



*Willowbank.*

Mr. Johnson built Willowbank a few years ago on the site of the old Alison place. The old Alison place wasn't particularly appealing and Mr. Johnson has a picture to prove it, but it did have a wonderful view. The Johnsons' white frame farmhouse is large and sunny with a pillared front porch and great big rooms. David sits down in the drawing room—a dazzling place with a bow of windows, a huge fireplace, a moulded ceiling, walls painted to match the walls of a house in Williamsburg, Virginia, a piano, an organ and a great many paintings of dogs and horses—and recounts the history of the Alisons and the Starrs. Sometimes he's directly, if remotely, involved.

A few years ago he and his children noticed a large, odd depression in the ground, and they dug up 1,500 old glass bottles. One of the early Starrs had been a devoted user of Davin's Vegetable Pain Killer, and when he finally succumbed to arthritis, his widow buried his supply. Mr. Johnson had the tonic in one of the bottles analyzed and found that it contained digitalis and morphine as well as less powerful vegetables.

While Mr. Johnson is talking, Rebecca, the 12-year-old, comes in with a shaky-legged, newborn black Suffolk lamb, which she sets up on the oriental rug. Rebecca started the family flock with a 4-H lambkin which took first place at the provincial fair. Mr. Johnson then bought a couple of ewes, which produced a series of twins and triplets. The Suffolks are all born black but they soon fade into perfectly respectable sheep. After the flock was underway Mr. Johnson noticed that handcrafted articles were bringing good prices,

and the fleece is now sold as yarn and to local craftsmen who make vests.

The Johnsons also have a Bluetick Hound, a Border Collie, a couple of Parson Jack Russell Terriers, forty head of cattle, two champion German jumpers, a few regular riding horses and endless acres of McIntosh, Red Delicious and Gravenstein apples and strawberries that are sold to pick-your-own customers. To make the apples handy the trees are pruned to under ten feet, and the orchards have wide roads so the drivers can go right up to the trees. That way, as Mr. Johnson notes, they are likely to pick an extra ten or fifteen pounds.

The pickers come from all over the province and from Newfoundland, retired farmers, young married couples, people with kids and a lot of people who used to live in the Valley and return for nostalgia as well as fruit. At the height of the picking seasons, June and July for berries, August and September for apples, Willowbank draws a thousand pickers a day. Many of the pickers and most of the tourists also go to see the collection of nineteenth century sleighs and carriages, all tip-top shiny, in the big red barn.

A few miles inland, at New Ross, is the sixty-acre Ross Farm, a remarkable contrast, for as near as the imagination of man can make it, it is an authentic, early nineteenth century, working Nova Scotia farm. It produces lumber, peas, carrots, beans and small crops of several kinds of wheat. The compact farmhouse was built by Captain Ross, one of Wellington's officers, in 1817 and it has, indoors and out, a look of hard-scrabble