

## The Story of an Old Garden



"GOD ALMIGHTY FIRST PLANTED A GARDEN; AND, INDEED, IT IS THE PUREST OF HUMAN PLEASURES. IT IS THE GREATEST REFRESHMENT TO THE SPIRIT OF MAN, WITHOUT WHICH BUILDING AND PALACES ARE BUT GROSS HANDIWORK." - LORD BACON.

PROVINCIAL



"It was I ween a lovely spot of ground  
Was nought around but images of rest,  
Sleep-soothing groves, and beds of pleasant green."

*Thomson's "Castle of Indolence."*

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"And I must work thro' months of toil  
And years of cultivation  
Upon my proper patch of soil  
To grow my own plantation."

*Tennyson's "Amphion."*

**V**EARS ago—nearly a quarter of a century ago it is now—a strange infatuation began to possess the minds of men in the new West. Speculation and unreality were in the air, and fortunes were made and lost to the tap of the auctioneer's hammer. Old men saw visions, and young men dreamed dreams, wild, foolish dreams, dreams of effects without causes.

wealth without labor, ripe fruit to be gathered at the time of seed planting. It was all a great gamble, fortunes to be found in the turn of a card, or the rise of a market, rather than in the cultivation of the soil or the development of industry. The time was one of intense excitement and strain, a time of high fever, which left the new settlements debilitated and weak.

But wild as was the craze, it served to attract to the country men of the right sort, men of brawn and brain, real settlers, whose modest ambition was to found on the new prairies homes for themselves and their



children; men who were content to plan and plant, to till and build, and if need be,—to wait. Such homeseekers — and not the foolish speculators — were the men who had sane views of the future of the West, who saw its possibilities and its real destiny. The sods



Mouth of Omand's Creek

they turned and the trees they planted made more for permanency and for real progress than the dickering of all the ephemeral speculators together.

At the height of this notorious boom, in the small army of home-seekers, came a man from "Old England," a skilled gardener, by name Frederick Salter, the elder. An indomitable worker, and having every faith in the rising West, he at once set about making a home here. From all the land around the City, he selected some hundred acres to the west and began to lay out a garden, growing vegetables and flowers to meet a demand which increased, little by little, as the years went by.

Salter's choice of location proves him to have been a man of shrewd judgment. It was a high ridge of garden land as good as could be found, sloping down to a fine wooded river bank. On the south-





west, Omand's Creek, flowing down to the Assiniboine, had, in long years, plowed out for itself a deep channel, which in time Nature had smoothed and planted with elm and maple, oak, willow and poplar, making a charming glen. It pleased his gardener's eye, and promised to lend itself easily to the beautifying he had planned for it. Besides this, his garden lay in the direction towards

which the best growth of the City would inevitably lead.

Originally, this plot had formed two small homesteads of the old Parish of St. James, whose quaint little church stands near by the school and burying-ground. Across the plot wound the historic Portage trail, the connecting link between the settlements of Kildonan on the east and Portage la Prairie on the west; and at a still earlier date the highway for the trains of squeaking Red River carts as they started on their long treks over

"the far flung fenceless prairie  
Where the quick cloud shadows trail"

and to the "posts" and the buffalo fields of the Far West.

So while stocks rose and fell in the young City, while frenzy waxed and then abated, the gardener thought only of his garden and of the home he was making. Early and late he toiled, day after day untiringly, lifting trees from the well-wooded river bank and planting upon the prairie





until he had enclosed some thirty acres, and his garden had a shelter against the relentless north-west winds. He drew water from the river for his seedlings, and filled gap after gap in his groves until he had double and triple rows of thriving trees. North of the house he planted belts of fine firs. The labor expended on these thousands of trees, planting them and tending them to maturity, must have been enormous. But a home he must

have, beautiful as the homes in the old land are, where men plant and build for generations that come after.

Years passed—the trees, the city, and the whole wide West grew and flourished apace. To the people of Winnipeg, the Salter Garden came to be a landmark. Its white gates on either side of the Avenue opening into shady lanes of fine healthy maples, the well-tilled garden with its endless rows of vegetables, the plots of flowers, the wooded creek and the firs down by the river seemed a very oasis on the blank stretch of prairie.

It is to be regretted that the man whose energy and perseverance created this old garden should not have been able to remain and see the work his hands had wrought still further develop. Ill-health compelled Mr. Salter to seek a warmer climate; but old ideals and old energy still remain, and in sunny California the gardener is laying out another garden, this time of orange trees.



A new era has dawned upon the Canadian West. The wild frenzy and the sorry waste of the boom of the early eighties are gone now and forgotten. The long, lean years that followed, years of discouragement, but of steady, slow progress, are also gone and well-nigh forgotten. At last Western Canada has come into its own and, rising like a young giant refreshed, has shaken off all discouragement and fears. Homeseekers in legions are pouring in, and by townships and by great tracts like provinces the prairies are being peopled. Towns and cities are springing up as if by the magic of Aladdin.

Most marked of all has been the growth of Winnipeg, and phenomenal in Winnipeg has been the western trend of building. Once the Salter Garden was well out of the City. Now streets are stretching out to it, and the whirr and clang of the electric car have taken the place of the squeaking carts of a quarter of a century ago.

The Salter Garden is



comparatively near. No site could be more suitable or desirable for residence. The car service is not a promise or a "will be," but is an accomplished fact. The lots are of a liberal size, the community most select. Building restrictions have been placed upon the property. A large part of the property has already been secured by men who are to build at once.



The truth of the old adage that "it is an ill wind that blows nobody good" is once more exemplified in that Mr. Salter's misfortune in being compelled to seek a warmer climate gave to Winnipeg one of her most charming residential districts.

The old man "builded better than he knew," for the matured results of all his toil will beautify not one home, but many.

He has left to Winnipeg a goodly heritage which will be more appreciated as the years go by. Many a hard-worked business man, escaping from the noise and bustle of

the City to his home among the trees, will rise up and call him blessed who planted the old garden so many years ago.

"For the side ground you are to fill them with a variety of alleys : private, to give a full shade some of them, wheresoever the sun be."—*Lord Bacon*.



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