

Day After Day - February 1937

Dorothy Day

The Catholic Worker, February 1937, 4.

Summary: A colorful account of a winter morning at the Easton farm—warm fires and cold bedrooms, making butter, the frolics of Bessie the three month old calf. Speaks of guest rooms, hospitality, starting a Catholic lending library, and reading about cooperatives. (DDLW #316).

The January sun is pouring into the kitchen and dining room of the farm. The temperature is thirty— yesterday it was twelve at this time in the morning, and the house is perfectly comfortable with wood fires going in the two rooms. The rest of the house is of course like an ice box. We take hot bricks to bed at night. It is one of the thrills of a life time to feel one's warmth gradually permeating the icy sheets and one's breath making a corner warm for one's nose. A pleasure the inhabitants of steam-heated apartments can never know. A cup of hot coffee never tastes so good as when coming out of an ice cold room into a warm kitchen.

An interruption to go out in the kitchen and admire the butter. Rosie is giving about nineteen quarts of milk a day now and there is buttermaking every other day. This morning it took only twenty minutes to churn and I just finished sampling the bits off the wooden paddles of the churn. There are two quarts of butter milk which will be used for pudding and biscuits today.

Most Beautiful

Bessie will be three months old the 10th of February and she is still the most beautiful thing on the farm. (The O'Donnells have not yet brought their six weeks old baby Martin up here.) Bessie must weigh about 150 pounds by now, and it is the most graceful 150 pounds you ever saw. John Filliger and I took her out for a walk this morning and it is an adventure. First you have to see that Rosie is properly secured in her stall. Once when her offspring was out she broke the rope which secured her, knocked down the barn door and with cries of anguish rushed up the hill after John and the calf. She leaped and kicked, and tossed her head and expressing her fears as to her young one's safety. She doesn't want to lose this, her latest born.

This morning she moored like a fog horn a few times as we took Bessie out with a chain about her neck, but otherwise she was quiet. Bessie has sprouting horns now and a set of teeth, and she is weaned, but passing through Rosie's stall, she made a dive for her. A little more breakfast wouldn't come amiss, she indicated. But she's off milk altogether now, so we heartlessly dragged her away and out into the fields around the house.

Appreciative Sniffers

It was a good thing it was not icy out. Snorting with enjoyment, she leaped and then started to run, pulling at the chain which John had wrapped around his hand. They raced down the hill together almost to the kitchen door, and then she pulled up, prancing. Her small hoofs sounded hollow on the frozen ground and she danced a few steps gracefully, tossing her head. The dogs, Paprika and Kaiser, barked with excitement, not wanting to be out of anything that goes on.

Bessie likes the small world she has come into and went around sniffing appreciatively at the woodpile, the table under the trees where the washing up is done, and she left the print of her wet nose on every rock and log. The ax and saw she smelt of and tossed her head at them. Then she was off again, this time up the hill, bounding madly in the cold sweet air. She is just as clean and white as when she was born and we are indeed proud of her.

The four black pigs are growing stout and lusty. When John goes out to pour the skim milk into their trough they dive madly into it, feet and all. One of them is Teresa's, the present of Mr. Breen, purchased with a check from a *Commonweal* review. She can't tell the pigs apart, however, and each time she comes to the farm on a holiday she has to pick one out all over again. "It's the one with the straight tail," she will say, and then the unaccommodating pig curls his tail up scornfully.

Guest Rooms

Part of the house of hospitality has moved down to Easton. As we have explained before, our idea of hospitality means that everyone with a home should have a guest room. We have pointed out before how two women who help us with the paper and who are interested in our ideals, have moved into tenement apartments down at Mott Street and take in those in need of hospitality in their spare rooms. One of the striking stewardesses is staying in one apartment, and another woman temporarily out of employment is staying with our friend in the other.

Loretta O'Donnell has two of the girls from the House of Hospitality with her, and during the day they work over in the Easton office on South Fourth Street, where the business office now is. It is a big family now, what with two babies, and two guests whom we cannot really consider guests, since they have become part of our community during these past two years.

A Good Book

Stanley and Dan occupy the rooms in back of the store, and there they feed anyone who happens to come along. The store is big enough for meetings during the summer months when visitors abound, and we aim to start a Catholic circulating library as soon as we have money to build shelves to receive the books which are already stacked on tables in the store. All the clerical work is done there, and Stanley is building up interest in the paper by his

distribution about town. It is a headquarters such as our friends have started in Boston, Chicago, St. Louis, etc.

Lying on the couch while the chestnut logs snapped warmly in the big stove, I read Kagawa's "Brotherhood Economics," which is one of the best and simplest accounts of the cooperative movement I have come across. Peter says he links up the idea of communitarianism and cooperatives very well, and I enjoyed reading his brief account of the mutual aid movement among the early Christians and communities of monks. It is a short book, and a simple book, surveying economics from an entirely fresh angle. We recommend it to our readers.