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FIRST-DAY Impressions of being a "Patriotic" on a big farm near a city. All who want to help this food situation by economy will note what difficulties in the way of garnering a fat crop the Lord put in the way of Little Father.

A DOCTOR'S motor spilled me out at the end of a long lane bordered with locust trees, fringed by ten acres of fall wheat stooks, and blocked by a large plaster cast house. From that to the dairy was a hop, to the drive-shed a step and a good-sized jump landed you into an expansive barnyard with two large barns looming over a gang of loose young Clyde horses and thirty Holstein cattle that looked like huge blots of ink on a bank of snow.

It was about five o'clock when I was introduced to the lady of the house—Little Mother with two small boys—and shown to a bedroom. I was informed that Little Father—nobody on the farm called him that, however—could be found in an oatfield back over the railway track.

So I followed my nose and went, observing that the railway was the length of another field of oats—all in stook—back from the barn, an 18-acre field, as I learned later, neighbouring on a twelve-acre field of wheat, cut, but not stooked as yet. So here in one sector of that farm firing line were 40 acres of crops, all more or less ready to be yanked barn-wards.

As I got up the grade of the railway and glanced back over what seemed to be a huge and beautiful valley with the house and barns on the edge of it, I could see in the distance along the main road another lake of cut wheat—not stooked as yet; 14 acres in that, as I was told next day.

Count this and you get 54 acres, all ready to come in.

The part of the farm cut off by the railway had, in the midst of it, a ten-acre field of corn, flanked to the right by a twelve-acre patch of oats, on the far edge of which a new self-binder seemed to be pushing three Clydesdale horses in my direction. I found out subsequently that to the left of that cornfield was another large field of oats ready to be stooked:

On a rough estimate I could account for 75 acres of crop all ready to come in. As I sat on the fence waiting for Little Father to come clacking along on his three-horse chariot, I noticed a third barn off to the right of the others; one of those old-style, weather-beaten barns that look as though they were intended to be always empty. Later investigations showed that this barn was crammed to the peak with hay, and that the horse-barn and the cattle-barn with the grain-barn above it, held the balance of more than 100 tons of timothy, clover and alfalfa.

This arithmetical diagnosis of a 200-acre farm is put down as a rough prelude to Little Father the apex of it all, the man on the machine, the cheerful, energetic soul of the whole picturesque aggregation of crops, cattle and barns. If I had never travelled the trails of a real Ontario farm before, I might have imagined Little Father as about twice the size of a man in a movie. To wrestle that 200-acre farm with its 30 Holsteins, 16 horses, and machinery of eleven species to a finish once every year; to come at it from the barnyarded white days of winter, feeding and stabling horses, siloing and chop-stuffing the stalled cattle and cleaning out the stalls, milking the 14 cows and canning the milk to send daily to Toronto, cross-cutting wood on the chip-hill—from this five months of restful ease, oh ye townsmen! to grind up one's loins for the springtime seeding and from thence until late frost to keep booting over that farm from peep of day until plumb dark, would need either a gang of men or one man built on the plan of Hercules.

But Little Father, third in generation from the Britisher who had chopped half that farm from the bush, could have been chucked into one of Hercules' side pockets; and in his normal condition as God took care of him, he was as much man-alone on that 200 acres as the Ancient Mariner on the sea.

The binder hummed itself to a halt. The three horses, shiny with sweat, stretched their necks as Little Father rammied the twelve-foot gad into its socket and from his high perch looked down at me. He had on about as many clothes as a bathing-girl.

"Are you the patriotic the Doctor told me about?" he said.

"Probably," I admitted. "Have you any others?"

"Two came to-day. An old gentleman and his son. They're over beyond stookin' oats. He doesn't need to work; does it to help on a bit; never worked on a farm before. His son is a school lad—both from the city. By George, I'd have been without help on this farm altogether if I hadn't induced my brother to leave this job in the city. Now, how long do you want to work?"

Little Father



On The Farm By Augustus Bridle

I intimated a week and a half or so. As the weather looked good for two weeks of harvest days, I imagined that ten days' shocking and hauling would not leave enough of his crop out to worry him.

"And what wages—?"

"Don't mention it just now," I interrupted. "I'll know better in a day or so whether I'm worth what I've got in my mind."

Little Father didn't seem to be excessively meek. But I knew right well he would have been vexed if I had named a ridiculous figure and because I couldn't get it, decided to walk back to the suburban station again.

"Ever work on a farm?" he asked.

"I—have."

"Oh! Know what to expect, then?"

"Yes. But I beg to be excused from milking cows and cleaning out stables. Shocking and pitching are my preference."

"Ever build—?"

"Loads? Oh, yes, but I prefer pitching on. You'd haul with two waggons, I'll keep them going."

"Well, guess you needn't start in till morning. I'm going to change teams in a few minutes and cut till dark. My brother's coming back with three fresh horses."

"Oh excuse me!" said I. "If I can get a bite to eat I'll shock oats right here till the binder quits."

I went back to the house, got into my overalls, had supper, of which one item was eggs laid that day, and went back to the field.

Shocking can be done in about as many ways as smoking. To get the real joy of the job you hug the sheaves. Ten to one you hug Canada thistles in every other field. These historic decorations belonging mainly to run-down farms or clay banks along new ditches have started colonies on many a good farm this year because men like Little Father couldn't for the love of money get hired help to cut them in the month of June before they blossomed.

I shocked till dusk and went up with the Clydesdales that clumped out to the iron trough for a drink pumped by Niagara from 160 feet below, past the Holsteins milked by Niagara and now heaping themselves in the yard for a glorious cud-chew, into stables lighted by Niagara. His work was done for the