

mile-long billows, or gathered into stooks that threw dark shadows upon the fresh-cut stubble. The wavering breezes swept across the land, and seemed to shout and sing the harvest hymn:

"The valleys stand so thick with corn,  
That they laugh and sing."

But in some of the lower-lying, or undrained fields, there were streaks and blocks of yellower and brighter grain, whose nodding heads gleamed more brilliant than the dull gold of their companions. Afar they portrayed the amplest yield of all the soil, but nearer, and in the hand, the empty shell and transparent husk told that the icy finger of the frost-wind had touched the kernels when in the milk. Truly were they outwardly whited sepulchres, covering the death of wheat within.

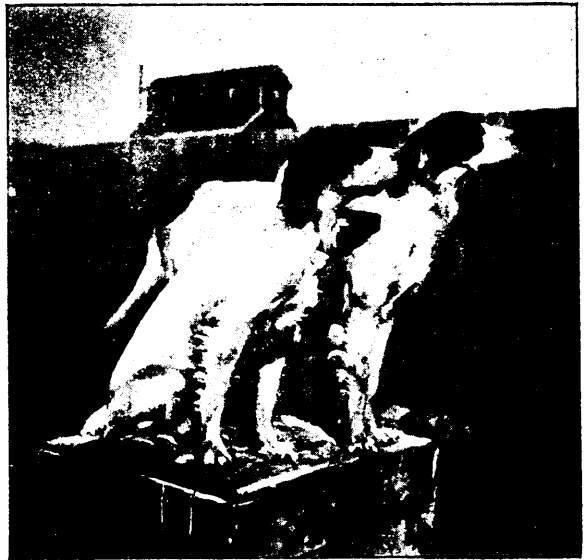
Yet the farmers were full of hope. More careful tillage, earlier sowing, better selection of seed, said they, would effect a cure.

So the latter part of last October found me hastening westward on the C.P.R., wondering whether the joys could be repeated, and whether the farmers had attained their desired end. So one fine morning, when the mists were just beginning to rise, and the tops of the elevators were hidden in the flying scud, found me driving (in a single buggy) south from Manitoba, reckless of the advice of kindly friends that I should lose my way, but confident in a sort of instinct as to the points of the compass, and firmly reliant that the well-worn prairie trails would lead me "somewhere" for the night. Two more horses and two more men may be a surfeit, but there is always room for one more horse in the barn, and for one more mouth, however hungry, at

the hospitable tables in the North-West, and so I always found it, as for a fortnight we wandered from homestead to homestead in Southern Manitoba. When well away from the village and his stable, I stopped a moment, and unbuckling the over-check, loosened old Dobbin's head from being tied in modern pastures to his tail, and thereafter he and I drove on in comfort.

The weather throughout was all that could be desired. In the day, mild; in the night, cold: but what of that, when smoking beside the well-filled kitchen stoves, and chatting with the cheery hosts of what their fields or they had done, or watching the hostess busily making pies for the next day's meal?

Alas, for the solitariness of the



"DUKE" AND "BUSTER," MANITOBA.

Manitoban who is "keeping back." The day's work over in the fields, the horses cleaned, the cattle fed, it is late before he can begin to get ready his own lonely meal. Though game be plentiful, the plucking of it is weary toil; a rabbit's skin will only come off in little bits, and feathers and fur seem to stick like glue to the stubby