now, after yesterday. Yesterday! But in five years—seven—I'll pay it back." Then, at a half-uttered protest from Julie, "That's the only way I'll take it. It's for Dirk. But I'm going to earn it—and pay it back. I want a—" she was being enormously businesslike, and unconsciously enjoying it—"a—an I. O. U. A promise to pay you back just as—as soon as I can. That's business, isn't it? And I'll sign it."

"Sure," said Aug Hempel, and unscrewed his fountain pen again. "Sure that's business." Very serious, he scribbled again, busily, on a piece of paper. A year later, when Selina had learned many things, among them that simple and compound interest on money loaned are not mere problems devised to fill Duffy's arithmetic in her school-teaching days, she went to August Hempel between laughter and tears.

"You didn't say one word about interest, that day. Not a word. What a little fool you must have thought me."

"Between friends," protested August Hempel.

But—"No," Selina insisted. "Interest."

"I guess I better start me a bank pretty soon if you keep on so businesslike."

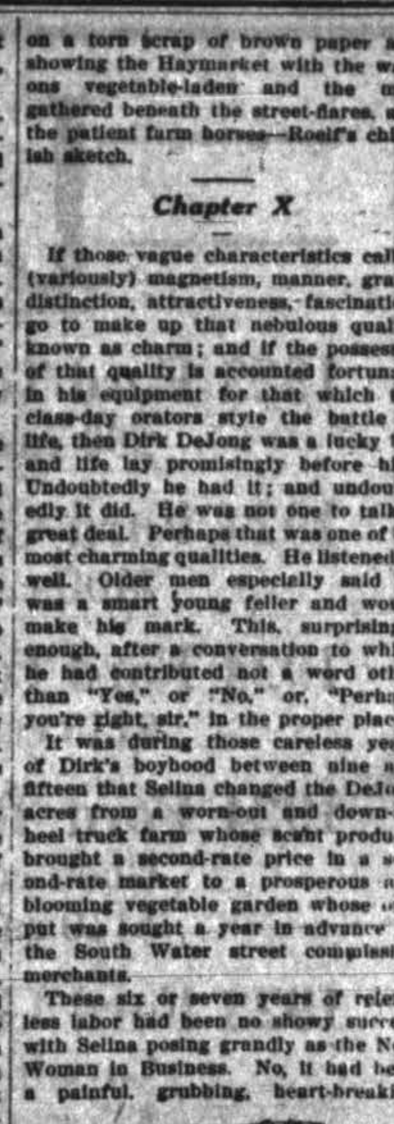
Ten years later he was actually the controlling power in the Yards & Rangers bank. And Selina had the original I. O. U. with its "Paid in Full. Aug Hempel," carefully tucked away with other keepsakes that she foolishly treasured—ridiculous scraps that no one but she would have understood or valued—a small school slate such as little children use (the one on which she had taught Pervus to figure and parse); a dried bunch of trilliums; a bustled and panniered wine-red cashmere dress, absurdly old-fashioned; a letter telling about the Infanta Eulalie of Spain and signed Julie Hempel Arnold; a pair of men's old side-boots with mud caked on them; a crude sketch, almost obliterated now, done on a torn scrap of brown paper and showing the Haymarket with the wagons vegetable-laden and the men gathered beneath the street-flares, and the patient farm horses—Roelf's childish sketch.

Chapter X

If those vague characteristics called (variously) magnetism, manner, grace, distinction, attractiveness, fascination, go to make up that nebulous quality known as charm; and if the possessor of that quality is accounted fortunate in his equipment for that which the class-day orators style the battle of life, then Dirk DeJong was a lucky lad and life lay promisingly before him. Undoubtedly he had it; and undoubtedly it did. He was not one to talk a great deal. Perhaps that was one of his most charming qualities. He listened so well. Older men especially said he was a smart young feller and would make his mark. This, surprisingly enough, after a conversation to which he had contributed not a word other than "Yes," or "No," or, "Perhaps you're right, sir," in the proper places.

It was during those careless years of Dirk's boyhood between nine and fifteen that Selina changed the DeJong acres from a worn-out and down-at-heel truck farm whose scant products brought a second-rate price in a second-rate market to a prosperous and blooming vegetable garden whose output was sought a year in advance by the South Water street commission merchants.

These six or seven years of relentless labor had been no showy success with Selina posing grandly as the New Woman in Business. No, it had been a painful, grubbing, heart-breaking


At Eighteen It Had Been Midwest University for Dirk.

process as is any project that depends on the actual soil for its realization. She drove herself pitilessly. She literally tore a living out of the earth with her two bare hands. Yet there was nothing pitiable about this small energetic woman of thirty-five or forty with her fine soft dark eyes, her clean-cut jaw-line, her shabby decent clothes that were so likely to be spattered with the mud of the road or fields, her exquisite nose with the funny little wrinkle across the bridge when she laughed. Rather, there was something splendid about her! something rich, prophetic. It was the splendor and richness that achievement imparts.

It is doubtful that she ever could have succeeded without the money borrowed from August Hempel; without his shrewd counsel. She told him this, sometimes. He denied it. "Easier, yes. But you would have found a way, Selina. Some way. Julie, no. But you, yes. You are like that. Me, too. Say, plenty fellers that was butchers with me twenty years ago over on North Clark street are butchers yet, cutting off a steak or a chop."

Dirk had his tasks on the farm. Selina saw to that. But they were not heavy. By the time he returned from school the rough work of the day was over. His food was always hot, appetizing, plentiful. The house was neat, comfortable. Selina had installed a bathroom—one of the two bathrooms in High Prairie. The neighborhood was still rocking with the shock of this when it was informed by Jan that Selina and Dirk ate with candles lighted on the supper table. High Prairie slapped its thigh and howled with mirth.

"Cabbages is beautiful," said old Klaas Pool when he heard this. "Cabbages is beautiful I betcha."

Selina, during the years of the boy's adolescence, had never urged him to a decision about his future. That, she decided, would come. As the farm prospered and the pressure of necessity lifted she tried, in various ingenious ways, to extract from him some unconscious sign of definite preference for this calling, that profession.

(Continued next week)

Hogging Off Barley

While there would be some waste in hogging off barley and while the hogs would not make as efficient use of it as they would if it were harvested, threshed and ground, the time saved in getting the cheaper feed, and the labor and expense of harvesting saved, probably would make up for any waste and loss from this method of feeding. This, of course, applies only to the small patch grown for early feed.