

"CHARLIE" EATON—A BIGGROWER OF POTATOES AND APPLES

(By E. D. Halliburton in The Farmers' Guide.)

Farmers as a class, dislike publicity. At least that is the conclusion your correspondent has reached after his experiences in interviewing many of them for the "Guide". The statement would seem absurd to a member of the staff of a city "Daily" who comes into continual contact with all sorts of people, rarely meeting one who is averse to seeing his name in print, but then he does not often interview the genuine, hard-working farmer. The farmer-who-chooses is not the sort of a man who aspires to hold the centre of the stage or he would probably have chosen some other profession, and since the publicity that the city business man revels in, puts no dollars in his pocket, he has not that motive for courting it.

As subjects for these sketches your correspondent usually tried to get the men who were rated as among the most successful in their respective localities, in the belief that it is of such farmers and their methods that the average reader would prefer to hear. But some of them strenuously objected to being written up, always on the score that they disliked being singled out from among the perfectly good farmers who were their neighbours, and getting material was sometimes rather difficult. One of these rather difficult ones was Charles Eaton of Canard. He almost balked at being pushed into print but since his barns towered above those of his neighbours, and his potato rows were longer and his orchard area greater and his name more often mentioned, your correspondent's interest in him was relatively greater as a consequence and he has not been able to escape.

Judging in the usual way, by the size of his farm operations, there is no doubt about "Charlie" Eaton's success. There are few, if any men in King's county or in the whole of the Annapolis Valley who carry on mixed farming on so large a scale. More than that before very long one got the idea, intuitively perhaps, that here was a farmer who was successful in a still more satisfactory way, a suspicion, growing stronger all the time, that he was so strong in harmony or in love with his work as to derive a very real enjoyment from it. Prices are of course important. They add the big zest to the game, still to him they are not all important. "I raise potatoes and beef because I like to raise them," he asserted. "I'd go on raising them if I knew I was losing money"; and his crisp, emphatic sentences left no doubt in one's mind but that he would do as he said.

A small man physically, wiry, tamed and somewhat bent, the conclusion of unusual physical energy is nevertheless conveyed. Neither luck nor accident was necessary to the measure of prosperity he has achieved. On his 400 acres of mountain land, run as a side line, he broke up another 15 acres only this spring; this land is in a section unsurpassed for raising potatoes and now, at the age of 60, Mr. Eaton says "I am just getting started up there."

In all the farm's between 650 and 700 acres, 250 on the home farm down in the valley and over 400 on the top of the high sheltering plateau to the South known as the North Mountain. Of the total he has about 300 acres under cultivation, some of it intensive cultivation. Fifty acres have been planted to potatoes this year, 10 acres to corn and four or five to turnips, besides about 80 acres of orchard and hayland enough to cut over 200 tons of hay as well as that needed to oats. Obviously Mr. Eaton has no time to be bored with life. It was Saturday afternoon when I called at the farm, the busy end of a busy week. The owner talked to me as he teamed the pair of "cattle" that worked the hayfork. Delays were not in evidence. As soon as an empty hay-wagon came out of the barn, a loaded one was hauled in; 100 tons, cut, hauled and mowed away, had been the week's work.

One gathers that the potato is the crop nearest Mr. Eaton's heart. He has always grown them and he says that he always will. Of the 50 acres planted this spring 25 acres are certified seed composed of Irish Cobblers,

URNS PRO.



According to reports Dunc. Munro, captain of the Granite Hockey Team, which won the Olympic championship at Chamonix last winter, has come to terms with the Canadiens, professional hockey team of Montreal. It is said he has signed a three year contract calling for \$4,000 per year.

Green Mountains, and Garnet Chilli. The remaining half are Cobblers and Green Mountains, not certified seed. Fifteen acres are on the Mountain Farm where, as he emphasizes, they find it very easy to grow. This farm, or side-show as he calls it, is not the least interesting part of the Eaton operations. Ten years ago he bought 112 acres there with 10 acres cleared, for less than \$400, and today he has one clear 50 acre field and has bought sufficient additional land around it to bring the total acreage up to 400. As potato land he is very enthusiastic about it. The higher altitude makes it ideal for the development of disease resistant plants and certified seed, while the loamy soil as yet hardly tapped is rich and fertile. In short potatoes do exceedingly well and Mr. Eaton already plans to put in about 40 acres there next season. Grain is also a profitable crop on this farm.

A large amount of the manure from 75 head of cattle and other live stock is available for the potatoes and almost half the crop got some manure, but whether manured or not the whole got an uniform heavy application of commercial fertilizer, much of it a well known brand of potato mixture and some of it mixed at home. He said that he was often criticized because of the quantity of chemicals he bought. This Spring his purchases amounted to 50 tons of mixture and Nitrate of Soda besides a car-load of ground limestone for some of his dyke land, but he said, "If you're mean with your feed you'll get a mean crop" and in order to minimize the cost of cultivation and care he looks for maximum crops and he usually strikes a fairly high average.

In general the fertilizer as sown by the planter at the time of planting. He also believes that it pays to give them a moderate application of Nitrate just as they are breaking through the ground; he did this with part of his acreage this year and the appearance of the field would certainly justify the practice. After the application the field is gone over with the cultivator and the fertilizer worked up on the rows as much as possible. Mr. Eaton believes in having the rows far enough apart to allow of generous room for cultivation, between 32 and 36 inches. In this connection a good deal of use is made of a small and very light double mould-board potato plough which he bought in the Aroostook, N.B. Valley a few years ago and which he declares to be almost indispensable. With an attachment for widening or closing in the mould-boards somewhat after the fashion of a cultivator, it is particularly useful for hilling up the plants after the cultivation.

At the time of my visit the fields on the home farm had been sprayed twice and on the Mountain once. The ordinary potato sprayer with the pump driven by wheel gears is used to do the work. The digging is done with a Massey-Harris elevated digger. Last year's crop totalled 9,000 bushels and this year it will be much larger than that if all should go well. At present the half-mile long rows could hardly look better and the unusually large field forms a picture calculated to delight the eye of any potato man.

Mr. Eaton made no attempt to disguise the fact that he disliked milking, although differing from most people who have dislike in this age of reform-

ers; he assured me that he had absolutely no objection to allowing other people to go ahead and milk cows if they wanted to. Naturally then, since he does not want to, he goes in for beef alone, and Shorthorns. A few years ago he paid some attention to the breeding end of the game and used to keep 10 or 12 pure bred cows. It became increasingly difficult to dispose of the young bulls however, and the number of pure bred cows have gradually dwindled to three. As the herd sire he has a fine pure-bred bull in splendid condition. The remainder of the herd consist of grade Shorthorns and as a rule he furnishes from 20 to 30 head for the butcher each year. A few years ago he experimented with a few Holstein but he does not appear to have been impressed with them. And for the smaller breeds of dairy cattle he has nothing but a dyed-in-the-wool one man's contempt. If I remember aright, he classed them as "wascals" but perhaps had there been a Jersey or a Guernsey man about, he would have conceded them something by putting it more mildly.

The stock have all the "luxuries" that the modern barn provides, comfortable quarters, light ventilation and individual water bowls. They are housed on the first floor of the big barn shown in the picture, cows on one side, young cattle and calves on the other, while a large feed room and a roomy box-stall for the bull, occupy one end. A manure cellar takes up the whole of the ground floor and the threshing floor is really two flights up, entered by way of a steep grade in the end not seen in the picture. The attractive-looking building near the house is a horse-barn and garage and was dammed with hay above.

Other live stock include 2 brood sows. Mr. Eaton makes rather a specialty, not of rearing pigs, but of raising them for sale and, for some years he has had a regular clientele who provide a more or less steady market for his output. This spring he disposed of about 200 of these young ones. He has always kept sheep and despite the fact that the flock have now entirely vanished he does not propose to be having them another year. He doesn't like having all his eggs in one basket. Mixed farming, as mixed as possible, is the safest bet, he says.

The activities already described would justify the term large, as applied to the operations of Mr. Eaton and his three sons. But these things are really only big side lines. First of all, the Eatons are orchardists, having 80 acres of orchard and eight additional acres of young trees were set out last spring. They have not yet, however, had as large a crop as they would like to justify. In their best year they picked 4,500 barrels, but much of the orchard is still rather young and last year, Mr. Eaton said, half the fruit blew off.

They follow the methods of orchard culture which have become practically general throughout the Annapolis valley, cultivating the orchard and sowing a cover crop. Nitrate of Soda in one application is sometimes sown alone and sometimes a complete fertilizer is applied as was the case this year. Barnyard manure is not usually used unless in a young orchard which is being intercropped, as is the case of a 10 acre block this year planted to corn to fill the 160 ton silo which was put up last year. The trees are not being headed as low as some growers are now heading them, but on the other hand they are not being pruned so relentlessly as to force all the bearing branches up in the air, described by the growers in the Western part of the county as being similar to the way the Dutchmen prune the tails of their oxen, leaving a tuft of hair at the tip.

They try to keep their fruit clean, both by spraying and dusting. As spraying is not altogether feasible because of the time involved, only those sections of the orchard consisting of trees hardest to keep clean, such as the Gravenstein, are sprayed as a rule, and dust is relied upon to control the greater part of it.

They own their own warehouse and ship their own apples. They used to belong to one of the co-operative fruit companies but Mr. Eaton soon chafed at the rules and regulations. With so much stuff lying around and only a limited time to get it under cover having to wait for his turn made him rather

impatient, so being a small apple and potato company himself, he bought a warehouse and went back to handling his own produce as he had always been accustomed to do.

"Charlie" Eaton would probably have to curtail some of the many departments of farm work were it not that his sons are able lieutenants and take a good deal of work off his hands. Blake, the oldest, is the farm foreman, while the second son is the mechanical genius of the farm and keeps everything in repair from the big Cletrac tractor and motor trucks to hay tadders. Incidentally he took the first two years of the engineering course at Mount Allison University and might have been listed to the farm had not the war intervened. When he returned from overseas he married and settled down on the farm. Mr. Eaton says with truth that he is particularly fortunate in his sons.

Besides a tractor and two motor trucks motive power is supplied by three teams of horses and two teams of "cattle". The latter are particularly valuable for bringing the mountain pasture land under the plough and all spring were being used for this purpose. A mill and cooper shop is run in connection with the farm and here the thousands of apple and potato barrels essential to the marketing of the crop are made. The mountain farms include a good deal of timber land and in this way profitable employment is provided for the winter months. Stave wood is gotten out and sawn up and allowed to dry before the coopers begin to make up the barrels.

There are many big orchardists in Nova Scotia, big potato men and big live-stock men, but there are few who combine the three as "Charlie" Eaton does. He is an outstanding example of the farmer who did not follow the well known advice about putting all the eggs in one basket and watching them all. And his neighbors speak of him as being a very successful farmer. We have a feeling that he would still have been successful had he chosen the

one basket plan. With the capacity for work of which his farm is evidence, coupled with his love of the work, he couldn't be anything else.

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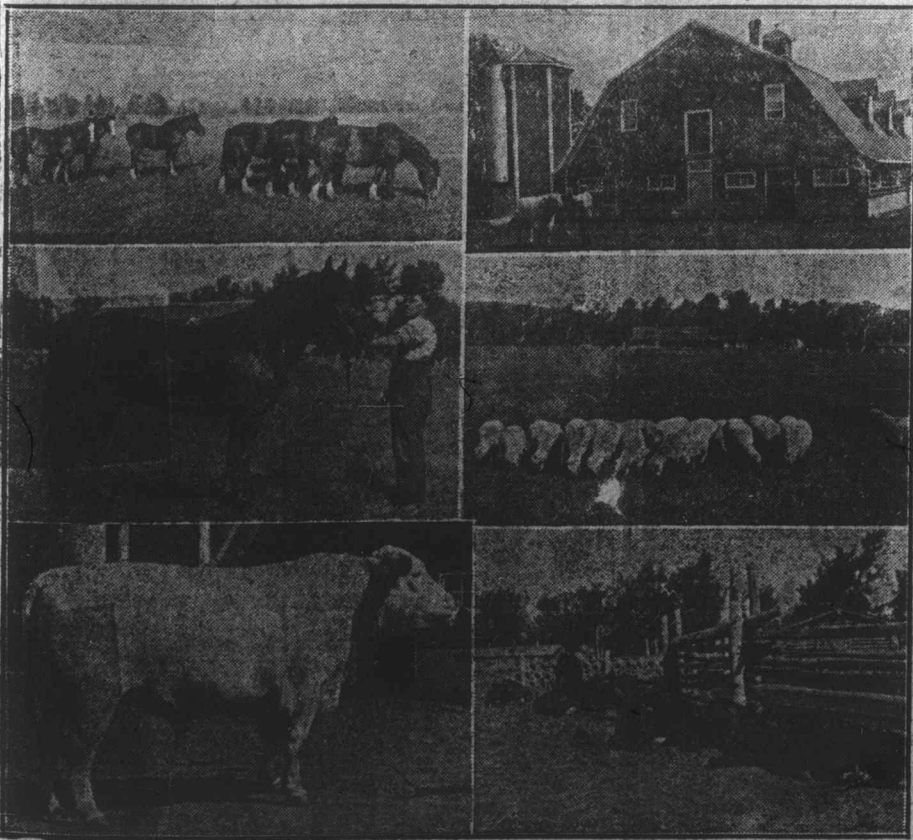
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