

It is a cold, sunny day this last Sunday in March, and as I put on my outer clothes before I went to the barn this morning, I felt just a little bit wealthy. Instead of the worn gloves I had been wearing, holes in the thumbs and threadbare throughout, I slipped on a pair of new, bright yellow, fleecy work gloves, dark blue cuffs snug against my wrists. No, I didn't feel just a little bit wealthy; I felt luxuriously prosperous.

Our work gloves of choice are the ubiquitous yellow fleece kind that "everybody" wears. They are relatively inexpensive, comfortable, and serve the purpose better than any other kind we have tried. But, in area stores, they are generally available only in a size that fits most men. I usually end up wearing them, because they are still better than the brown jersey type or any other kind.

Once in a while, though, we come across these gloves in a smaller size. Then, I buy them, and, for a time, have exactly what I need on my hands in the barn and garden.

So, when we need to go to an area farm store for something else, I always look at their selection of gloves. And, this past week, I hit the jackpot! They had the yellow gloves in a smaller size. I bought six pairs.

So, now, I am a rich person. I slip my hands into the fleecy gloves and feel their protection—the crack in my thumb that I have painted with "liquid bandage" after taking the advice of a friend is doubly guarded now. I can handle the pitchfork handle, the cold pails of water, the chain that keeps the calf pen closed—all without freezing my hands. The icy metal latch on the yard gate is no challenge. The frosty hook on the chicken coop door doesn't stick to my hands.

It is, of course, no wonder that new, warm gloves that fit make me feel wealthy. New socks give me the same feeling. In fact, it is often something quite inexpensive—or without monetary cost at all—that gives me this sense of prosperity. A new bar of soap, an unopened chocolate bar, an unread book, a letter from a friend, a new journal, a glass of iced tea on a hot day. The list is endless.

I think this is the way it should be for all of us. After all, the small pleasures do not "wear out." Even though, of course, those new gloves do become ragged and useless in time. But, with expensive items—houses, automobiles, fancy clothes, rich furnishings—the pleasure, when it fades, as it inevitably does for most people, cannot be renewed by another expensive purchase.

It isn't that way for most of us when it involves the small "luxuries" of life. When that bar of soap is used up, we are fortunate enough to be able to have a new, pristine bar to replace it. When my gloves wear out, I hope I can afford a new pair—and, I surely hope I can find that small size again. And, I know that when I have read the book that awaits me right now, I will be able to borrow another from the library.

Small pleasures are renewable; large ones sometimes are not.