



Everything Begins and Ends with the Soil

The CANADIAN THRESHERMAN & FARMER CANADA'S LEADING AGRICULTURAL MAGAZINE

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THE BOY AND THE CORN

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IN ANY COMMUNITY, the most ineffective if not the most obnoxious individual is the man who will sit back in his chair and give away to reminiscences. Reminiscences are fine things in season, but they are worse than a weariness to the flesh when they are out of season. When they are fragments of a past that calls aloud for decent burial, the man who indulges in them should be relegated to some spot where nothing is looked for in the way of development. A man of this class who is permitted to be at large among progressive people does more damage to society than twice his weight in free-handed wickedness.

YET WE HAVE HIM EVERYWHERE. There is a growing disposition, however, to treat him as a joke—to regard him as something that cannot be got rid of, because the law forbids certain forms of extermination. But the moral weight of this man is fortunately

beginning to shrivel up, and in the New West we hope one day to find that he will finally evaporate—dried up by the sheer indifference and neglect of his audience—like the man who could no longer find some one to listen to his spell-binders and died (so the autopsy proved) from suppressed fiction.

TO BE MORE PARTICULAR, we think of a type of man who had the luck some twenty-five or thirty years ago to acquire a section of fat land that had never been plowed, say in Southern Manitoba. He started wheat-raising and went at it solidly till (as in every case where one will be "a whole man to one thing at a time") he made his pile, sold his depleted land at a fancy price and "retired" to spend his days in flooding the village with reminiscences. Yet, forsooth, this is the man who is sometimes pointed to by a select coterie of locals as an "experi need farmer;" who has "made good" in farming, and whose opinion as to what ought and ought not to be done is regarded as the last word in successful agriculture.

ONE OF THE "CANT'S" in this man's long list of impossibilities is that one which says: "You can't grow corn in Manitoba; I tried it years ago and it was a farce—you can't ripen it in the short season." Now if the country had been left at the mercy of such men as this, what would even our seed wheat have come to, not to speak of corn? But for the Burbanks and Saunders's—the Seager Wheelers, and the enterprising crowd of men who are handling the thing from a purely commercial basis, where would horticulture and agriculture be in North America to-day?

WHEAT, OATS, FLAX AND BARLEY may now be left to take care of themselves so far as indigenous or acclimatized products are concerned. Alfalfa is quickly finding its place in the confidence of the people; what is wanted is some baptism of ginger upon the corn crop; and co-operative interest and effort of all sorts to the end that it cannot suffer

from neglect, that it shall have the same chance to establish itself as a staple product as those other cereals which have spelt fortune to so many men and have given to Western Canada a first place in the world's food markets.

MINNESOTA A FEW YEARS AGO suffered from this same fatuous scepticism as a corn growing state, but last year a sixteen-year-old boy came out with a crop of 135.14 bushels of corn to the acre, and was acclaimed champion of the Gopher State. He applied nothing unusual in his method of cultivation. The contest in which he took part (conducted by the extension division of the Agricultural College and a Minneapolis newspaper) was carefully supervised from start to finish. His winning sample was ripe and well matured and the record (one which has never been exceeded in the Northwest) was declared valid.

ON THE HEELS OF THIS RECORD came another boy with 130.8 bushels. He also worked by ordinary methods of cultivation and his cost of production including all items of expense recognized in farm accounting was only \$15.08—a little more than eleven cents a bushel. The total profit was \$76.46, a result that must surely satisfy the most greedy expectation. As an indication of progress, it may be stated that the boy who had to surrender to the 1912 champion the supreme position in corn growing won his spurs two years ago with 106 bushels on an acre. The 1912 hero (Arthur Hoese) gets a \$200.00 scholarship to the State School of Agriculture at St. Paul as his well-earned recompense for intelligent and persistent effort in shepherding his corn.

FURTHER POINT IS GIVEN TO these fine records by the fact that there were many who obtained yields of 100 bushels an acre and rather better than this. More than 50 boys and girls secured from 90 to 100 bushels per acre and not one of the 45 young folks who ranked highest found the cost of production greater than \$29.00; most of them did not spend more than \$20.00 in raising their crops. The girl champion, Florence Stenger, is of the same age as young Hoese. At Sauk Center in the northern section of the State, she raised 97.5 bushels, the highest yield in her section. Gophers and windstorms damaged her crop in its early stages, but she replanted her missing hills, cultivated six times and—"that's all there was to it."

THAT WE HAVE NO RECORDS LIKE THESE in Western Canada is simply due to the fact that the same interest has not been given to the industry. Climatic disabilities are more imaginary than real. The advantages and disadvantages as between Minnesota and Manitoba are probably about equally balanced. Here is a golden opportunity for our College Extension divisions. Why not follow the lead of Minnesota and give the boys and girls the same substantial incentive? There are no enthusiasts like the young folk, and this is a case in which young blood will surely win.