

A String of Pearls

Written for The Western Home Monthly by Erma Stocking

THE soldiers in training in Western Canada, the year of the big crop showed no hesitation in responding to the call to save the wheat. All of the grain was needed by the Empire in this time of her great trouble. Harvest help was at a premium and those soldiers who would do their bit for the West by saving her grain were given leave of absence.

Sewell Camp, as it was called that year, held no charms one of those bright days of autumn, for the boys in khaki who were eager to entrain for the harvest fields and forget the monotony of drilling. Dick Hurley was polishing buttons and packing his knapsack with a spirit that provoked sarcasm from two of his tentmates who were not leaving camp.

"Why the sudden burst of energy, Hurley," said a young Englishman. "What do you anticipate so pleasant about seeing your bally homestead again? If your piece of land is anything like mine, you wouldn't crave the privilege of seeing the place again."

"Say another word, old chap," answered Dick, "and I'll show you the kind of muscles homesteading gave me. Haven't I told you that I used to own the finest piece of land in Canada? Not a stone or bush was on it, except a dandy little bluff right near my shack. I nearly killed a half-breed that started to cut it down one day when he thought I wasn't there. Of course, I am going back, for there is something magnetic about the prairie when you have watched a quarter section of raw land evolve into a fine field of wheat."

"Good for you, Dick," laughed the cheery American boy, who had come North and enlisted for a reason that he never would tell. "You probably knew good land when you saw it, and I'll bet Fred here picked out a nice, sandy farm because it happened to be near a creek and had a few trees and a hill or two on it that reminded him of home. Say, if she writes a letter while you are away, shall we open it to see if it is important enough

to send on, or are you going where you'll see her and not need writing?"

"One thing sure," said Dick, "if you want to know a thing, it doesn't take long for you to ask and find out. But the fact is, I haven't an idea what it would be like to hear from a girl. They seemed to be scarce articles around my homestead. I sold my land before I enlisted and am going to a new part of the country, so you see there is no girl attracting me away from here."

"If you boys are going as far as Brandon with me, you had better get a hustle on you."

There was no part of Saskatchewan more favored by Nature that year than the district around Rosetown, the heart of the famous Goose Lake Country. Robert Dale was often heard to declare, much to the amusement of his daughter, Inna, that he had the most fertile and prettiest piece of land to be found in the province. Its fertility had yielded beyond his dreams this year, and had occasioned the need of more help during harvest.

The great train bearing its always heavy traffic between Saskatoon and Calgary seemed a miracle as it sped over the apparently trackless prairie. As it came suddenly to a stop, Mr. Dale's keen eyes caught sight of Dick Hurley, whose manly bearing seemed to suggest a desire to get into the thick of things. Dick was equally attracted and they were soon on the long road toward Mr. Dale's home.

With cheeks as pink as her beloved flower, the prairie rose, Inna flew from her work to the door to watch the road where her father would be visible for miles.

"See Daddy too," said Tiny Tim as he coaxed to be held up so that he might look down the road with the field glasses that Inna had used. "Daddy's coming, Daddy's coming!" he assured her, as she put him down after his long look for his father, and he danced down the lane with an abandon of delight that Inna sorrowfully wished his mother were alive to see. "Wait honey," said Inna, "he is not as near as the glasses seem to tell you. Help

me to get some roses for the table, for think how hungry he will be and we must have dinner all ready."

When Inna stepped through the door to greet her father, Dick thought that he had never before seen so sweet a sight. The dark blue of her eyes Dick knew was of a shade that could seem black from the depths that love or anger might give. But anger, except for a righteous cause, could never come to the possessor of that sweet face. Her hair caught the sunshine that turned its brown to bronze, as she lifted up Tiny Tim to his father to be kissed.

When the tired harvesters had finished their evening meal, by clever questionings Inna drew a description from Dick of life in the training camps. "It's not all sand in our beds, nor monotonous drilling, Miss Dale," he laughingly said, "we even have our Movies, and the boys of the 53rd have had moving pictures taken of them that we are rather proud of. There is fun about camp more often than you would think."

"Not long ago our Company's mascot, a bull-dog decided he didn't like the looks of Company D's daschund. The daschund had as much grit as length and didn't mind fighting it out. Of course, we banked on our dog and thought he would win out easy. That fight lasted longer than we thought it would, for the daschund was in fine trim and made of good stuff. But the bull dog hung on long after we thought he was down and out and he finally won. Poor Dutchy was minus both ears and his tail."

During the harvest in the Canadian Northwest, the sun can shine with an ardor that can not be excelled in a more southern country. Dick found that stooking wheat had its drawbacks when he was on the opposite side of the field to the jug of water. He had a ready welcome for Inna when he saw her coming through the stubble with a pail in her hand. With a laugh she showed him the Red Cross badge on her arm and offered him a drink of lemonade from the pail that she was carrying. "I always did want to do Red Cross work," she told him, "and I thought it well that I revive the ex-

hausted soldier in my fields rather than wish I were in France."

"I'll make you a medal of gold from this wheat, Sister of the Red Cross," answered Dick. "May I have a pin? We will have the ceremony of decorating the hero who has saved a life. You can't imagine how hot I was." She did not know that the ceremony offered a delightful excuse to find how deep her eyes were.

"Thanks, Monsieur, for your gallantry. Allow me to place in monsieur's cap the insignia of the Order of the Rose," she replied with mock courtesy.

"Tell me, do many others belong to your Order," he asked her.

"Indeed, sir, you are not going to learn the number that I have decorated," and she laughingly left him; not noticing that the rose was removed from his cap and placed in a place of safety near his heart.

There are no busier days than the harvest time on the northern prairie. Wheat must be cut with all possible speed to save it from the frost that might any night appear, and from the winds that scatter the dry kernels far and wide. Two or three binders on every farm of the average size make a constant hum, and the several stookers busily gather up the sheaves that have fallen from the bundle carrier of the binder. Mile-long fields of grain suddenly become bewildering arrays of stooks. The stubble offers tempting feeding grounds for the wild duck and prairie chicken. The face of the farmer loses a few of the tense lines of worry, for his whole year's labor is either a success or a failure according to the yield of these fields.

A week of work in the wide wheat fields brought to Dick a return of the sense of all that is best in life. Training for war had for a time be-dimmed his knowledge of the true values of a well-lived life.

"Love and work, we must have after all," he thought, "to bring life to its best." Work, he never had feared to meet, but love had been to him as an unknown land. He was entering that land now, he knew; and he blessed his guardian angel that he had never frittered away by purposeless passions the love that he would not be



SAVE FOOD BY HOME CANNING

Everyone now knows that the conservation of food is a very vital part of our war duties. "Food is Ammunition." We are asked to save it and to utilize the largest possible proportion of perishable food in our own land, sending exportable foods to our Soldiers and Allies overseas.

In our "War Gardens" we are now growing tons of vegetables that can best be saved for winter use by home canning. This will reduce the demands upon exportable tinned goods, and these will be available for shipment abroad.

To ensure success in home canning, the Manitoba Department of Agriculture is giving practical canning demonstrations by experts at 238 places within the Province during the summer months of 1918.

238 Canning Demonstrations Every Manitoba Woman Should Attend One of These

Home Canned Goods are Wholesome and Delicious. Apart from the War Needs, Home Canning is worthy of encouragement.

Watch for Posters or write the Agricultural Extension Service, Parliament Buildings, Winnipeg, as to dates.

For Manitoba's excellent FREE CANNING BULLETIN, "Canning by the Cold Pack Method," write a post card request to the Publications Branch, Manitoba Dept. of Agriculture, Winnipeg.

V. WINKLER

Minister of Agriculture and Immigration.

"More and more we must live on Garden Products. More and more we must give our commercial supplies to our Allies. It is only through the help of our Housewives we can accomplish this substitution."

CHAS. LATHROP
PACK,
President National
War Garden
Commission,
Washington.

"The Food
Crisis is Grave
and Urgent
Beyond
Possibility of
Exaggeration"

SIR ROBERT
BORDEN

