

Six Weeks on a German Farm.

BY J. A. SCOTT, AN ESCAPED PRISONER.

The sun was shining brightly and a cool wind waved the growing crops gently to and fro, and as I trudged along that well-made German road, it was hard for me to realize that I was a prisoner of war in the hands of the enemy. It was the end of June and I, along with eleven more, had been brought from Minden where we had been interned, to labor on the farms in Westphalia. I had been three weeks in this district now, and was rapidly becoming acquainted with the German methods of farming. The people amongst whom I labored were of a peculiar religious sect and adopted a semi-uniform as their national dress. The dresses of the women were trimmed with rows of black beads round the bottom. The bodice was black or green, trimmed with lace of various colors, and for head-gear they wore a high conical hat from which stood out on each side enormous black bows, fully a foot and a half long, and eight inches wide, and to complete the uniform they wore an apron of a light green color. When working in the fields, the hat and apron were not in evidence, but a white or pink handkerchief was bound around the head and ears, leaving only the front part of the face exposed. When you saw the women with their heads uncovered you were at once struck with the contrast between the color of their skin. The front of the face was browned by sun and wind, whilst their ears and neck were of a dazzling whiteness. I was not much impressed by their looks. The men were for the most part soberly attired in black. This dress must have been in vogue for ages.

The farmer I was compelled to work for was fairly well to do, and he owned about 100 acres of land, which were all under cultivation. In addition, he rented about 30 acres of meadow land from which he cut his crops of hay, one in July and the other in the beginning of October. The farmhouse and buildings used to house the stock were all under one roof, and the whole made one huge structure similar in appearance to our barns in Western Canada. The end of the building where the house was situated could be entered by either one of two doors, and was very cosy and comfortable, whilst at the other end entrance was gained through a huge gate, which permitted teams and wagons to pass through. On entering the gate you found yourself in a large courtyard.

On the right was the cow-shed where twelve to fourteen fine milch cows were munching away at the clover, which was cut fresh every day. The cows were chained up all day, and the only time they went outside was once a week, when we would clean out the shed. This was done by hitching a horse on to a huge-pronged rake. The prongs were stuck into the bedding and manure which was to be removed, and the horse would drag it outside, two or three hundred pounds at a time. It was then spread carefully out on the manure pit, which was built specially for that purpose. Some of the cows were milked three times a day, the others only twice. On the end of the cow shed was the hog-pen. It was built entirely of concrete; was well lighted, drained and ventilated. As soon as the young ones were weaned they were placed in a compartment of their own, and their progress carefully watched. On the other side of the courtyard there were loose boxes where the horses were kept. A mare with foal was in one, whilst the others were occupied by the remaining two horses that were doing the work that summer. Western farmers will smile at the idea of two horses working even a farm of 100 acres, but they accomplished it with ease.

The farm was spread out a good deal, 10 acres here, 30 there, and so on. As the owner grew richer he bought what he could. You could work on a piece of land in the morning, and in the afternoon would have to walk a mile to work another patch. The community where I was situated went in for mixed farming, and in a 30-acre field you would find growing rye, clover, turnips, mangel-wurzels, etc. Very seldom was a large portion of land used for growing the same thing. This was, no doubt, on account of the crop being the most part cut by a scythe and bound by hand. The crop had been put in that spring with a small seeder, and that and a mower that I saw there was the only up-to-date machinery that

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