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The Grain Grower's Guide

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The Farm Boy Who Went Back

JOHNNY WORTMAN hated the farm. He rose at half-past three or four o'clock every morning, fed and carried his team, and ran to the pasture for the cows. His bare feet stung, and he would warm them where the cows had lain. He turned the cows to the calves, milked, drove the cows back to the pasture, and breakfasted. By half-past five he was in the field to plow, to harrow, or to cut hay; or in the truck-patch to hoe, to pick berries, or to worm the cabbage; or in the potato patch with a brush to fight the beetles.

Then, on top of all this, his Sunday-school teacher pestered him to learn the names of all the books in the Bible, to memorize the Golden Text, or to read about "Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah." "And with him was Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan," an engraver, and a cunning workman, and an embroiderer in blue and in purple and in scarlet and in fine linen. After the reading, the teacher would ask to what tribe did Bezalel belong? And so on down the parched and barren way. Johnny could not remember all those names and dates and what the fellows did. Every time he made a break, Artie Eely would thrust up his hand and arm like a goose's neck and nearly twist off his seat in his enthusiasm to let the teacher know that he could answer the question properly. Then the teacher would say: "Artie is the only smart boy in the class."

Johnny decided that he would run away, so he tied up his clothes in an old shirt and left at midnight. He ran through the orchard and hopped the fence into the pasture. He ran over a calf, which scared him nearly to death. The night was darker than he thought it could be, so he started back to the house. In going through the yard he ran into "Shep," who was chasing a cat. In the scramble, his mother heard him.

She came downstairs, saw his bundle and knew what was up. She closed the door and he felt "a scorch" coming. She told him to tell her all about it, and he did.

She told him she knew that they had a hard life of it. It had been that way ever since they had bought the farm. There was the interest on the Modest loan, the taxes, the mortgage, and many other smaller dribs. The hogs had died of the cholera; the best team had been sold to pay off a note that threatened trouble, so they had nothing left to work with but two old teams of skin and bones. She too longed for a different life, yet she found a silent joy in the stubborn work and in rearing her house of little ones. She said that his going away would make her very sad; besides, his little sisters would have no one to take them to school on the cold, winter mornings. He untied his little bundle.

Johnny's father wasn't a good manager. The mortgage lingered, and the Modest loan and other dribs had a way of growing by the compounding interest. His father "went security," and some neighbors whose notes he indorsed used the borrowed money to buy things that he had to do without. Once in a while the sureties had to pay the notes.

His mother died—worked, worried, and tired to death. Johnny felt free.

A Flight from the Drudgery of Mismanagement. The Grinding Toil of the Big Town and the Happy Return to the Soil

By H. GARD, in World's Work

Surely the big, outside world couldn't be harder. He jumped on a freight train, helped the fireman shovel coal, and slept in the tender. He landed in New York and in two days was working on a tug-boat as roustabout, washing dishes, scrubbing, etc. It was a new sensation. A few weeks later he got a job on an excursion boat plying on the Hudson between New York and Newburgh. Clubs would charter the boat for a day or two. Johnny waited on the table, served the drinks, passed the cigars, and helped himself to whatever he wanted, for the clubs footed the bills. It was like finding manna—board free, wages thrown in.

He quit the excursion boat for an ocean steamer sailing to Brazil and the

many others in poor health who were willing enough to work for bare necessities.

He went on to Sacramento and thence by sleeper-trucks to Portland. He couldn't find a thing to do there. A man on one of the city jobs told him he could get work if he had money. Having no money, he boarded a train on the Oregon Short Cut for Salt Lake City. He rode the trucks, in between the mail-cars, in the blinders, or on top of the coaches. In going through a tunnel, one foot piled on the other, a projecting rock struck his toe. It stung so that he nearly rolled off; he didn't ride on top any more.

At Salt Lake City he found work in a restaurant. He worked every day

came a school-teacher, but in teaching he found himself bound by precedent. Method was supreme—the Socratic Method, the teaching ideas of Plato, Aristotle, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Herbart, Hegel, applied psychology, history of education, Spencer's Philosophy, apperception, correlation, experimental psychology, lengthy treatises on how to make the idea shoot. Johnny couldn't harmonize with the system, so he quit.

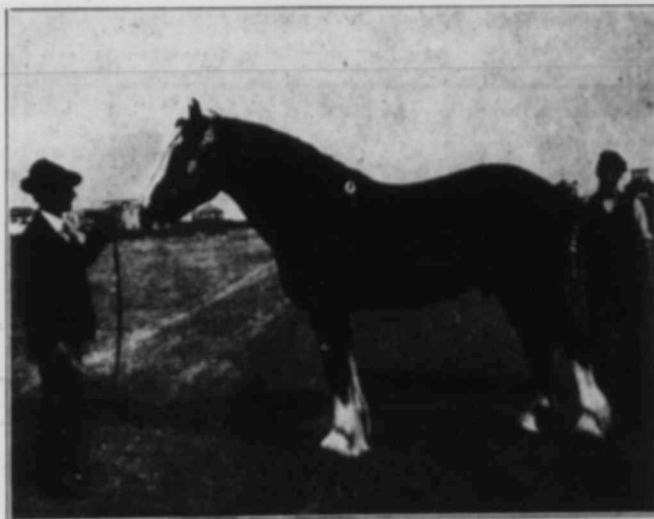
He then decided that he would be a business man—learn the game and have a business of his own. Then he would have money, a coach, a box at the theatre, servants, a big mansion on a fashionable street, fine clothes, prestige, honor, the whole galaxy of luxuries. Back to New York he went. Men looked up from their desks and asked: "What can you do?" He was "up against it." Finally he ran across a gentleman who dictated his letter to a phonograph. Johnny told him, "Try me three weeks, three dollars a week." He rented an old machine and practised till three o'clock A.M. At the office the next morning he stuck tubes in his ears and lit in. But the old typewriter ran like a log-wagon. Ten o'clock that night found him copying the letter of the day in the letter-book.

He had only fifty cents left and it was a week till pay-day. He told the landlady, but she said that she wouldn't trust anybody; so he slept in a delivery wagon, in an old boat, in a shed. He bought a loaf of bread and some bananas every day; water was free. Thursday he stranded. Could he stand it till Saturday evening? It was like pulling teeth. Saturday he got in \$3. He had to have hat and socks. That took \$1.15, leaving him \$1.85. He must eat, but he could get along without a bed. His old suit went off on a tear, so he had to buy at a pay-us-a-little-at-a-time house—\$7.50 for a suit, payable \$1.25 down and \$1.25 a week. He couldn't have butter on both sides of his bread and snore on either for what he had left. So he stuck to the eatables and shifted for sleeping apartments. Anyway the nights were getting warm and the top of an old shed didn't go so bad. Worse things could happen.

In three months his pay was \$4.50 a week. In six months it had another jubilee and danced to the tune of \$6.00. He could see the promised land. In a year he was docketed for \$10 a week. After that the advances came just as often, but the increase was only \$1 each time till it got to \$20; then he got a \$5 raise every six months. He knew nearly everything about the plant and everybody from the manager to the fellow who stole junk. He worked from three in the morning till eight and nine at night. His salary was \$60 a week now, but where was this advantage over the farm? There was no time for recreation, no superabundance of fresh air, no cozy nooks, no inviting streams, no smoke-free sunshine. He beat the bushes for an easier position, worked for a millionaire, then for a multi-millionaire, then took the speculation fever. He put in all; result: not only did he lose all his money, but his health was cracked. The doctors said "Tuberculosis."

Undaunted, he sailed in again. The soil called him back. There were glowing accounts of bumper crops in new

Continued on Page 12



Kings Chancellor Imp. (1914) (1915) by Royal Edward, sweepstakes over all breeds and first in 3 year old Clydesdales at Nankin Summer Fair, and first in 3 year old Clydes at Geneva (Swiss) Summer Fair. Owned by Wm. B. Evans, Geneva, Switz.

Barbados. The outgoing vessel carried machinery and canned goods, while the incoming brought coffee, Brazil-nuts, and raw rubber in suggests that looked like clouds of earth. But Johnny tired of it and beat his way home again.

The farm was just as distasteful as ever, so he crawled under a New York Central sleeper bound for St. Louis. He rode on the trucks from St. Louis to Kansas City, thence to Denver, then to Colorado Springs, where he worked a few days, then on to Salt Lake City, San Pedro, Los Angeles, thence by boat as a stowaway to San Francisco. As he left the vessel the sailors yelled at him and called him "Dago." He cleaned brick; the pay was small, the hours long. He had to compete with Italians, Japanese, Chinese, consumptives, and

and Sunday from four in the morning until nine and ten at night, with never a vacation, never an hour off for more than a year. He planted \$250 in the bank during the time. Disgusted, he started home, using his truck and blunder pass. This was a hard life, too—full of cold fingers, sleepless nights, thirty-six to forty-eight hours at a stretch without food, many hours without drink. He was only a laborer. The great outside world had no more contentment than the old farm. So back to the farm.

He went at it with a vim. He rented a piece of land, and raised 618 bushels of wheat. But he wasn't enraptured with the farm yet—too much hard work, no leisure, no regularity of prices, too much uncertainty. Then he be-