



MOST people would succeed in small things if they were not troubled with great ambition.—Longfellow.

Four Thousand Bushels of Corn

(Continued from last week.)

THEY left the dog to guard the broken fence, and went back to see what damage had been done. It was not so great as they had feared, although it was bad enough. Three or four acres had been badly trampled, and a good deal of the corn had been eaten. Sam felt worse about it, if possible, than Jimmie did.

"You must let me pay for this," he said. "I know that I can't make good the damage so far as the contest is concerned, but I can, at least pay for the corn that has been destroyed."

Jimmie shook his head. "You'll have to settle that with the preacher," he said. "I know he won't take anything, though. It is only an accident, and can't be helped now."

As Jimmie had foreseen, the preacher refused Sam's offer. "It isn't the money damage that counts," he said, "and nothing you could pay me would improve my chances to win the contest." When Sam met one of the deacons that afternoon, he gave him \$25 to add to the preacher's salary; then he felt considerably easier in his conscience.

By the first of July, Jimmie's corn was so big that it had to be "laid by." By that time there was a noticeable difference in looks between the preacher's forty and the other upland fields on the McKene farm. The preacher's corn was taller and stockier, and had a greener and thrifter look.

"I do believe that bone meal is helping it," he said, one afternoon.

"It must be that," Jimmie replied. "There is no other difference between that field and the others on this part of the farm."

"If Mr. Hodzkins could see it now, he would have to admit that there may be something in a professor's advice."

"Don't boast too much till husking time," Jimmie advised. "There's many a slip between the field and the corncrib."

"Especially when the neighbor's cows slip through the fence," the preacher added.

It was not the preacher's story, however, but the peat forty, that was the chief topic of conversation among the old corn growers of the neighborhood. They came from miles round to look at it. A neighbor half a mile away who had planted corn on a similar peat field was still cultivating away at his yellow, sickly crop, which was not yet more than a few inches tall. The two fields formed such a marked contrast that it was no wonder the corn growers were astonished.

"You must have put a powerful lot of manure on that forty," one of them remarked, one day.

"Not a load for four years," Jimmie replied.

The next day Jimmie had another visitor—not a successful corn grower, but an old, shabbily dressed man, with a discouraged look on his face. The old man's eyes filled with tears as he looked at the luxuriant corn on the peat forty, and listened to Jimmie's account of the soil treatment that had made such a growth possible.

"If we had had professors to tell us



Indian Girls Do Good Work as Berry Pickers.

In the Niagara district a number of the fruit growers employ Indian girls to assist in berry picking. They pack into small baskets, which they fasten on with their aprons and thus make picking easier. In the illustration the carrier is shown on the ground in front of them.

what to do when I was a young fellow, I might have been a dime farmer," he said, when Jimmie had finished. "As it is, my wife and I have worn our lives away trying to get paying crops from just such land as that. Now we are old, and our children have gone to town and left us. I don't blame them. The farm never did anything for them, any more than it did for us. And all for the lack of knowing what to do!"

Jimmie's face was serious as he watched the old man climb slowly into his dilapidated buggy and drive away.

"I didn't realize how much more of a chance a young fellow had nowadays," until I heard that old man's story," he said to Bill, while they were milking that night. "It makes a lot of difference to have professors and agricultural colleges and experiment stations to turn to in case of trouble."

At that moment Jake came up. "Some of the fellows down at the store last night were talking about getting up a petition to bar you from the

contest," he said. "They say it isn't fair to go and get some professor to tell you what to do."

"Those are the same fellows who were making fun of me last spring for doing what the professor told me, aren't they?"

"I told them that, but they made such a fuss that I had to shut up. They say using stuff on the soil as you and the preacher did ain't practical on a large scale."

"There aren't many bigger cornfields round here than mine and the preacher's," Jimmie answered. "If it turns out to be profitable it will have to be practical, and if it isn't profitable, I shan't get any of the prizes; so what are they worrying about?"

Jake went out without answering, and Jimmie, who was plainly worried by Jake's story, turned to Bill. "Have you heard any of this talk of barring me?" he asked.

"No," Bill replied, "but then, it isn't likely I should. I don't hobnob with the boys as much as Jake does, though they're treating me more like a man than they did when I first came to work for you. You don't realize how much you've done for me, Jimmie. You are the first person who knows my story who has treated me like a man since—"

"And why shouldn't they?" Jimmie interrupted, indignantly. "As long as you do a man's work and act the part

to have a dust mulch to hold what moisture there is."

"Your corn won't suffer from the dry weather as much as some will," the colonel answered. "I took the farmers' short course at the agricultural college last winter, and one of the professors explained it this way. He said all the plant food that plants use has to be dissolved in water before the roots can take it up. He calls that the soil soup. Of course the richer this soup is, the less of it the plants need. So a rich soil will get through a dry spell in a better shape than a poor one. By the way, Jimmie, I'm going down to the agricultural college to the mid-summer institute. You'd better come, too."

"They're talking already of having me barred from the contest for taking the advice of professors. I think I'd better not do anything more to cause opposition."

"Whom do you mean by 'they'?"

"I don't know exactly; one of the fellows I've talked about. I think I'm the only one here who has a better idea of the contest now."

The colonel laughed. "Don't worry about that, my boy. We are running this contest by rules set by me myself, and those rules don't say anything against taking advice from anyone."

The main purpose of the contest is to get people to learn more about raising corn. It's the big corn crops that we are after."

"I'm glad you feel that way

about it."

"Well, now that that is off your mind, what about going down to the agricultural college with me?"

Jimmie finally agreed to go along, and the colonel invited the preacher to accompany them. The next day the one-horse cultivators came. Jimmie set the men to cultivating between the rows; they broke up a crust that had been formed by the last rain, and killed a good many small weeds that were starting.

"I'm glad the corn is so big the neighbors can't see me!" Jake grumbled. "I don't know what your father would say if he should see us killing time this way."

"He will be surprised by a good many things when he gets home," said Mary, who had just come out to the well for a pail of water. "And the biggest surprise of all will be the corn crop on the peat forty."

"Don't be too sure of that," Jake said. "Mr. Hodzkins was telling me the other day that it takes more than a lot of stalks on peat ground to make a crop of corn. He says he's seen a

growth of stalks on such fields with hardly any seed at all."

"Was he really in earnest about it?"

asked Jimmie.

"As much as a man could be."

"Well, there will be \$80 worth of fodder on the forty, anyway," Jimmie said, grimly.

At last husking time came. One of the judges stayed with each contestant while his forty acres was being husked. As there were not judges enough to go round, it was nearly Thanksgiving Day before the husking was over. Each load of corn was taken to the nearest scales as it came from the field, and weighed under the supervision of the judge. The weights were kept secret, and the contest was only guessed at the amount of his yield by counting the loads. According to Jimmie's estimate, the peat forty had yielded about 110 bushels to the acre, and the preacher's forty about seven hundred bushels less.

(Continued next week.)