

## Literature.

## Farmer Hopkins Hired Girl.

By Mary R. P. Hatch.

## CHAPTER I.

April in the city, and rainy—what could be drearier? Alone in the attic with no fire, only the ghostly tapping of rain against the window for companionship and the scratching of her pen—what could be bleaker? But she wrote on—never pausing although a chill ran through her frame ever and anon. Rising at last, she moved rapidly across the room for an old shawl that hung upon the wall, then wrote again; and as the poor light threw a transient glare over her face it showed rapt thought, genius, determination, valor and want. But a cough interrupted the writer. She grasps her throat to prevent its utterance. As the hollow sound rings out fearfully in the empty room it startles her, for she clasps her hand to her side and moans:

"Oh, how can I die now? I must if there is not a change. I want to do so much first."

Nervous energy increased rather than diminished by weakness caused her voice to sound unnaturally sharp.

She bent her head to think with all the force of her energetic nature. A pleasant resolve had brightened it when she raised it.

"Yes, I will go into the country the first of May," looking at her pen with a pleasant little cough, for she had long regarded it as a confidant, having no other; "but we must work, old pen, hard, if we want a holiday—if we want a sight of the green fields and the May flowers; oh, the May flowers."

Hers was a bright, happy nature. It is a mistake that allied to genius is oftenest unhappiness and disdain of life. To Sylvia Leigh, ever in an attic and without companionship, life seemed a joyous thing, too precious for just appreciation; and for weeks, as she had felt that her health was failing her, she had thought it a sin to drift out of life without making great efforts to stem the current. But what could she do? Nothing, it would seem. She decided otherwise. She would go into the country as soon as she could earn a sufficient sum to carry her. Oh, how much more than dollars was the little sum she had slowly hoarded up! It was health, it was life to her.

It was her intention to go into the country and seek employment; not to teach, but to do housework in a farmer's family if she could get a chance; she thought it would be more healthy.

After doing all she could in the way of planning and preparation, she gave herself up to the hands of Providence, and whoever knew Providence to forsake the trusting?

In two weeks Sylvia had twenty dollars, but she had not earned it all in that time; for weeks previous she had been saving as she could, with wise forethought thinking of the time when she might be unable to work. She had paid her rent and purchased a few necessary articles, and still had this sum left. How rich and happy she felt as she stood before the little cracked glass and tied on the hat. It was of decidedly old style, but becoming and new. It cost her twenty-five cents, but Sylvia's dextrous fingers seizing upon its capabilities made, with the aid of a ribbon and a spray of flowers, a pretty hat. Her dress, notwithstanding it was but a shilling a yard, was extremely tasteful, a pretty soft gray and neatly made. Her gloves were cotton, but they matched in color, and her boots were new, as were her collar and cuffs, confined with the tiniest imaginable knots of pink ribbon.

Sylvia smiled brightly at herself in the glass before donning the old shawl, then ran lightly down stairs and down the narrow streets to the depot, carrying her diminutive portmanteau in her hand, but stopping a moment before entering the broader thoroughfare to literally shake the dust from her feet and to cough.

"There!" she said softly, with quaint conceit, "I hope I am leaving this place forever, and my cough with it."

She bought a ticket to Bloomingdale, New Hampshire, for no other reason than because it had a cheery sound, and ticket agent assured her that he knew the place to be a farming country. What a relief it was to seat herself in the cars and to know that for a time, at least, she could rest in the care of her kind guardian. She hoped and had faith. Perhaps this was the secret of her joyous disposition.

Many noticed the poorly-dressed girl, with her pale, clear complexion, short, dark brown hair, combed smoothly over her brow, but waving slightly beneath the pretty cheap hat, the childish, innocent mouth hardly agreeing with the determined look in the dark eyes, not remarkably beautiful, but clear and unfathomable in their depths. Not a face for a young man to fall in love with at first sight, nor elderly gentlemen to feel it necessary to protect; so she was unmolested, and left to take quiet note of her passengers, mentally gauging them all by her womanly standard, and concluding that if in want of assistance she would ask it of the restless, absent-minded, old gentleman, with clear, bright blue, slightly inquisitive eyes and benevolent gaze, rather than of a philanthropic individual who distributed tracks and Sunday-school books to the passengers gratuitously, or the severely righteous

man who frowned darkly at everything frownable—at the boy who sold candy, at the young men playing cards, and at the flirting couple in the corner.

It was growing dark when the cars reached Bloomingdale, and as Sylvia alighted at the little station she felt a trifle dispirited. The pleasant-faced gentleman had got out also and was rapidly walking away when the depot master, who appeared well acquainted with him, called out: "Hello, Mr. Hopkins, neice didn't come, then, or, in a lower voice, 'is that your neice?'"

"No," he replied, "she's gone to work in the factory; gets bigger pay. I don't know what we shall do, my wife's a'in' and spring's work ain't done yet."

Sylvia came eagerly forward. "May I—did I understand you to say your wife is in need of assistance? I am in search of a place and should like to work for you if I can suit."

The farmer looked at her doubtfully. "The girl I see in the cars to-day. I thought yer was a milliner or somethin'. Don't look tough enough to do housework."

"Oh, indeed I am. I am not accustomed to do housework, but I know I could learn," replied Sylvia.

"Oh, yes, you'll learn. What I'm afeared of is, you ain't tough. Look to me like one of 'em that'll work 'emselves to pieces 'fore they know it. Like 'nough you'll do, though, if you begin easy at first."

"May I try?" asked Sylvia, her face flushing with hope.

"Yes," he resumed kindly. "You've got the grit, no mistake."

They walked off together. Neither thought of distrusting the other. There is a free masonry of goodness that never deceives.

It was nearly half a mile to the farmhouse, but Sylvia kept up with the farmer's long strides, and together they entered the low kitchen where Mrs. Hopkins sat knitting. Care and hard work was apparently the cause of Mrs. Hopkins being 'aillin'." "Kinder worn out," the neighbors said, which might be said of nearly all farmer's wives. The multifarious cares of butter-making; cheese-making, cooking, cleaning, and the long list of and so forth, wherein is generally the gist of labor, all undertaken without assistance, is enough to make the farmer's wife look a'illin'."

"Well, Hannah, I've brought you a girl, though Miranda wouldn't come—rather work in the factory; more genteel, you know. My wife, Mrs. Hopkins, Miss—Wall, now, if 'tain't slipped my mind!"

"My name is Sylvia, sir—Sylvia Leigh."

"Yes, Sylvy; queer name, almost like Silver. Wall, wife, I'll warrant ye she's wuth her weight in silver, if not in gold," and he laughed at his little joke. Sylvia laughed, too, and his wife's face relaxed, as she said:

"I shouldn't wonder, Ephraim, if you're right," and she looked so kindly at Sylvia that she felt warmed and invigorated at once, for at last she had found a home almost. She liked their homely ways and words; it was like a glimpse of the fresh fields that as yet she had only seen darkly as they had walked along. What a cosy bedroom was that to which she was shown! cosy and airy, and upon the lower floor. She opened her window, before undressing, to breathe the sweet evening air, alive with the breeze and fragrant with the scent of growing things. Her prayer that night was happy and filled with thanksgiving.

It was not long before she learned to do housework, and she liked it. She began to grow strong. "Didn't look so peaked," Mr. Hopkins said, and his wife lost entirely her worn, tired expression. It was a genuine pleasure for Sylvia to cook, sweep, make beds and so forth; there was such a healthful variety about it, and a bird was not happier nor sang more than she as she went about her duties.

Now that she was earning her board and lodging and two dollars additional per week, and not worried about present needs, she began writing a book. After her day's labor was done it was a rest to write in the evening, after the good farmer and his household were sleeping the sleep of the tired, honest folks.

Her book was dearer than anything in the world to her. Hitherto, her efforts had been narrowed by necessity; they meant little more than food and lodging, and were consequently sordidly connected with her past miserable privation. Freshness, purity and plenty were about her; health was hers; and originality, animate and inanimate, peeped from everything. For the time she lived in her story, her characters were real to her and moved about before her senses until it seemed that she might even touch them. Her interest was so intense that it was a real pain when she introduced some faulty personage, and she watched with dismay the errors and sorrows she was obliged to develop from the connection. But it was almost all goodness she depicted, for it seemed more natural to write it so. She wrote consistently, and every sentence was weighed and pondered. As she wrote, her eyes gleamed like stars in a clear night, the firm lines deepened on her face and the sensitive mouth grieved with feeling. For the rest it might be said that the fresh air of the hills breathed on every page.

## CHAPTER II.

A new England landscape in summer,

pastures where cows feed and ponder, where huge rocks, crumbling and moss-grown, rise darkly from the circling green; opposite a well, above which rises, Pisa-like, the tall post, whence lazily dangles from the smaller pole the bucket. Below and beyond are square fields of grain, making mosaic work with their varied tints. These are skirted by broad, rolling meadows, and beyond all, turning the whole to rhyme, the placid Connecticut, washing the gently curving banks, flows smoothly and silently along, decked with sky, clouds and foliage, and anything it can coax to shine on its bosom.

Up and around are the hills, some near and homelike, others mistily, hazily distant, their scalloped edges blending with the sky so impalpably as to be a matter of faith rather than vision. For sound, there is the whirr of the grasshopper, the timid note of the bird aroused from its noonday siesta, and the click of mowing machines; for scent, the faint smell of wild flowers and the sweet odor of the balm of Gilead, languishing in the heat, and for sober matter of factness there is the glaring white farmhouse, homely and neat, with barns and sheds and fences and a few trees mingled together for utility alone. Even the trees were set out to shade the cellar and to keep the parlor carpet from fading.

A young man is sauntering up the road, too idly to note all this, but pleasantly impressed, nevertheless. He is gentlemanly in looks and dress, evidently from the city, Sylvia concludes, as her glance falls upon him, after blowing the horn to summon the men to dinner.

"Can you inform me if Mr. Hopkins resides here?" he asked, politely doffing his hat as he came toward her.

"He does. Walk in," she adds, in country parlance.

He entered and was conducted to the sitting-room by Sylvia, who then went in search of Mrs. Hopkins, while she dished up the dinner for the men, who had just driven into the barn.

Mr. Hopkins hired a good deal of help in haying, and as the stalwart men came up to the house you would change your mind about the overloaded table. Mr. Hopkins leads the van, hale and hearty as he was twenty years ago. His straw hat is pushed back to cool his brow, while a wisp of straw, which he chews in an absent-minded way, helps him to "calculate," as he says. Jimmy Ryan brings up the rear, whistling in a tremendous manner three lines to his ditty, and finishing up by singing, loudly, "And they go wall together." Evidently his knowledge of the words does not extend further.

At sight of Sylvia the old farmer called out, heartily, "Most tired of waitin'!"

"Oh, no," she answered. "But you have a visitor, sir, in the sitting room."

"Shoo! you don't say so! Can't be Ranson's here again after oats. I haven't any to spare."

"Wrong!" said Sylvia. "I don't believe he would know an oat if he should see one."

"What! Ranson?"

"No, your visitor; he is from the city."

"Shoo! after you Sylvia? Wall, I'll go in and see him."

"My name is Sutherland," said the young man to Mr. Hopkins, "and I called to see if you could be induced to take a party of us to board this summer. My sister is rather delicate, and fancies that farm life might benefit her. There would be five of us in all, counting the child. Mr. Perkins, the postmaster directed me here. You can have references if desired, and we will pay a dollar a day each, including the little girl, or more if that is not enough."

"That's enough," said Mr. Hopkins, "a generous price; but help's skurce, and my wife and Sylvy work hard now. I'm afeared I can't make it out. Howsum-ever," he said, as he saw his visitor's look of disappointment, "I'll talk with the woman folks, and let you know to-night. Stopping at the tavern?"

"Yes. I hope the decision will be favorable, for this is really a beautiful place," he said, with another bow. Mr. Hopkins began to think he was all bows, but he was very prepossessing, being free from arrogance if a little affected. Dapper little men are apt to be.

The "woman folks" were consulted, and urged him to accede to the proposal, when he said: "Five time seven is thirty-five, and ten times that is three hundred and fifty; more'n enough by fifty dollars to take up the mortgage on the farm."

Sylvia gave just one thought to the book so dear to her and progressing so well, then said, cordially:

"Well, sir, that I should say, would pay well. Have them come, by all means, if Mrs. Hopkins thinks best. We can get along finely, with an occasional day's work from Mrs. Grey."

"But, Sylvia," said Mrs. Hopkins, "you work so hard now."

"Not another word, my dear madam. Mrs. Hopkins works so hard, you should say. It is decided," she said, gayly, to Mr. Hopkins. "Our city company must not be too particular; and, then, think of our manners, which would be vastly improved, I dare say, by the association."

"Wall, Sylvy, I shall pay you another dollar a week; 'tain't much, but it'll help buy your chicken fixens."

Ribbons and other girlish finery was what Mr. Hopkins meant by the rather vague term of chicken fixens.

(To Be Continued.)

## Humorous.

## How Not to Do It.

"I told you so," said the Putnam avenue resident after the hired girl had burst in upon them to announce that there was a rat in the trap. "You people were fooling around here trying to catch sewer rats with the newfangled traps. One of these big fellows goes into such a trap, eats what there is to eat, lays down on his back and kicks his way out in less time than one of us could open a door. Good thing you had some one that knows a rattrap when he sees it. Come on now and we'll get rid of this fellow."

It was a lively procession that hurried to the barn.

"Here, don't open that yet," as the girl held the trap and the pet poodle kicked and tore around as though it had a fit. "Put this bag over it. We're not here to amuse the rat. Hold still now till I get this twine string around its tail. That's it. Now don't get excited. Give me the grass hook. Stand over there, Jacques," to the coachman. "You better go into the house, grandma," but grandma declared that she had killed rats before he was born, and she hitched up her sleeves as she swung a mopstick with both hands.

"Let 'er go," shouted the boss. Then there was something like a football rush. One swoop of the grass hook cut the twine string and removed the dog's tail so completely that there was nothing left to wag. The girl went backward into a water bucket, grandma's mopstick caught the boss on the back of the head as he went down, the cat flew into the haymow, Jake made one kick that sprained a ligament and the rat skurried under the barn.

"Just what I expected," as they bathed his head with cold water. "You're a fine lot of yahoos. Set that trap again and leave the next catch to me. Understand?"—Detroit Free Press.

## A Domestic Comedy.

Mr. Jones-Brown (taking his seat at the breakfast-table)—Good-morning, dear.

Mrs. Jones-Brown—Good morning, Charles. You came in rather late last evening.

Yes, dear. I reached town on a late train from Tipperary's place in Lonesome-park. Glorious place that! Heard about it? Tipperary told me himself. He ought to know. Beautiful lawns, fine gardens—vegetable, fruit and flower—hot and cold water, observatory, hot-house, splendid kitchen, plumbing A 1, all modern appliances, electrical fixtures, gas, too, architecturally perfect, view sublime, neighborhood congenial, servant problem solved—they just beg to go there; ten minutes from city—in short, glorious!

Well, Mrs. Tipperary was in town yesterday afternoon and she isn't so eloquent about it. Do you know, dear, what she tells me? It's lonely as a graveyard, plumbing vile, fruit, flowers and vegetables a myth, scenery in winter all snow, in summer mud; Kitchen awful, gas about one-eighth of the time, hot water never above 32 below zero, neighborhood miserable—in fact, they are just waiting until some easy thing comes along, so they can unload it on the unsuspecting idiot.

What! Are you ill? Are you ill, dear? Not exactly, Only—only—Only what? Nothing much—only I bought that place!

## Hints for the Strawberry Season.

No matter how the fruit is served, it should be washed to free it from grit.

The fruit is better washed before the hulls are removed.

No other dressing is quite so delicious on uncooked berries as whipped cream. Nine times out of ten, puddings or other desserts made with gelatine are unsatisfactory, because sufficient time is not allowed for them to mould firmly. They should have eight or ten hours. If a short time better depend on corn-starch.

The lower crust of a pie will not become sodden with fruit juice, if it is brushed over with the white of an egg before it is filled, and is not allowed to stand more than an hour after baking.

Plain shortcake should be baked in two thin layers, with a little soft butter spread over the bottom one before the other is put in place; or better even than this, cut into individual cakes with a biscuit cutter.

Cold fruit desserts are becoming better liked for summer than warm ones. But the one which is neither cold or hot is robbed of half its goodness.

The most delicate pie is made by baking a deep shell; stand on ice, and when ready to serve, fill with berries that have been sweetened an hour, and pile whipped cream over the top.

A tempting pie has a deep, baked shell filled with berries and boiled custard, covered with a thick meringue. Brown the latter slightly and serve cold.

## A Negro Lynched.

SALISBURY, M. D., May 26.—Garfield King, a negro, aged about eighteen, was taken from the jail at this place early this morning, hanged to a tree and shot to pieces. He was awaiting trial on the charge of having deliberately shot Herman Kenny, a white boy, about the same age as the nigger.

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