

## What are You going to do about it?

Written for The Western Home Monthly by Francis J. Dickie

JONATHAN J. Jackson was fifty; a typical down east farmer whom the neighbors spoke of as "comfortable" when discussing his financial standing, meaning thereby that Jonathan had perhaps ten thousand cash in the bank along side the deed of his one hundred and sixty acres. Added to this there were the usual dozen or so head of cattle, horses and swine.

For half a century, Jonathan had seen the sun rise over the same old quarter. He knew every rail in the wriggly old fence

bank account. So, all this combined, his manner was one grandly condescending when he struck the country road and looked once more over primly kept fields—mere patches they were to him now.

During his short stay of two weeks, he talked often to Jonathan, with the result that the latter decided to take a trip West. "I ain't sospry as I used to be," he admitted a little grudgingly. "I don't hustle through the chores quite so fast; and harvesting leaves me a little tired, so I sorter reckon a holiday'd do me good."



For two whole days of travelling Jonathan looked out upon endless miles of stocked bronze wheat

that still ran around two sides of the farm; he knew every maple, birch and hickory tree in the "back" ten acre lot. Fifty years is a long time to spend in one spot; it tends to make for certain ideas, to weld a man's thoughts into a certain groove.

Jonathan had read much of the West; of the great crops of wheat grown year after year upon the same soil, till he had come to put the whole west down as a land run by fabricators and mad men.

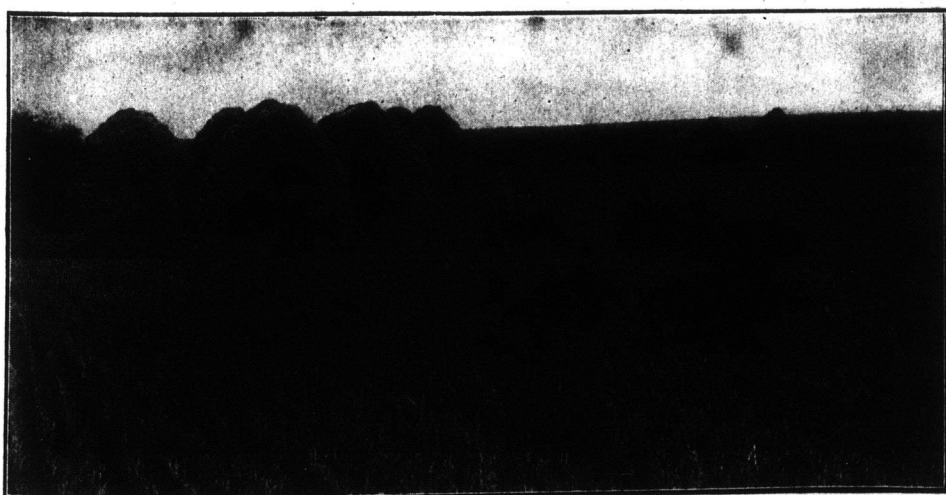
Now there was Cy Young, for instance, Cy had been out West for ten years and was now operating twelve hundred and eighty acres of wheat. Peter John, Cy's brother, told Jonathan many tales of Cy's successful grain growing; to all of which Jonathan listened only half convinced.

Certainly a man could not successfully farm two sections of land, always growing wheat—that is not for long. "It ain't according to reason, this growin' wheat year after year," Jonathan had remarked testily one day in reply to Peter John's tale of Cy's success out West.

So Jonathan travelled westward with the big, breezy Cy. For two whole days after leaving Winnipeg, the old man looked out on endless fields of stocked grain, stretching away and away to the horizon in bronzed irregular rows that lay mile on mile, an unchanging vista, monotonous repetition of new cut grain. Yet, despite the sameness of scene, it held the old man fascinated by the very stupendousness of the crop it portended.

Later, at Cy's, he watched the harvest stacked, and, still later, hurled, sheaf by sheaf, into the steely, gnashing maw that went endlessly on, rending and tearing, sucking into the bowels of the harvester this golden fruition of boundless acres.

Then, when he had seen it all, and the fall grew late, he took train for home. And at night, as he rode back across those long miles, a few weeks before gaudy with endless lines of sheaves, he saw, flaring and red against the night, a thousand monster bonfires, the light of many burning straw stacks, dotted glarings, as



Later, at Cy's, he saw it stacked

Then Cy, in the late summer of 1914, wrung a brief holiday while the grain ripened for the harvester, and came home. Cy was six feet two, stout in proportion, with the voice of a fog horn and the wind tanned face full brother to a harvest moon. Ten years of the West, of big deals and gigantic operations, had left their imprint upon him; he was breezily self assured, supremely satisfied in his own ego. Time had changed the quiet rural youth into polished business man. He was a practical farmer on a big scale, to whom one successful harvest brought more cash than did fifteen years of slaving of the folks back home. In 1913 his grain tickets had called for \$36,000, \$20,000 of which had later found their way to his

if of some Brobdignagian army in bivouac.

Then it was that Jonathan saw as red as the flames that tinged the autumn sky. "Why! Why! Why?" The question reiterated itself in his brain; and then, turning to Cy who was accompanying him as far as Winnipeg, he burst forth: "Why this terrible waste?"

"What waste?" Cy asked blankly, not getting the trend of thought.

Silently the old man waved his arm toward the distant horizon where flames leaped high. Cy watched the flames carelessly a moment, then: "What can you do about it?" he said, answering question with question.

At once Jonathan was alive. Backed

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