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A Farmwife's Life For Me

by Janet Sutherland

IN THOREAU'S day a man might have been able to reject city life and go back to nature as a hermit. But the modern man with country life in his blood now usually takes his wife with him — a woman who loves the farming life as much as he does.

Marrying a farmer now is a far cry from the type of life a city girl would have expected 100 or even 30 years ago. Gone are the isolation and loneliness, the morning to midnight chores, the makeshift lighting and sanitation and the long tables of ravenous threshers. In their place are contacts with cities through extension workers, modern automobiles and even airplanes. Systematic and mechanized work accomplishes daily chores, and rural electrification and a farm couple's ingenuity have replaced many old-time drudgeries.

Success or Failure

The success or failure of a farm marriage usually depends upon the wife's happiness, for all farm life revolves around the home. Farm life demands a family relationship of dependency rather than a loose bond of parents and children held together only by three meals a day — something which occurs too often in city life. Farm husband and wife work more as a team than even city theatre or columnist co-workers. The couple has complete dependence on each other not only in work but also in homemaking, leisure hours and child care. Father's latest threshing problem or Mary Jane's new dress becomes a family concern.

Work Together

Mrs. Gilbert Denfeld, whose husband is an Iowa State College graduate and who is now living on a farm near Sioux Falls, S. D., says, "One thing I truly feel is that marrying a farmer is more of a 50-50 proposition than marrying a man in any other profession. The farmer and his wife do more things together — everything from house cleaning and painting to milking and helping with chores when the especially busy seasons come."

Both farm children and their parents agree that there is no lack of excitement in living in the country. Improvements in country schools have brought education up to the city level. Dangers encountered on bucking horses or on overflowing hayracks are something pavement-raised youngsters cannot imagine.

Excitement is different, yes, but no less thrilling than anything that happens in a busy town neighborhood.

Since there is no corner grocery to solve the farm woman's food problem, homemaking requires more planning and efficiency. The farm itself produces many needed staples. The home freezer and a fruit room lined with canned foods will meet most necessities. These "isolated" people can have corn on the cob and strawberries in January just like anyone else.

"I think farm women are more apt to treat their homemaking seriously since you can't leave little chickens, bottle lambs or hungry threshers," adds Mrs. Denfeld. You can't go away from the farm with a "Sorry, I'll be late" note.

It is this feeling of successful homemaking plus the small things like walks through freshly-cut grain fields and picnics under a haystack that make Mrs. Denfeld and thousands of other farm wives say, "I'm really sold on farm life."

Maru Ellen

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