

They thought I would have to unload it and had packed it accordingly. All the loads after that were built properly, and it was comparatively easy to load, but I was now sick and disgusted with life on a German farm, and resolved to get sent back to Minden at the earliest opportunity. About this time we had a wet spell, which lasted a few days, so the haying was postponed till the weather should get finer.

I was now occupied on various jobs, one of which was the making of straw bands to be used in binding the sheaves when the grain would be cut. These were all made before cutting time and kept in the loft. Another chore was the cutting of the chop. Bundles of straw and hay were passed through an ordinary chopping box, which was worked by horse power. My job was to carry the chop upstairs in a large basket. As it had to be carried down again to be used, it seemed a waste of labor, but it was the only place they had to store anything. Toward the end of July one of the cows had a calf which was born dead. Next day the butcher came from town and killed her. She was skinned and hoisted up to set, after that the carcass was divided up and taken away, but the farmer retained the heart, liver, etc., for his own use, and girls were kept busy making sausages. I suddenly discovered that I did not like the taste of sausage and turned vegetarian right away. By now the crop was in splendid shape, the rye being over six feet high, whilst the wheat equalled any I have ever seen. One night we had a bad storm and a good deal of the grain was flat next morning, but a few days of sunshine soon brought it upright again.

The prisoners working on the farms were being paid the large sum of thirty pfennings a day (six cents), and were compelled to work hard. I was sick of it all, so I refused point blank to work any more. After two weeks of confinement I was taken back to Minden, and whilst there, I had an opportunity to study the work in harvest time. Although not actually employed on the job, I was able to take note of what was going on. The grain was cut with a scythe attached to which was a cradle which left it on the ground ready for tying. Women and children followed on and tied the bundles with the bands which had been made during the summer. After them came the prisoners who would stook the sheaves in long windrows, and all the grain cut that day was stooked on end before knocking off time. After the sheaves had matured and were dry, they were loaded up and taken to the barn where they were unloaded and carefully stacked to await the coming of the threshing machine. I saw two machines in operation, one was a gasoline outfit, and the other a steam rig, the fuel used being wood, of which there was an abundant supply. The separator was one of the old-fashioned hand feed variety, and generally did a clean job.

The straw came out intact, the grain being pounded out of the ears, leaving them on the straw. The grain was sacked and carried by the prisoners up some steps to the loft where it was emptied out on to the floor. The straw was bound up by the women into large bundles and passed from hand to hand till it reached its resting place in the part of the loft where it belonged. This was used for bedding and chopped up for feed when it was required. Government officials took note of the amount of grain that the farmer threshed, and he would be compelled to keep track of and account for every bushel during the following year. A good many dodges were devised, however, to cheat the government and many a bushel of rye has been hidden away unknown to the inspector. The farmers in Germany are better off than all the rest of the population, and they have food to eat and to spare whilst the rest of the people are suffering from the pangs of hunger. Spies, however, abound all over the country, and the farmer has to be always on the alert to prevent himself from getting into trouble. One day whilst we were at dinner on the farm I was astonished to see the Frau grab the dish of meat off the table and hastily hide it in a trunk that did duty for a cupboard. Before I could inquire the reason a gendarme walked into the house. He had brought a paper for Windheim to fill in. He had to show how many pigs, chickens, cows, etc., he had, and the amount of acres he had under cultivation, also of what they consisted. When the gendarme had gone the Frau produced the dish

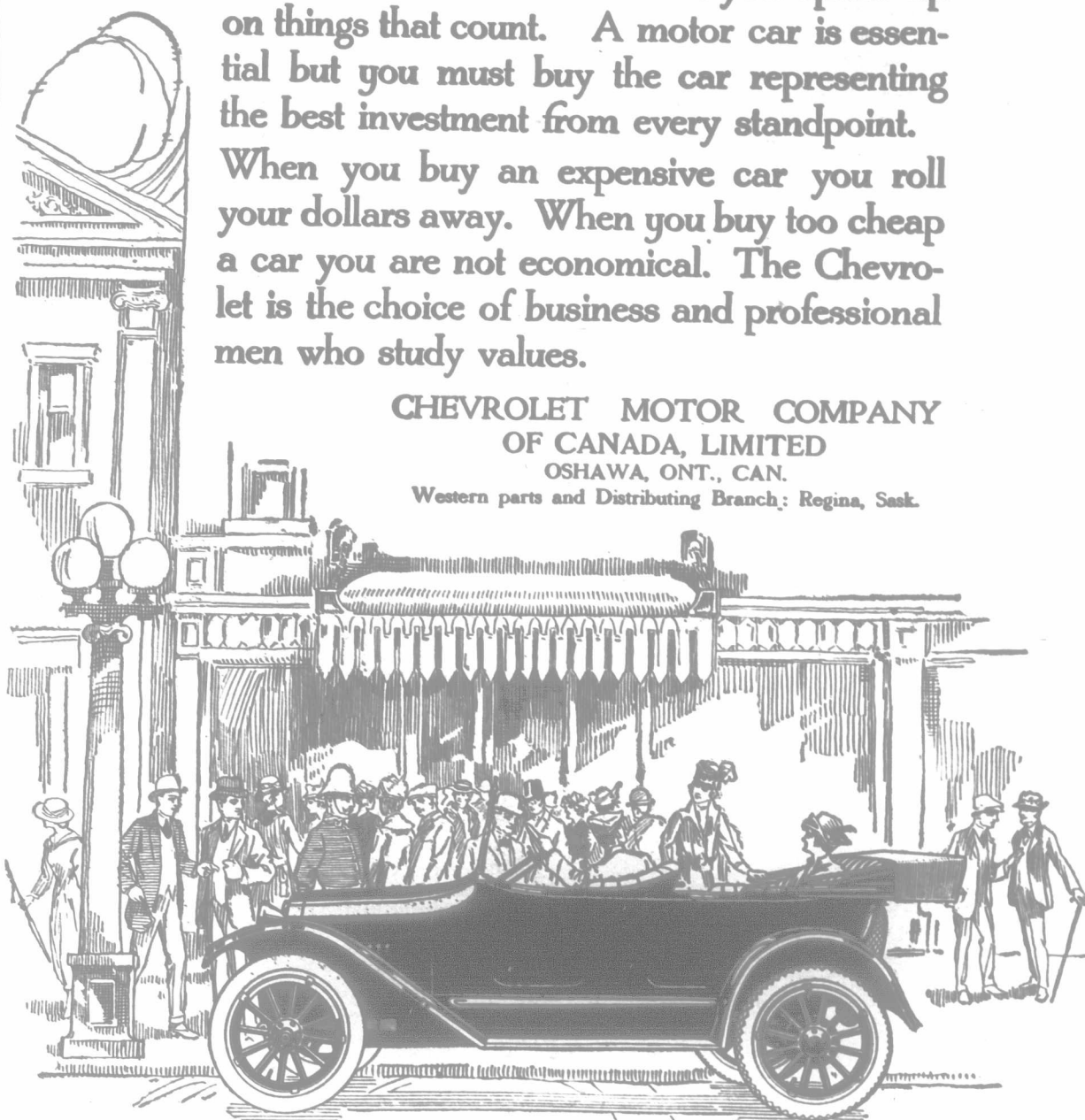


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