



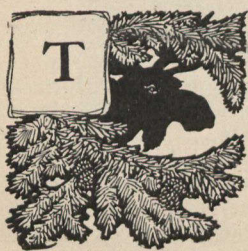
A Field of Tobacco Ready for Harvesting.



A Field of the Plant which Sir Walter Raleigh Loved.

# THE TOBACCO SITUATION IN ESSEX

By A. P. McKishnie



THE tobacco situation in Essex County this year is the climax of a series of peculiar see-saws, resulting from the great bane of the industry—the instability of price. Since tobacco was first grown successfully and profitably, right to the present day, the same series of see-saws have continued.

One year would see a large crop and low prices; the next would disclose a small crop, with prices universally high. One year, prices would soar to the top notch, and as a result, the next year would see every farm dotted with tobacco patches. Many farmers, growing tobacco just for the money in it, without expert knowledge of the weed, would produce much tobacco, albeit of a poor quality. The tobacco market would be glutted, resulting in a fall in price. The ensuing year, the field would be left to the professional growers, and prices would

gradually rise again to satisfactory rates.

The year 1907 saw one of the largest crops in the history of south-western Ontario. One third of that crop is still unsold. In March, 1908, the entire crop was practically untouched by the buyers, and farmers would have gladly sold out for three or four cents a pound. The price just now is six and one-half cents; but even at that, there is much tobacco which will never be marketed.

As a result of the tobacco glut, this year's acreage is small. Tomatoes and sugar beets, contracted for with the canning factories and sugar factories beforehand, promise surer returns than tobacco, in which, the growers complain, there is only one thing certain, and that is uncertainty. The tobacco this year will be, however, of good quality, barring damage by the rains, which seem to have affected it in some districts.

Many growers now entertain the hope that a new era is about to dawn, wherein the industry will be placed on a firmer footing. The government's action in subjecting home-grown and imported

tobacco to the same stamp, thus placing them on a par, gives promise that a market for cigar tobacco will be created.

In the past the acreage has been practically all devoted to Burley tobacco—a standard chewing variety. Cigar leaf has not been attempted, save experimentally, in this district. Experts declare, however, that several good qualities of cigar leaf, notably Virginia and Spanish Zimmer, can be grown here. This fact, and the added fact that Virginia is being actually grown in Colchester Township at the present moment, has led to the establishment of a factory in Leamington for the manufacture of stogies from the Canadian leaf.

The outlook is that, with a small crop this year, prices will rise. Next year's acreage will be largely given to cigar leaf tobacco, and this will tend to prevent another over-production of Burley, with a consequent drop in price. The creation of a market for Canadian cigar leaf, coupled with improved methods of curing the weed, are expected to help in putting the industry on a firmer basis.

## The Bean Crop in Kent County

BETWEEN sixty-five and seventy thousand acres of beans are now being harvested in Essex and Kent counties. It is anticipated that the yield of this acreage will be 1,625,000 bushels. This is a conservative estimate of the buyers. Many of the growers look for a much greater yield. Certainly, not in many years has the bean crop presented an outlook more promising than at the present moment.

Growing conditions have on the whole been exceptionally favourable, although the heavy rains experienced in certain sections of late have to a certain extent had an injurious effect upon the now ripening plant. Many fine crops of beans have been "scalded" so badly that, even though the yield itself in point of quantity should remain unaffected, the sample of the outfit is likely to be inferior. This condition, however, is by no means general; and to-day the outlook throughout the entire bean-growing district is for a splendid crop and a good quality of bean.

Last year, on account of a series of late spring frosts, capped by the memorable frost of July 2nd, the bean crop went short some 200,000 bushels. These spring frosts made replanting absolutely necessary in many sections; and as a result, a large number of late crops of beans were damaged by the early autumn frosts. This year's crop has not had—nor will it have—any of these drawbacks to contend with. The harvest is weeks earlier than usual, and there will be practically no late beans on the market.

The acreage planted this year has been considerably in excess of that last year, particularly in southern sections. Individual farmers in many parts of Kent County are growing, this year, as much as fifty acres of beans. Some have sown even more extensively. The increased acreage is a factor to be reckoned with in estimating the crop of 1908.

It is generally conceded that, from the outset, the new beans will command a fair price. In other years, it has not been unusual for old beans to be held over; last year, indeed, cases were instanced of

farmers who had held their beans for as much as three years for an expected rise in price. This year however, there are practically no old beans to be had, the crop of 1907 and previous years being to all intents and purposes thoroughly cleared out by the end of July. Hence, the crop of 1908, when it appears, will have the market all to itself.



A Field of Beans in Kent County, Ontario.