

## CHRONICLES OF GINGER FARM

By Gwendoline P. Clarke

It has come at last! That heart-warming, land-drying, health-giving sun we have all been waiting for. Three days without rain, can you believe it? The birds are singing as if their little throats must burst with the ecstasy of song; the swamp frogs keep up a perpetual chorus and in our garden there is "a host of golden daffodils." Yes, spring has come to Ontario.

There is the hum of a tractor in the air-later in the day it may be one of many. Across the road neighbour is working his field with four horses abreast. It is a pleasing picture. We certainly can't do without tractors but for a picturesque scene of farm life in Canada what can compare with a good team of well-matched horses? However, I suppose they can no longer be described as typical of farm life because if one took a cross section of the country no doubt one would find that there are more fields in which tractors are working than horses.

Thus time marches on. How soon will it be before aeroplanes are used to speed up farming operations? No doubt they have their uses even now. I think I read that DDT was being sprayed from the air over mosquito breeding areas and also for lightening of fruit trees. And no doubt helicopters could be used under favourable conditions, to sow clover seed, like a sort of giant cyclone seeder. Certainly they could be used to scatter poison bait on the prairie when grasshoppers threaten to destroy the crops. We could have done with a helicopter very nicely out west in 1920. Then Partner wouldn't have had to drive all over our half section with a horse and buggy at three o'clock in the morning spreading poison bait over the growing crops. That was an awful job but unless it was done the grasshoppers took the whole crop.

Sometimes it gives one a queer feeling to look back and remember the tough times one has come through; the things one did to make a little extra money when crops were poor—Partner biting out a threshing gang to work off the bill for his own threshing; coming home on horseback and arriving anywhere from ten o'clock until midnight; starting out again before the sun was up; leaving me alone, perforce, in our prairie farm-house with our two-year-old and a baby yet unborn. And the knitting I did in the winter—a pair of socks for 25 cents! But we got along, somehow we kept our heads above water and I don't remember that we ever felt particularly sorry for ourselves. Other families were poorer, much more so. Some years without a crop some wives out on cash reserve one might have had. But we were young and willing to work and the west was in our blood, one might almost say we were incultured with the spirit of optimism. The last harvest might be bad; the winter hard; living conditions barely tolerable; but in the spring, a new start... promising crops, a new year... this year there surely wouldn't be a grasshopper plague, or a dust storm, or hail and wind to ruin the crops... this year it would be different; this year there might be a bumper crop such as only the West can produce!

Oh well, this is Ontario... the spring of 1947... and each year brings its own problems, to the east and to the west. Right now I had better go out and see how my three hundred problems out in the broad-er house are doing. This is only their second day out and they are inclined to wander away from the pen and get themselves lost. They have about as much sense of direction as I have when I get about five miles from home. And that is saying a lot!

Do you know, we have not yet taken out our storm windows, and maybe it is just as well—Partner says it might be safer to leave them on until the middle of June. As I said before, the grader is working on the road, and a very strong wind is blowing, so between them all there is a great deal of dust flying around and most of it coming this way. The storm windows may, therefore, do more than keep out winter frost and gales.

Second Nice is here for the weekend. Tonight it will be my job to take her down to the Queen Elizabeth to catch the Niagara bus, that is if our jalopy doesn't fall to pieces on the way. We are still trying to get something that looks more like a car and last week we really thought we had something. Judging from the price that was asked, it should have been a good car but when we looked it over what did we find but a cracked block! I wonder how much longer people will get away with stuff like that. It just about burns me up.

## U. S. Diplomat

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## ... TABLE TALKS ...

The Old Hen Gets in a Stew

Chicken Mousse

Three duck-billed platyfish

Two ducks, after a 1500-mile ship voyage from Australia

The animals—Cecil, Betty and Penelope—were the only ones of their kind in the zoo to meet the ship at the dock

The platyfishes are the only ones of their kind in the zoo to meet the ship at the dock

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## THE QUALITY TEA

Safe In Play

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