

The Story of a Farm Boy.

Part II. Why the Boy Chose an Agricultural College Course.

BY B. S. A.

THERE'S no place like home.

Those who always remain under the parental roof can never realize the real truth of the quotation which goes before. It is only the boy or girl who has loved the old place and has been a part of its very existence who can fully appreciate what it means to say, "there is no place like home." It is only the mothers and the fathers of the ambitious ones who go forth to face new trials, and the young people themselves, who know from experience that:

"The golden threads in the warp of life
Are the sorrow tugs at the heart."

Jimmy was destined to feel many a time the pangs of homesickness gnawing at his heart strings, while his father and mother had ahead of them many a lonely evening.

As the democrat drew away from the old farm that bright September morning, Jimmy was not light hearted. In the back was a large trunk packed with all his belongings of any value, many of which owed their existence to the patient toil of his mother's busy fingers. At his side sat his father, silent. On the verandah stood his mother with big tears welling up in eyes of sorrow as she attempted to swallow the lump in her throat. Jimmy had a lump in his own throat as he kissed her good-bye, and it grew as he rode by the front field of the old farm and his fine team of Clydesdales galloped up to the road fence, as if to enquire where their young master was going. Under the tree in the corner lay his flock of Shropshires, chewing industriously at their quids, oblivious to what was going on. Little they thought that eventually they would be dispersed at public auction and the money used to complete Jimmy's so-called education. Old Collie, the farm pet, and a trusted friend of the boy, jumped up as Jimmy climbed into the wagon, and thrust his wet nose in the young man's face. He followed the departing lad for half a mile, and then, after a last wistful look, turned dropped his head and his tail, and trotted dejectedly back to his mat at the foot of the verandah steps. Jimmy was leaving home for college. Conversation lagged on the way to the depot. The boy and his father did more thinking than talking. At last the train pulled in and out again, and the first real separation—the boy from his home—in twenty-one years was a reality.

We have followed Jimmy from his earliest school days, through fourteen years of life on the farm during eight of which he was co-partner with his father, in work and planning if not in returns, and one of the mainstays of the farm. We have learned that he left the farm in search of wider knowledge which he hoped would give him the power to increase the money returns from farming, to make life on the farm more desirable, and to help put agriculture in its proper place in Canada. He had given three years of thought to the matter and had decided to take an agricultural college course. Why? This is part two of the story.

Jimmy had been reared close to nature. He knew every sheep in the flock from every other sheep. He had brought them up from the time they drew their first breath. He loved the wide fields and the hills and dales of his native township. He knew the trees of the woodlot intimately, for had he not fallen from many when climbing for crows' nests in the spring, or to shake down nuts after the first nips of Jack Frost in the fall? He liked the smell of new-mown hay not for its pleasantness alone, but because it meant something to him. He had an inherent love of nature, agriculture, live stock, and all things rural. Only one other profession ever entered his mind and that was Medicine, but he finally dismissed it preferring to be a "Doctor of Agriculture," rather than a struggling country M.D. First, then, Jimmy decided upon scientific agriculture because he liked all things pertaining to the farm.

While he almost worshipped the land, he believed that to give the man thereon a chance, something which he did not then understand thoroughly, was necessary. He disliked the city just as ardently as he loved the soil. He understood fully that big cities are necessary to the welfare of the nation, but he had no desire to be confined in one. True, bright lights and bustle had some attraction for him, as they have for every youth of spirit. But city pleasures were to him largely superficial. He had not been molded in the proper groove to make a satisfied city citizen. It was a bigger and a broader sphere he hoped to fill—at least it appeared bigger and broader to him, and certainly more congenial. He hoped to learn enough of the whys and wherefore of agriculture to make him a scientific as well as practical farmer—to give him place in his community where he might help on the good work.

His native province he believed to be exceedingly well equipped to give him his opportunity. He had been for a Short Course, of two weeks' duration, at the Agricultural College the previous winter. He had gazed in wonderment at the wise visages of freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors, who, he afterwards learned, appeared more learned than they really were. No small part of a College course is taken up in making an impression. He had visited all the buildings and had talked nervously with the President, who, as all good Presidents interested in the welfare of their institutions do, advised him to enter College for the "regular" course. He left believing that the College was all that it had been reputed to be, viz., one of the best of its kind in America. There was no real reason why he should take any other than an agricultural course when he left the farm.

This is the second chapter of "The Story of a Farm Boy." The first chapter appeared in the issue of October 17, and told why the boy left the farm. Readers will find that the influences which separated the boy from the old homestead are still common and are constantly adding to the numbers of those who yearly drift cityward. The subject of this story sought a course at an agricultural college in order that he might better equip himself for the work he liked best, and in this chapter are related the trials, tribulations, but ultimate success of Jimmy at the seat of learning. It is a complete and interesting description of college life as experienced by one who was there for a purpose.—Editor.

Why wasn't some trade or city business considered in the change? You already know that Jimmy's nature favored no city work. While he saw his school chum now a bank clerk and better dressed than himself, and while he knew that his father's best boyhood friend had made hundreds of thousands in the city, he also, delving deeper into the affairs of men, knew that the great rank and file of the boys who leave the farm for city bright lights, sociability and opportunity, ultimately find themselves facing limited possibilities. Without education or standing they can only remain hand or machine laborers, grinding away day in and day out to meet the ever-increasing cost of existing in a little cottage in some out-of-the-way corner of the centre of dinginess. Jimmy vowed never to join the dinner-pail brigade of factory workers; not that it did not offer honest toil, but because it offered nothing more than this and moving pictures. He called to mind, when thinking of this particular phase of his problem, a saying of the old village shoemaker in whose shop he waited while horses were shod or grists ground. Silas, for so he was called, used to grumble without ceasing and allowed that any man was ruined just as soon as he took off his coat to go to work. Jimmy did not believe this at all. He banked on honest toil as his hope for happiness, but he did believe that the man who worked with his coat off in the city had a harder road to hoe than had the man on the farm. He preferred to sweat in God's fresh air, rather than in man's foul factories. The city was no place for him.

Jimmy entered College full of hope for the future. "Where there is no hope there can be no endeavor." Jimmy's hope was backed up by a will to put forth a most strenuous endeavor. If it is a fact that people live by hope, Jimmy was living in the true sense of the word. The course was four years in extent. He hoped, after four years of diligent study, backed by an abundance of practical experience, to be able to command a salary in a position which would enable him to get a wider knowledge of not only agriculture, but of business and the relation between other industries and agriculture. At first he was not sure of the four-year term. He did not know whether or not he could qualify beyond the second year, but he had not forgotten the farm and still had it to fall back upon. In fact, his future work he hoped would be very close to, if not on, the land.

The College course did not disappoint. Jimmy arrived, as most good freshmen do, on the opening day. He was green, but not so verdant as to go to the pig pens to register, as he was soberly directed by a good-natured and over-obliging sophomore, who loitered in front of the President's office and volunteered altogether too much information. Jimmy registered and was assigned a tower room, three stories up. His

room mates were, city boys—one a spoiled orphan and the other a remittance son of a well-to-do father. At first neither appealed to him and many a lonely, homesick study hour was spent before the east window, which faced in the direction of his old home. Initiation and hazings brought diversion. Books were not attractive. As a result of eight years of work with his hands his brain was rusty. But after a month or so of tribulation, during which Jimmy had a daily fight with himself to keep from throwing up the venture, homesickness wore away, the new life began to open up, and he pushed on. Examinations at Christmas found him well up to the top in a long list. This gave him new heart. He was making friends and enjoying his work. The first spring he pushed closer to the top and left College convinced that he had chosen the proper course.

Back on the farm again, he worked with renewed vigor. Cultivation and seeding, haying and harvest—it all meant more to him. He began to understand a few of the underlying principles of soil fertility and farming generally. His father and mother listened eagerly to his stories of College life. His boy friends began to hold aloof, inclined to criticize the "educated farmer."

Jimmy's summer passed without events of importance, and the next September found him off again for College, feeling eager to get back and less attached to the old farm. This time no tear filled "mother's" eye, and Collie did not follow. Jimmy's mother had entered into the spirit of the venture and was proud of the boy. His "dad" was a little inclined to be talkative about his son's progress. The dog had bestowed his surplus affection on Jimmy's father because they were always together in the boy's absence.

The second year passed all too quickly. Sophomores run colleges—or rather, they think they do—and that is all that matters to them. The work was of a more practical nature and in this Jimmy revelled. In sports he began to take an interest. Football and basketball filled in his leisure time. He worked hard in the fall term, and at the Christmas trial of guessing at answers to the brain twisters asked by an all-wise staff, he stood second to the top. While at home over the Christmas-tide his father happened to remark that he had gone as high as he could. This provoked him to reply: "I'll show you." In the spring, after weeks with "the midnight oil," he was out on top and leading by a nose for the two years. Moreover, he had not neglected College duties and sport.

Jimmy spent his second summer on the old farm. The old attachments were renewed. He still liked the old place. He began to fear that if he left again for College he might never return to the land. He argued the question with himself right up to the time to re-enter College. He was undecided. And then one day he received a personal letter from the President, advising him to return to complete his course. He asked his father. He asked his mother. He remembered his purpose in going in the first place. His mother said: "Do as you think best." His father said: "If I had your ability and chance I'd never farm. There's nothing in it but hard work. I'd plan to get an easier living."

Jimmy went back to College on the money which his surplus sheep stock furnished. His father decided to rent the farm, and so the sheep were dispersed at the sale and brought an additional \$300.

Jimmy's third year at College found him a leader in work and sport—a so-called all-round man. In the spring he had no farm of "father's" on which to spend the summer. His father living in a village, like a fish out of water away from the farm, offered to give him a summer of ease. Jimmy could not loaf, so he took a fifty-dollar-a-month job, and started out to test his College-acquired knowledge. He found that it stood

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The Residence at the O. A. C. Where Many a Boy's Destiny is Decided.