

"Every Little Bit Added to What You've Got"— It's the Little Things that Count. A Few Extra Bushels Here and There Fill the Bin.

It is not easy to admit that you have been short-sighted, even to a friendly brother-in-law who has helped you out. Johnston had just made such an admission to Howard.

"Yes," he said, "if you refused to help me, they would have cleaned me out. I wouldn't have had enough left to keep Molly and the boys until the next harvest. There probably wouldn't have been any next harvest, for they would have taken seed and all."

"It wasn't quite so bad as all that, was it?" Howard asked.

"Yes, it was worse. I was licked. I suppose that's why I followed your orders. I did a lot of trifling jobs just because you said so 'em and I'd agreed to follow orders when you loaned me the money. Now I'm beginning to see why you insisted on their being done."

"Nothing very mysterious about it, is there, Johnston?"

"No mystery at all. Only good, sound, horse-sense. But I was working in the dark and couldn't grasp even the simple reasons, then."

"You were pretty foggy, that's right," Howard responded.

"You see I couldn't forget that when we took up this land neither of us had much," Johnston continued. "I had Molly and you had Ruth, and all of us were young and strong. Our farms were the same size and one was just as good as the other. We all worked hard and saved where we could. I know I worked as hard as anybody could and—"

"You certainly did, Johnston."

"—and I never was extravagant. Yet I never more than broke even while you made money year after year. I always thought you were luckier than I was. You see I wasn't looking into things deep enough to find the real reason why I wasn't getting along."

Howard interrupted him again, laying a friendly hand on Johnston's shoulder.

"That was just it. You were not thinking enough. You worried too much about results and did not think enough about causes."

"You've put it right, Howard, but I'll say it plainer yet. I worked all right from the ears down, but from the ears up I was away on a long vacation."

"There are a lot of fellows in your class," Howard observed. "No, I won't say in your class, but rather, in the class you were in. They don't realize how little things count. They don't see that if they're breaking even raising twenty bushels per acre, they'd be making a profit if they raised twenty bushels and a half. You didn't see that either, at first."

"I see it plain enough now."

"I know you do and I'm mighty glad that I was the one to help you get your eyes open. I wish I could do as much for a lot of other fellows I know. There's Smith, for instance. He did the same thing this Spring you used to do; he put off killing gophers until after he finished his Spring work and now look at his grain! There are spots in the fields five rods square where he won't have one-third of a crop. The gophers stole his seed. He put out poison, but he waited until too late."

"I noticed that, myself. And I remember how I bucked, Howard, when you insisted on my killing the gophers first thing that Spring. I thought you were crazy to insist on me letting all my Spring work go hang while I killed a few measly gophers."

"But you found out it paid, didn't you?" Howard asked.

"Sure, I found it paid. I don't know how much exactly, for I never kept books on my farm before. As near as I can tell, though, I had about four bushels and a half more wheat per acre than the year before. Paid! You're right, it paid!"

"How much land did you have in wheat that year?"

"One hundred and ten acres."

"Pretty nearly five hundred bushels more, eh?"

"Yes. And it was mostly clear profit. I just about broke even the year before."

"That's how it works out, Johnston. It's the same way with deeper plowing, extra harrowing, to get a better seed bed, testing seed, and all those little extra details."

"You remember I said you could make your crop quicker, if you gave the land an extra harrowing before you put in your seed. Was your crop ever ready to harvest so early before?"

"Never. It's mighty lucky you had me do that, too. Remember how the storm got Ryan's wheat next to mine the day after I finished harvesting?"

"How did he come out on it?"

"He didn't save more than half. He's one of the fellows who sympathized with me over the way you were making me waste my time."

"I'm glad you came to me, Johnston. I wanted to help you out long before. I hated to see my sister having such a hard time, but I didn't want to meddle. All the time I could see that you were on the wrong track in little things; the big problems didn't stick you at all, but you didn't seem to see the value of these little things, and I'll admit, seemingly insignificant details."

"You're right, Howard. I probably would have resented your pointing my mistakes out to me. I used to think I was pretty well informed and fairly wise. But, believe me, I've learned a big lesson."

"Yes, I think you have. I know it, for I saw you putting out gopher poison less than a week before you harvested."

"I have you to thank for that. You put me wise to a lot of little kinks in this farming business—things that often make the difference between profit and loss."

"My gopher experience is only one of them. There was also the idea that the only way I could stop the leaks was to find them and that book-keeping was the sure way to do that."

"The importance of storage bins was another thing; they enable me to hold my crop for the best price. I paid for them the first year. Then there was the question of better harvesting. I saved a lot of grain that had been wasted before. It ran into considerable extra money without increasing the cost."

"I always was skeptical about pickling seed. I couldn't see how treating it with formaldehyde would keep out smut. But after doing it, my grain graded higher than it ever did before and that meant more, too."

"Success in this game seems to me to be a combination of little things, little increases made all along the line and little leaks stopped up. There's

nothing that typifies it to me so much as my experience of gophers. If any man will take the time to watch them a little, he'll see how they hold him back. If he gets rid of them, he'll increase his yields three or four bushels to the acre. If he follows up the other points that he's sure to find, when he gets active from the ears up, he'll begin to get somewhere."

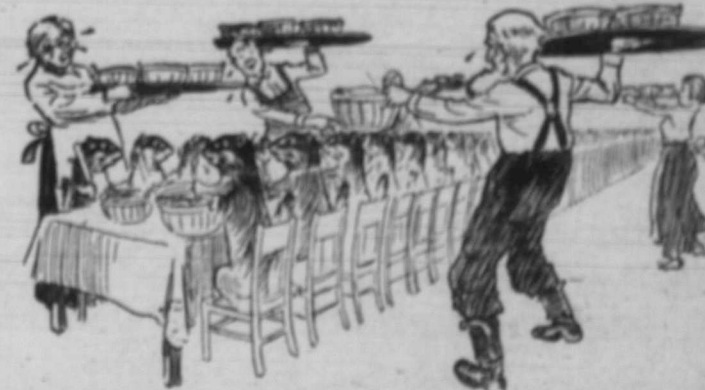
"And I learned another thing. It doesn't pay to buy anything just because it is offered cheap. The best is always the cheapest when you count results. And I find it pays to look for the article that is guaranteed by a real guarantee on which the manufacturers will make good. If the goods are really backed up by a guarantee, it is because the manufacturer knows they won't fail."

"And I used to buy gopher poison by the size of the package. I'd always take the biggest package the money would buy. I knew that one kind was guaranteed but I supposed that was only advertising talk. You remember how sore I was when you insisted on my taking that first lot of poison back and getting Kill-Em-Quick, the kind you used. I've learned to pay attention to what the Agricultural Colleges tell us. I know now that the size of the package has nothing to do with it; it's the killing power that counts, how many gopher deaths it contains."

Howard leaned his elbows on the gate and gazed across Johnston's splendid field of wheat, turning yellow under the sun. He slowly nodded his head in confirmation of all that Johnston had said. Finally he spoke.

"Wouldn't it be fine, if every Canadian only knew the lesson you have learned? Can you think of any better way for every man to 'do his bit' than by raising the limit crop, all that his land can bring forth, and save all the tremendous waste that 'failure' farming causes? What a service it would be to the nation!"

"What a service, also, to every man who does it!" added Johnston.



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