



DAVE'S DAIRY

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Monday. I carted another ball of string on Saturday afternoon and the pit started to look a bit like a stack. But this morning it had sunk again. So I went and rang Clarkson and told him it was gaining on me and what was I to do now? He said, "Just keep going!" So today we cut another two balls, and then started carting again. It's a disappointing business, because you can't help feeling that anything you put in the pit may be out of sight in the morning and it feels as though you may be wasting your time. Anyhow, by night we had about two feet of silage above ground level and it's beginning to look as if we are getting somewhere; we still have a few loads un-carted. We are getting used to the weight of the sheaves now and it doesn't seem so bad. It's certainly not so dusty as carting hay and, as I said before, it's quicker. All the same, I'm not denying that I have a few blisters. Mary says these are an indication that I don't do enough work during the rest of the year.

Tuesday. As soon as I got up this morning I went out to have a look at the pit. It had only gone down a foot, so perhaps we've got it beaten. But when I got closer I couldn't help noticing that it smelt rather alarmingly, so I went in and rang Clarkson, and told him that my silage was going bad and what was I to do now? But he said it always smelt like that. "That's all right about that, Clarkson," I said. "But what if it gets fly-blown?" But he said that the better the silage, the better (or worse) it smelt, and everything was in order. So we cut another two balls after carting the stuff that was in the paddock, and I'm going to finish it tomorrow dinner time, whatever happens.

Wednesday. We carted the last load into the pit just before dinner. The silage was about four feet above ground level, sloping off at each end. Then this afternoon we set to work to cover it. First we shovelled some dirt right along the centre, making a track for the tractor, so it wouldn't tear the sheaves out as it was passing along. I was getting rather weary, so left the Italian doing this while I went over to Clarkson's to borrow his scoop. I had forgotten about my shorts till I got half way over, and then I thought perhaps I had better sneak back and get my best suit on. But it didn't seem to be worth it, and anyhow a chap would look rather a goat going over to borrow a scoop wearing his best suit. And I was hanged if I was going to swing on to the shovel and let the Italian go over. Anyhow, I thought, Clarkson has got to get used to the sight of me in shorts, because it doesn't look as if Mary will come across with my long pants till winter comes (cripes, what if she won't, even then?). When I got over to Clarkson's place I looked around the shed, but couldn't find him, but one of his numerous offspring said he was in having lunch. "Cripes," I thought, "this is awkward." So I went to the door and knocked. Clarkson called, "Who's there?" "Dave," I said. "Come along in and have a cup of tea, then. Don't stand out there like a giddy goat." "I can't come in. I haven't got time; I'm in a hurry," I yelled. "You come out." "The wife's just pouring you out a cup, Dave, so for goodness' sake stop playing around and come in."

"Cripes," I thought, "this is tough." So I took a hitch to my shorts, which have a habit of creeping downwards if not watched closely, and took a tug at my moustache, and opened the door and marched in. Clarkson and his wife were sitting down at the table. They didn't say anything at first. Then Mrs Clarkson blushed, and I blushed, which I shouldn't have done, because I'm sure my legs went red. Then Clarkson started to snigger. Mrs Clarkson hurriedly

left the room, muttering something about having to see to the baby. Clarkson didn't ask me to sit down, which I wanted to do, because I wanted to get my legs under the table, out of sight. He just stared. "By cripes, Dave," he said at last, "they're long, and nobby and hairy. What's the idea? Sit down and tell me." So I sat down and told him all about it. "And you look out, too," I said, when I'd finished, "or you'll be next." He didn't say anything for a minute, and during the silence we could hear Mrs Clarkson talking on the telephone. I heard her say: "But, Mary, how did you do it?" Clarkson went quite pale. "Oh, you'll soon get used to it, Clarkson," I told him. "The first year is the worst."

Then we sneaked out and he showed me where the scoop was. As I drove away he said: "Dave, do the snakes worry you much?" I said, "You wait, Clarkson; I'll bet you ten bob you'll be wearing them inside a week." He didn't say anything.

Tonight Mary was saying that Mrs Clarkson had rung her up, and she (Mrs Clarkson) thought I looked "so nice." Mary said, too, that Mrs Clarkson understood that Clarkson was thinking of wearing shorts. I wasn't surprised/

Thursday. We covered the pit this morning. The Italian had finished making the track through the centre, so I drove the tractor up and down the track for ten minutes, then we hooked the scoop on and soon covered it up. I must admit that, now it's finished, there isn't much to show for all our work -just a big hump in the paddock. The weight of the dirt on the top has made the silage sink pretty well to pit level. Anyhow, I've made a pit of silage, and one thing about it, Mr Chifley will have to come around with his bucket and spade to find it. And haven't got to fence it, or thatch it, or insure it. In fact, I can forget it till we have a drought. And at least it has spread the harvest out because the wheat and oats are still too green to cut for hay.