

The Story of a Farm Boy.

Part V.—The Boy Goes Back to the Farm.

BY B. S. A.

The farm boy who had left his old home fourteen years before with high hopes of what his college course would reveal to him, and who had not been disappointed at the results, had, after ten years in professional agriculture, decided to return to the farm. He was going to be a back-to-the-lander, whether or not he ever became an "abandoned farmer."

Jimmy had thought long and earnestly over the proposition. As previously stated, it required no inconsiderable amount of pluck to break away from regular monthly pay checks of fairly respectable proportions and take a chance on the farm, for no one knew better than Jimmy, after his wide experiences, that farmers do take chances, at least those who get ahead or go broke.

I said before that Jimmy had done well in his profession. So he had. He had prospered and had joined the ranks of those apparently successful city people who either have money enough to call the evening meal "dinner," or do so because it is good form. It took considerable practice for Jimmy to remember to keep his coat on when going to the table, and to refrain from calling the half-past-six P.M. affair "supper." However, he had got on in the world, as his friends back home believed, and in his position was obliged to live and look the part. However, he longed for the shirt-sleeve days again, and the big roast dinners at noon, and the fried potatoes and cold ham suppers at night. With these he knew went exercise in the open air, work with living things, creation of value, production of wealth—something, to the man who loved the land, distinctly more worth while than any form of professional or other work. Jimmy had tired of the turmoil, was "fed up" with it all, and the close application to strenuous brain work had begun to get on his nerves. He desired to get

"Far from the madding crowd,"

and felt that at last he had the wherewithal necessary to make a humble, yet adequate, beginning.

Plans were laid in the home and many a night after the two bairns were tucked away in their cozy cots did he and Mrs. Jimmy discuss at length and plan minutely what was to be done. First they must choose a farm. Where would it be? This place and that came up for consideration and all had their drawbacks. It seemed that one was waiting for the other to suggest the place finally decided upon. At last Jimmy came out with it thus: "What's the matter with going back to the old home farm? I know it well. Every corner of it is as familiar to me as is each nook of this house to you. It is a good farm—big enough, fertile, well-watered, nicely located, and, with one drawback, entirely satisfactory. It has only one fault—a few stones—but no place is perfect. Besides, father is sixty-five now—too old to work as hard as he thinks he must on the farm, and mother has been in poor health for over two years. They do not want to rent the farm to strangers and they hesitate to sell, preferring that the old place, which was grandfather's, remain in the name."

Jimmy's wife was pleased that he had signified his intention of going after the old place. She remembered the big brick house, with its running water and modern conveniences, and also favored the place because of earlier associations in the neighborhood. Accordingly, Jimmy made a special visit to his people in September and talked over the whole project. His father still thought he was a bit foolish to think of breaking away from the "easy" job with his firm for the hard work of farming. But his mother noticed the grey hairs, the wrinkled brow, and the nervousness of the boy, for such he still was to her, and with tear-dimmed eye remarked: "I knew he'd come back some day and I think this is none too soon."

Plans were discussed by which the old place would keep both families. Jimmy's father had "retired" from the farm once before and stayed one year. He could not content himself in the village, and the tenant did not keep things up as he believed they should be kept on the farm. He had lived too long on the farm with plenty to do every day, and most days too much, to ever be satisfied in a town. Jimmy remembered the large number of thoroughly disgruntled, dissatisfied, uneasy, "retired" farmers he had met during his years in professional agriculture. Most of them had gone to cities or large towns with the proceeds of their farm stock and implements sale, together with the farm returns either as rent or interest, and found this not sufficient to keep them in idleness, where everything must be bought and nothing dug out of the earth, and they had been obliged to get work running street cars or as carpenters' helpers, and so on. Jimmy remembered all this and advised his father to build, on a corner of the old farm, a warm, comfortable cottage of not more than six rooms for himself and Jimmy's mother. He wanted them to have in it everything possible in the way of conveniences—running water, up-to-date sewage disposal, few steps for tired legs, a furnace to heat it, and just what rooms a good housewife in her old age, after experiencing a house too big, thinks she needs.

The plans were discussed well on into the night. All agreed to Jimmy's outline, but the main consideration was yet to be settled. Upon what arrangements would Jimmy take the farm and would his father be willing to let it go? Jimmy did not want anything for nothing, or, rather, he was willing to pay all the old farm was worth rather than take another at full value. He had seen other old men sell their farms, invest the money in mines or stock companies, and have to work hard in their declining years. He had seen boys get

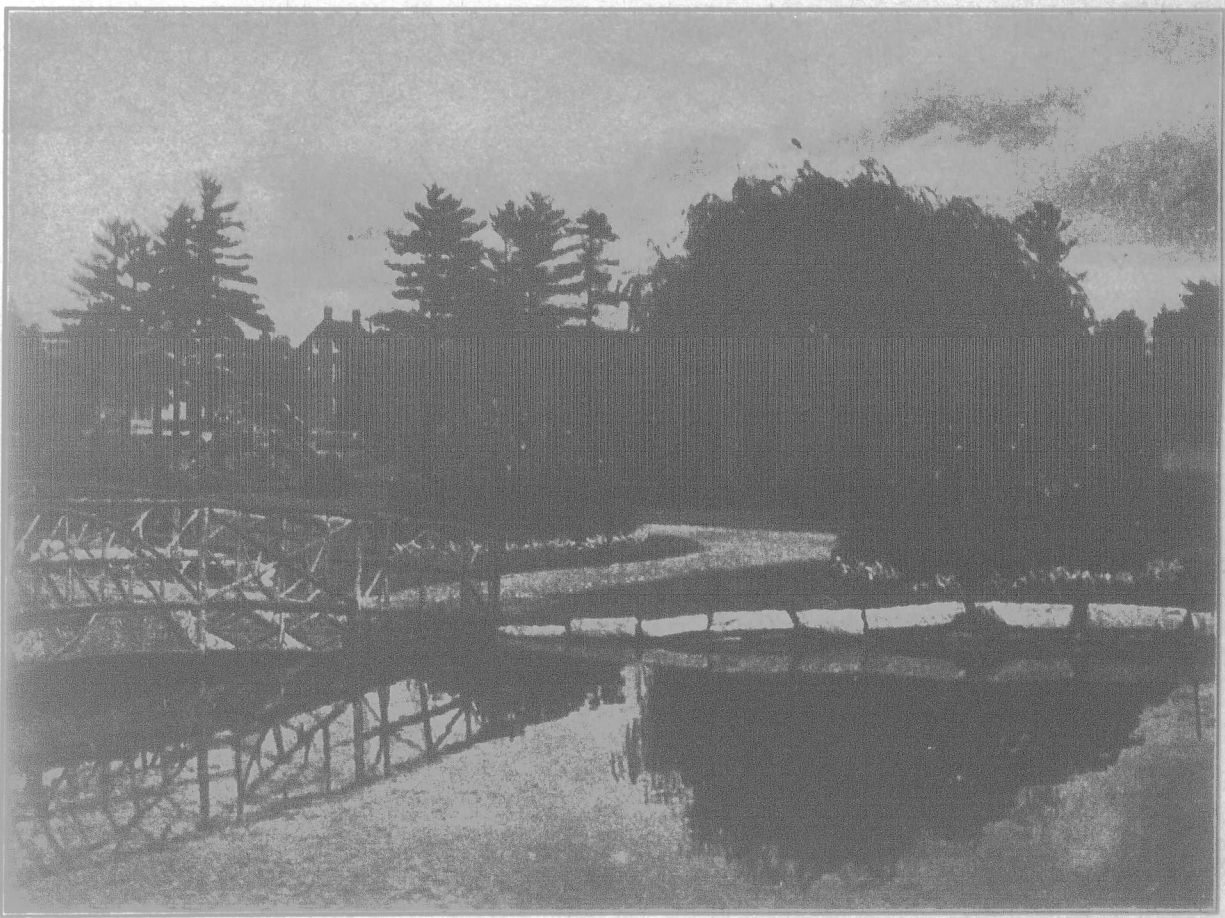
hold of their father's property and turn the old folks out to shift for themselves. He desired to be fair and advised his father to safeguard himself. This advice was unnecessary for Jimmy's father was a careful man in money matters. Jimmy still adhered to the belief that the old folks should hold the property—the farm—in their own right until they were through with earthly things. Acting on this belief, he suggested that the farm be made over to him, his father retaining a life lease of the same covering also the life of his mother, the boy getting the place and holding it only by paying an annual fee of \$550 for the \$150 acres, and the deal becoming null and void if Jimmy left the place. After considerable discussion an agreement was signed and the necessary papers sealed. Jimmy believed in doing everything in a businesslike way because he had learned from experience that trouble is avoided by having everything down in black and white. Jimmy and his family were to move into the big house and his father and mother were to have an acre of land off the corner of the farm, which faced two roads, for their cottage.

It was all settled. It was early fall and Jimmy would be back in the spring. He requested that certain fields be fall plowed, and his father immediately let the contract for the cottage which was to be completed at the earliest possible moment, for he believed that it was not wise to attempt to house two families under one roof. He wanted the new start to be made under the most favorable conditions possible and so he hurried the work of the new house for himself and "mother."

an ideal live-stock and grain farm, had four acres of young orchard which Jimmy, as a boy, had helped to plant, and boasted a fine, never-failing spring creek which means dollars and satisfaction to the live stock farmer. Jimmy returned to his professional work for another six months.

Spring was approaching. As the days of winter lengthened and the cold, as usual, strengthened just before the break-up, Jimmy became anxious to get away. The firm knew he was going. They made rosy offers to hold him, but to no avail. The die was cast. He must return to the soil. Younger men full of ginger were coming forward from the agricultural college each year. Well-trained assistants could take his place, as he had done his predecessor's, and new men could be found to "carry on" perhaps to better advantage. New blood, if it is good blood, brings new ideas.

The household goods were packed. The house was sold. City ties are more easily broken by people who like the country best than are country friends forgotten. The big vans backed up to the door and in a short time the goods and chattels were on the way to the depot to be shipped to the farm. Breaking away from the office in which he had labored for ten years and been well used was not easy at the last. The old desk was cleaned out. Soon a new face would worry over it day in and day out. The office staff were a congenial company and when the day came for Jimmy to finally say good-bye all around, and to listen to the little speech and accept the token of appreciation with which the head of the firm, before the entire staff, speeded the departing employee, he felt anything but cheerful. He made the parting as short as possible, took a last look at his old room, closed the door and turned his back upon it forever.



Attractive Home Surroundings.

Why did Jimmy choose the old farm? Why should he not? It was, as previously stated, a good farm, fertile and well built upon. How about the neighbors? They were good people, fairly progressive farmers but inclined to poke fun at "book farmers." They had a habit, as is the case in most communities, of criticizing the most progressive, while they soon found themselves following the lead of the very man they at first ridiculed. Jimmy knew the doubting Thomases. He was ready to start right in and show them, not in a braggart manner, but by quiet action, and it gave him no small amount of satisfaction to even contemplate results. He was destined to get a deal more real pleasure out of the actual results in after years. But these were not the real reasons why he chose the old farm. He wanted to hold the place in the name of his fathers. As stated in a previous part of this story, there is a bit of fine sentiment or tradition which farmers have about holding the old farm in the name. Farmers like to hand the farm—their savings—down to the sons, and sons who really like farming are always anxious to keep the land in the family name. Very often sons who have no desire to practice farming—doctors, lawyers, preachers, teachers, city business men, hold on to the old farms on which they were born, not because they are profitable under tenantry but because the owners cannot bear to have the home farm owned and controlled by strangers. Jimmy's choice was more than sentimental. It was good business. The farm was close to three steam roads and one electric railroad, and within twenty-five miles of a great city and a good market. It was

The neighbors from the fifth line made a little "bee" to get Jimmy's goods home from the station. The boxes and furniture which had been transported from the city home to the city depot in huge covered motor vans were taken from the country station to the farm house in hay racks. Many hands made light work of getting settled, and early March found Jimmy buying stock and implements.

Purchasing equipment was a new joy for the man who had worked for others for a decade. He took a pride in being his own boss—in being able to bid at an auction sale, knowing that his own purse contained the money to pay and that when purchased the stock was his own, not someone else's who paid him a salary and made money on his ability. Jimmy very wisely bought the flock of pure-bred Shropshire breeding ewes, over fifty all told, which his father had on the farm. He also purchased in a lump the implements on the place, most of which were comparatively new and in good repair. He got them much cheaper than new, and they were practically as good. For the first year considerable of the old farm was in grass, so he purchased a carload of choice feeder cattle on the nearest live-stock market and planned to grass them off. He got them home in late April and sold them the following September at a gain of \$800. His fifty pure-bred breeding ewes raised seventy lambs which sold on a high market for over \$1,200, leaving the original flock. Jimmy had thirty acres of oats and ten acres of roots and corn the first year. He was just getting started and the place

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Diary

M.A.

Common little animals are bugs, otherwise known as Pill-bugs, and Crawly-bugs, are quite frequently seen but are really not insects but are really not crustaceans, that is, and to the Cray-fishes, etc. By far the majority of the crustaceans, in fact they are a large group which hold the same position in point of number of species and of life in the waters, both salt and fresh water, as do the insects on land. The Sow-bugs we find which live in the sea, in the water, and on land, the marine, while the land are our only common

and Sow-bugs in Canada. *Porcellio rathkei*, a species, has no common name, but is distinguished from all longitudinal lines on its back. Three-striped Sow-bug. *Porcellio scaber*, may be seen on its upper surface. Its name, the Rough common name. *Ranunculus convexus*, a species, is distinguished by its appearance, but its habit of folding itself up when disturbed. This species like the name *Convex*. A fourth species, which is not common in Canada, will be seen that the name derived from that of the al which has the power of covering itself when disturbed. This Sow-bug is a perfect ball, and is the name "pill-bug." It is a valuable substance. As a material of no economic value, it attacks potato tubers, etc. In cases of such attacks it is effective.

It is not uncommon in species is about half an inch long. It occurs in large numbers and has a number of silver-grey spots. It is called Slicker, Fish-louse, Silver-lice, Silver-lice.

It is light and has the power of concealment, it is very active, it runs very fast, due to the scales on its back, it is impossible to catch the

very considerable amount of starch paste and glue, these substances it eats which have been stiffened by the gold lettering on the back of wall-paper.

It is common in cases where it is for long periods, and is noticeable where books, etc., are away for some time in a closet.

This fact gives us the reason—frequent hand-kerchiefs are very abundant following bait—a paste of arsenic. The arsenic added, and it is deadly.

It is common only during the winter months, it is abundant in houses in winter weather.

It requires that all persons who have as well as property warfare by the enemies without delay. These things of ships without including commander-ment is called to the does not imply that the claims at the peace if put forward they do merely to enable the if the occasion arises. In the Under-Secretary