

over the bridge, as usual, alone." The chief paused and smiled.

"Yes?" suggested his companion eagerly. "You will give orders that two of the planks in the bridge be taken up."

"Yes?" "We will go over to those pollard willows there and wait, and watch. If the old fool halts on the brink, or if he turns back, he is no more blind than you or me."

"And if he walks right on—"

"Then, of course, he is innocent. But he'll drown, and a good riddance."

They laughed.

"It is a very humorous idea, excellency. And here comes the beer. Let us drink to the success of our little plot."

* * * * *

"Grandfather, there is somebody following us."

"How do you know? I hope you have not looked around often, my child. Remember that always looks suspicious."

"No, I stopped to reach up for some cherries on that bush, and I saw him then. He dodged behind a hedge, but I caught a glimpse of him."

"Who was it?"

"It looked like the colonel's orderly."

"Have a care then! We must not carry out our plan for this evening. They evidently suspect us."

"We cannot—go over to the mill?"

"No, no! Bring the cows, Victor, while I have a pipe."

Saying which, old Laforce seated himself on a fallen tree trunk on the edge of a field, and began to smoke, while his grandson proceeded across the rich meadow land to where in a shallow valley by a hillside a small herd of cattle browsed.

They were the sole remnant of the old man's drove of fine milch cows.

Off to the westward a mile or so away, an old windmill lifted its great flapping arms.

The old man, who could now see fairly well, when it was no longer necessary to be on his guard, cast a keen glance up and down the road. He soon perceived the colonel's spy drawing near in the lee of a hedge, and at once re-assumed that detached and contemplative expression peculiar to the blind.

The boy returned, driving his cows, and the party began the homeward trip, the spy this time ahead.

"Victor," said old Laforce, as he hobbled along on his cane, "if anything should happen to me, it will be necessary for you to go over to L—. Do you understand?"

"But nothing is going to happen!" protested the lad.

"We can never tell. Our lives—mine at least—wouldn't be worth a minute's purchase if they learn of my private telegraph system at the mill yonder. My faith! How I have fooled the hounds!"

The old man cackled mirthfully. The boy looked serious.

"I wish I could send the messages," he said wistfully.

"They are ground wire my lad, and very poorly connected, else I would teach you. It takes an expert to send, and receive, though the code is simple enough. But what you can do is to make all haste to L— with the paper I told you about, if I am killed. Do you promise?"

"I promise."

"L— is nineteen miles away."

"No matter. I can walk it."

"You are a good lad, Victor. I feel that my end is not far off. I would have the commandant at L— know these things I have learned from the paper. You know where to find the paper?"

"Under the stone at the foot of the big yew."

"Good! And you remember where I told you to put it in case you are searched?"

"Yes."

The boy only half understood the purport of all these directions, but he possessed the virtue of obedience, and a native shrewdness far beyond his years.

"I am sorry," said old Laforce, with a sigh, "that we have been suspected. Daily I have kept the commandant informed of the movements of the Germans. To-night is my first failure."

The boy said nothing. He was absently switching at the weeds with a long stick. Soon they were in the village.

"Here we are back at the Croix D'Or,"

announced old Laforce quietly. "And how angry the swaggering scoundrels look! The spy had nothing to report, you see, Victor."

"Grandfather, you are a smart man. I think you are the cleverest man in the world," said the boy.

"Ah no, lad. But the good God is on the side of France, and as I am too old to join the army I do what I can in another way. They don't know that I was a German scholar in my younger days. They talk over their plans in their loud, boastful way, and my ears are pretty keen yet. I never fail to hear something of importance each night and morning as I pass by the inn."

The old man paused, and seizing the boy's arm, whispered: "That paper, Victor. Don't forget!"

"No, I'll remember. You can trust me."

"It is most important! I stole it, Victor, the night they all lay drunk yonder, on the good champagne of the Croix D'Or. It is the plan the colonel himself drew up of their next point of attack. How they swore and cursed the next morning at its disappearance! Little do they imagine it was 'old blind Laforce' who took it. I heard the under-officer blame it on the wind, and another on the carelessness of an orderly. Name of a pipe! It is not difficult to hoodwink such stupid dunderheads."

At sunset on the following day the Prussian officers proceeded to carry out their villainous "test" of old Pierre Laforce.

The boy was enticed to the inn upon the pretext of showing him how to do a

new kind of wood carving, of which industry Victor was fond. So while one of the officers whittled and chopped, and finally evolved a wondrous assortment of wooden birds and beasts for the boy's benefit, two others armed with a crowbar and other tools went to the bridge and removed a couple of planks. This left a gap of about two feet, beneath which the brown water of the river could be seen swirling rapidly down to the falls, a quarter of a mile below the village. The officers waited behind the willows.

At length old Laforce was seen approaching, and calling, as usual for the boy. He reached the bridge and began to cross it, tapping his way along with the thorn cane he always used.

Suddenly he stopped. Almost half-way across he discerned the gap, and like a flash his keen old mind saw the plot in all its devilishness. Instinctively he knew he was being watched.

To cover his pause he turned and called again for his grandson. But his brain was busy.

If he refused to cross, they would guess at once that he was not blind at all. He and the boy would both be murdered. Then who would take the paper to the commandant at L—?

On the other hand, if he stumbled into the gap he would be drowned. It was a deep drop, and he was not at all certain of his swimming ability, as many years had passed since last he had been in the water.

But France? And Paris? As he thought of his country and its

beloved and beautiful capital soon, perhaps, to be under the German heel, he hesitated no longer. Victor had his orders. When he, old Pierre, was dead, the boy would take the paper to L—. That was all that mattered.

"For France—my patrie," murmured the old man, straightening his shoulders. Then he walked straight ahead.

All this had taken but a moment. The officers, eyeing him from their hiding-place merely saw him stop and half turn, and then pause imperceptibly before going ahead, when no answering shout from the boy was to be heard.

Old Laforce came to the brink, faltered but a second and went over!

There was a splash in the river below. The officers laughed uproariously, and bounded out to watch the old man struggling with death in the water, with none to throw a rope or lend a hand.

"The old fool was blind after all!" muttered the colonel, shrugging his heavy shoulders.

Then they all turned about and went back to the estaminet, where the cooks had prepared a big dinner for his excellency and staff.

* * * * *

Two days later, into the town of L— there tramped a barefoot and half-ragged boy. There were dust-marks and weary lines on his face, and one of his arms was bleeding where a spent bullet had struck him.

But the commandant had left L— and gone on to the fortified town of B—. With a sharp cry of disappointment

Production and Thrift

GROWING CROPS ON STUBBLE LAND IN 1916

*The Empire's Demands for food are greater this year than last.
Less summer-fallow and less fall ploughing than usual in 1915 make
it necessary that the farmers of the Prairie provinces in 1916
shall sow extensively on stubble land*

MR. J. H. GRISDALE, Director, and the Superintendents of the Dominion
Experimental Farms, urge the following upon the Farmers:

STUBBLE LAND OF FIRST CROP AFTER FALLOW

Burn stubble thoroughly as soon as surface is dry. Fire about noon time when steady wind is blowing. Cultivate at once about two inches deep, then sow the wheat and harrow immediately afterwards. If possible, where area is large, harrow first, then cultivate, seed, and harrow again. In Eastern Saskatchewan sow $1\frac{1}{2}$ bush. per acre; in Western Saskatchewan $1\frac{1}{4}$ bush. On light soils and dry lands sow $\frac{1}{4}$ bush. less.

STUBBLE LAND OF SECOND CROP AFTER FALLOW

Usually this land should be summer-fallowed, but this year much of it must be in crop. Burn stubble if possible. This may be helped by scattering straw freely over the field. Wrap old sacking about the end of a 4-foot stick. Dip in gasoline. Set on fire and shake on straw and stubble. Carry gasoline in open pail. If stubble is too light to burn then cultivate, harrow and seed a little lighter than above. Oats and barley will do better than wheat. If shoe drills are used plough instead of cultivating. Plough, pack or roll, and then harrow, if land is grassy or weedy. In the drier sections at least one-third of all cropping land should be summer-fallowed every year.

STUBBLE LAND OF THIRD CROP AFTER FALLOW

Do not sow to grain, but summer-fallow. Better use your spring labour on other stubble land and thus make sure of crops in 1916 and 1917. Put your labour on land that is likely to give best returns.

SEED

Sow only clean, plump seed of tested variety. Use the fanning mill thoroughly and treat seed for smut. Have horses, harness and machines in good shape before starting work.

THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA
THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE