

## from SO WE GOT MARRIED

*Farming in Western Canada at the turn of the century required long hours of physical labor from both men and women. It was a hard life that often demanded practical solutions to difficult problems.*

My brother, Dan, came out early. We're from Parry Sound, Ontario, and the farming was hard there. When he bought a farm south of Russell, Manitoba, it was just a farm. A house, a poplar pole barn, and not much more and the family had no stock. They really weren't farmers and were going to Edson, Alberta,  
5 which was supposed to be a new and booming town. The man thought that his old trade of shoemaker would be good. Cobblers don't make farmers, remember that.

My brother, sure, he was a crab, as we'd say. Fifteen years older than I was, but he did get himself a wife. By advertisement. Oh, it was done a lot in  
10 them years. There were newspapers in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and he put in this advertisement and got himself a wife, and in four years they had two youngsters.

My brother wrote me to come out and get my roots down in this district, but he expected me to work for nothing. It was no life, so I went into town and worked at one of the livery barns.

75 Then Dan got all tangled up in a four-horse team and a breaking plow and that killed him.

We had the funeral and it was put on by Dan's lodge, all the men. It was held on a Sunday. Mary said, after all, it was no time to take a day off for a funeral.

20 I drove Mary home. There was cows to milk so I did the barn work and then I went up to the house. I just put the milk into the pig trough and what was left I just threw away. You see, something was on my mind.

I went to the house and I asked Mary what her plans were. I asked her if she was going to leave the farm and she said, "Where would I go?" She had  
25 been a governess or lady companion or both in Winnipeg for the Stratton family, but what could she do with two little kiddies?

So we had supper that night and when the kids were in bed I said that the best thing would be if I married her. I remember her saying, "Yes, I've been thinking that myself. We're the same age. Dan was too old for me and I think  
30 we can make it work. There's no reason why not. We shouldn't let Dan's death stop us, because there's this farm to run and I'd rather have people talking about our marriage any way they want to than have them talking behind my back about you living here and working on the farm." That's not really what she said but that's what she meant.

35 Next morning after chores I hitched up and we drove into town and got married. Nobody said anything.

Accidents happened. A woman couldn't be left on a farm alone and there were a lot of weddings, quick-like. Even then, in the city, it wouldn't be done, but out in the bush, you just made up another set of rules and that's the way it  
40 was.

*Barry Broadfoot*