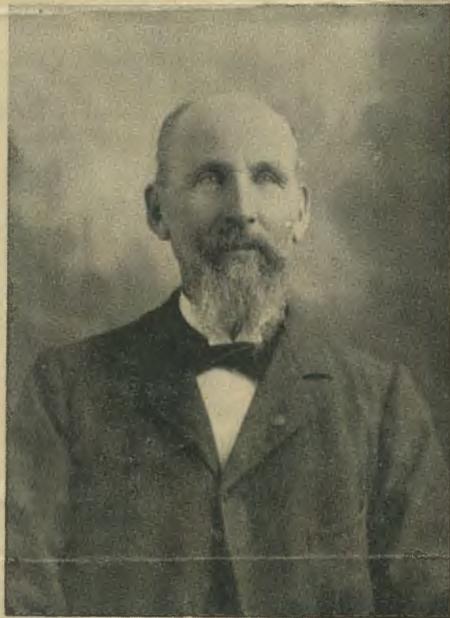


(Page 4157)

The Man With the Cow

By CYRUS H. WALKER



Read Before the Linn County Council, P. of B.
at Grand Prairie Grange Hall, April 7, 1900.

(Written before we had ^{hand} cream
seperators)

The Man With the Cow.

By CYRUS H. WALKER.

Upon the handles of his well worn plow
The weary farmer leans, and with his gaze
Intently fixed upon the ground, he thinks,
The latest beams of light from setting sun,
Touching the far-off, floating, fleecy clouds,
Transfigures them to silver, red and gold,
Giving promise of a bright tomorrow.
The tiresome toils of day are nearly o'er
And soon the man will seek his farmhouse home
To find a needed rest, and needed cheer.
For years he's tilled these acres broad and grand
And once they yielded largest crops of grain
That surely brought a large and glad reward;
But now, they give each year a lessening yield
And lessened price; far less than profit makes,
And, worst of all, there rests upon his land
A mortgage strong and heavy to be borne.
Although 'tis early spring and birds of song
Begin to carol sweet and thrilling lays,
There is no ray of joyous, heaven-born hope
Seen in his down-cast eyes, for well he knows
That when two score of months have fully passed
The mortgage must be met, or all be lost.
How can he part with this paternal home,
Where died loved ones, a doubly dear old home
Around which cluster fondest memories?
But hark! a sound borne by the evening breeze
Comes to his ear. It is the low tinkling
Of a bell, worn by Old Jersey, faithful cow,
As home she wends her way, to add her wealth
Of creamy store to family larder.

A sudden inspiration siezes him,
Unwonted light shines in his earnest eyes,
And words express, at last, his pent-up thoughts.
"I have it now! I'll sell my surplus stock
And all of else that I can spare, and buy
More cows, whose milk a creamery shall find
And stand in quality the highest test;
These lands, so long in use for raising grain,
Soon shall bring, the finest of red clover."
With light elastic step and happy mind,
He drives his tired, but willing horses home;
And hastening to his wife his plan unfolds
Who heartily approves with joyful tears.
Sleep quite a stranger is to both of them
Thro' all the waiting hours of restless night.
When morning comes, it sees the boys and girls,
But truly lads and lasses, strong for work,
Tho' still gladly attending district school,
Wild with desire to try the forlorn hope
Whose onward sweep may grandly save the farm.
Soon sales are made and best of cows are bought,
And extra strong tin cans, to hold the milk
That in the early morn in summer months
To a nearby creamery plant is hauled,
Where, robbed of all its cream, and taken home
Is duly fed to chickens, pigs and calves.
The farming work goes on with rapid pace.
The lower lands to different grass seeds sown
Will give a varied pasture for the stock
Ere spring time's copious showers are passed
Red clover seed is cast among the wheat,
Oats, rye or cheat, put in the previous fall,
While buckwheat, vetches, flaxseed, rape and peas,
Find place with timothy already grown.
In garden plot fine vegetables are raised,
While in one field is planted best of corn,
And also one to Ireland's staff of life.
Good breeds of chickens, hogs and goats or sheep
Are bought, and some Italian honey bees.
Choice bushes, vines and trees, for nuts or fruit

Are set on rolling land, to give return
Certain and large in future years, and thus
In most helpful ways and intensive form
This wise man diversifies his farming.
Ere early fall a silo's built, in which
The fast ripening corn, cut all to shreds,
Is snugly stored, to feed in wintry weather.
The land in corn, unturned by plow, in fall
Is sown to wheat, that, next year harvested,
Shall give a valued food for household needs,
And farm as well; but none for foreign lands.
A windmill, large and very strong, is built
With iron chopper thereunto attached
To crush the grain for all the feeding.
The months pass quickly by and lo! the farm,
So long run down, now wears the brightest look
Of general thrift, with buildings painted,
Fences in repair, while shrubs adorn
The spacious lawn, and climbing roses
Deck the home, with vines for shade and flowers.
Meanwhile the generous soil has richer grown
From down-turned clover sod and compost heap.
The legal day at last comes on, but brings
No dread. It sees the mortgage satisfied
With money earned and saved; not being spent
For unnecessary goods, or harmful things.
Ah! mortgagee, no matter who thou art,
If 'twas thy hope to get that goodly home,
~~For half its worth, 'twere perchance well that thou~~
And others loaning gold with like intent
Should not forget that often ye may have
To reckon with the cow, ere land is sold.
That night within the farmer's peaceful home
Is heard the song of praise, a heart-felt song
Of glad deliverance, and of thanks to God
For all the creatures of His providence
That minister unto the wants of man,
Chiefest of all, the matchless, high-bred cow.