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"This year I sold from a twelve-acre patch $1,200 worth of potatoes. I have paid for the land three or four times with potatoes, and some years potatoes were pretty cheap"—thus said Fred A. Johnson, of Port Stanley, potato farmer.

The growing of potatoes on Canadian farms is apt to take one or two forms: it may be a highly-specialized industry, to which other farm work constitutes a mere ground work, or it may be merely one especially-lucrative phase of manifold farm activity. In either case the result is the same. Possibly no farm crop is, at all times, more in demand than the modern form of that esculent first called by the Spaniards "batata." Certainly no crop will show a better proportionate profit, all things considered; year in and year out, than the ubiquitous potato.

The writer has found, on Ontario farms, splendid examples of these two phases of potato-growing. Let us first briefly consider the case of a man who has become rather an expert, a specialist. I first heard him described in the city of St. Thomas as "Johnson, the potato man," and at once went to visit him. Fred A. Johnson lives on a hundred and fifty acre farm very near the village of Port Stanley, on Lake Erie. When he moved to his present place forty-three years ago, he put in five acres of potatoes, and in no single year since has he failed of a crop. Space forbids a detailed explanation of this expert's methods, but a few facts may here be set down that should be of value to farmers throughout the Province.

Of the entire 150 acre area of the farm, twenty-eight acres are devoted to potatoes. This area comprises two fields of ten and eighteen acres, respectively, and in two fields, each of this size, the annual crop is produced, part of a scientific rotation. In preparing a field for potatoes, Mr. Johnson first grows a crop of oats, seeded down with clover. While the first crop of clover is cut for hay, the second is left on the ground, and the mat thus formed is plowed under the following spring. Clover, by the way, Mr. Johnson regards as absolutely invaluable for use on the potato ground. When spring comes, plowing and discing are done, barnyard manure being applied at the rate of twelve to fifteen loads per acre. Should the supply of manure be exhausted, a fertilizer consisting of potash (24%), ammonia (10%) and dissolved phosphate (66%) is applied by means of a fertilizer drill. The soil is, after manuring or fertilizing, thoroughly cultivated with a two-horse cultivator, and this operation is repeated from five to seven times, at intervals of a few days.

Owing to the close proximity of the United States gardens, with their early varieties, Mr. Johnson prefers to handle late potatoes. Planting, for the most part, is done the first week in June. Just here it might be mentioned that, on this farm, seed-cutting is done by hand, the proprietors having found that, no matter how efficient the machine used, spuds went to the fields without the necessary "eye." As Mr. Johnson said, "When every potato means two or three cents, one must be careful that there is an eye on each piece planted." The planting is completed by about the 10th of June, and thereafter comes continuous cultivation. After the seed has been planted for a week, the ground is harrowed lightly, and a week or so later a cultivator, with hillers, is used. Once the plants appear above the surface, cultivation continues at intervals of one week during the entire growing season.

A one-horse hiller is used after the plants attain a fair growth. Then comes spraying.

"We use an American machine," Mr. Johnson said, "a one-horse affair, by means of which the driver, with a simple pressure on the foot brake, directs the spray over eight rows on each trip up and down the field. We use a paris green spray for bugs, as, in my forty-three years' experience I have never had a case of blight or rot. In the last two years I have sold 15,000 bushels of potatoes to my St. Thomas customers alone, and I have yet to hear of one single bad potato. This year we will pick about 6,000 bushels, as usual, and I venture to say that here won't be a quart measure full of potatoes unfit for the best market. If you select your seed and keep your plants healthy and your soil clean, you need not bother spraying for rot or blight."

There is no hand-picking on this potato farm. A four-horse potato-picker is user—an American machine, also—and does the work in a wonderful manner. As the steel share uproots the potatoes, they are thrown on a revolving chain-carrier which deposits them in a box carried below the driver's seat. A boy walks behind the machine, removing the filled boxes and replacing them with "empties," which have previously been deposited at intervals along the rows.

"That machine cost me as much as a binder, but I wouldn't be without it at any price," Mr. Johnson said. "Nowadays one must use the latest machinery if he is to keep up with the fast-changing conditions. Growing over twenty-five acres of potatoes, we can never go back to the old system of hand-picking."

The Johnson potatoes are stored for the time being, and later on marketed. Mr. Johnson has over forty private customers in the city of St. Thomas, including hotels, colleges, stores, etc., and, as he says, "St. Thomas will take all the potatoes I can send it." Besides, should he care to neglect his local market, he can easily dispose of his crop each year in answer to demands made upon him by United States dealers and buyers.

Now, as to seed—you couldn't sell Mr. Johnson any, be your specimens ever so perfect. He believes in seed selection from his own crop, and his great success has justified his policy. On no account would he buy seed from an outsider. No variety, he says, will ever "run out" if properly propagated by intelligent selection. His favorite "late" varieties are the Worley and the Carmen, the latter of which he has grown continuously for a quarter of a century. Mr. Johnson will not put the Carmen on the market till after the month of January, as not till then, he believes, does it attain perfection for table use.

The writer regrets that he is unable to reproduce here a portion of what is probably the most complete and unique book of farm accounting to be found in Canada. "My books show that my first sale from this farm, forty-three years ago, was 54 lbs. of wool at 54 cents a pound," read Mr. Johnson from his accounts. "From that date on, I can show a written record of every transaction made on this farm, if only for a postage stamp."

Mention must needs be made of this home, built, in no small measure, from "potato money." It is surely one of the finest to be found on any Canadian farm. Such conveniences as a private acetylene plant, dumb waiter, wood-elevator from cellar to kitchen, and hot, cold and soft water on tap, all contribute to a home-life which appeals to the visitor as truly admirable.

So much for one who has made his twenty-eight acres of potatoes the object of special study and experiment. Let us now turn for a moment to the case of an Erin township farmer, Mr. Charles Baldwin, who runs on ordinary mixed farming principles some 200 acres near the village of Hillsburg, Ontario. Above all, first and foremost, be it understood that Mr. Baldwin is a successful, practical, all-round farmer; his work with potatoes is in the way of a little extra attention to a very common crop.

Three years ago Mr. Baldwin sold the potato crop from a fifteen acre field for about $1,000. How much profit? you ask. Mr. Baldwin puts it this way:

"Frankly, I reckon that the potato crop pays all farm-running and minor expenses, leaving the returns from other farm work for any other use we desire."

—By H. B. McKinnon, in The Canadian Countryman.

THE FATE OF AZUMA;

Or, The South African Millionaire.

CHAPTER I.

"Stop, you psalm-singing brute, and take that."

On the stillness, the extraordinary stillness of the African veldt, which resembles no other silence, the voice of the man, which was a pleasant one, sounded almost metallic, and his wrath and fury were increased by the fact that he was ordinarily a peaceful man, not given to fighting, or even to war, but the cringing note, so often apparent in his race, was missing, as he gave the man addressed a blow with his fist that sent him reeling.

The "psalm-singing brute" was a Boer, and what had roused the Jew's ire was the fact that he had caught him in the act of maltreating a Kaffir woman. The Boer is at once a fatalist and a respecter of pluck, (he does not, unfortunately, think the Englishman plucky, or used not to, that was the trouble), and he desisted for a number of reasons. First of all, evidently it was the will of God that he should not beat this woman; secondly, he recognized that this was not one of the hated Englishmen, and he imagined that he was a German; thirdly, greatest reason of all, the young man's fists were strong, and a few more knocks of the kind were not to be looked forward to with pleasure. He relinquished his hold on the woman, who stood, boldly defiant, gazing with hate at her tormentor, with deep gratitude at her rescuer, while she wiped the drops of blood that were falling from her naked back and dripping down her arms with the end of her skirt.

The young German Jew was about to walk off. He didn't think that this man would touch her again; instead it was the Boer who slouched away and the woman and the man stood alone on the side of the road in the glaring sun.

"Haven't you anyone who . . . I mean, can't you get someone to bathe it—water?" he said, seeing that she did not understand. The woman smiled and advanced towards him. She did not mind her wounds now. Had she not had many which had terminated less speedily? for she was in the employ of a family of Transvaal Boers, the most cruel and bestial of all.

She laughed, and as she did so he noticed how young she was, how beautiful, if one can say beautiful of a woman who has all the characteristics of a race possessing all the reverse standards to the accepted ones of beauty. She was not "fair to look upon," but she was of a rich tawny color, and her shape was like that of a bronze statue, while her eyes were liquid and full of intelligence, almost of sweetness.

She came up uttering one of the few words she knew, but which sufficed to proclaim him master.

"Baas—Baas—" she said, and kneeling kissed his boot.

"Don't, don't do that." He drew away, and shook his head then he pulled out some coins, a handful of them, from his pocket. Her eyes gleamed for a moment at the unwonted sight, but she also shook her head. She would not take them, and the young man passed along the road and into the farmhouse where he had lodged last night, the first night of his arrival. In a few moments the incident had passed out of his mind.

Adolph Lieb was the son of a German Jew, a Jew of Frankfort, a retired jeweller, who had made a fortune, and, more than that, was counted a very respectable man. The Liebs could trace their ancestry for several generations, but also they had not risen to the dignity of that modern corporation of distinguished moneylender with aristocratic proclivities called bankers. No Lieb had as yet moved in the smart world, but all had had a certain standing in the town of Frankfort. Years ago one had been a gold-beater, centuries before that, one, had had the astute inspiration of changing monies, in a superbly honest manner, which had precluded his making a great fortune, for when a Jew doesn't make money it is not because he can't, but because he won't, and there are as many honest Jews as honest Christians. And Adolph's father had followed his family's traditions, and given good jewels for the money, at reasonable prices, and was consequently the delight of the great ladies of Frankfort. No wedding of any importance took place in Frankfort or the vicinity without Heinrich Lieb having contributed to its magnificence and it had been known that he had been sent for to Cologne, and Hamburg, and even Berlin. He had wonderfully good taste himself, and knew the tastes of the renowned families of his native town so well that he never wasted their time nor his by offering them anything that would not suit them; while, as he said: "The word 'impossible,' that is not in my dictionary. If there is a red sapphire anywhere, anywhere, then Heinrich Lieb can get it. If Heinrich Lieb doesn't get it, then the thing doesn't exist." And apart from the fact that he was an honest and artistic jeweller, he was sympathetic. It was told that a great lady, whose parties were more sought after than those of royalty, had once exclaimed:

"I love old Lieb!"

And while people laughed, they had understood what the Grafin meant. He was a charming old man to deal with, and many a friendly chat had passed between him and his women customers; while, over wedding presents and the re-setting of heirlooms, men high up in the social and financial world would give him a glass of wine and offer him a good cigar. His shop was a small, unostentatious one, like his house on the Judengasse, and he pretended that he was a poor man knowing that nobody believed him. If occasionally he had advanced money on jewels to save some decadent house of old name and standing, it wasn't in the least that he was a pawnbroker, but merely that he had done it out of kindness of heart, often giving more than the value, and keeping the jewels jealously guarded from any human eye till such time as they could be redeemed. If acts of this kind enhanced the good feeling that everyone bore him, and increased his trade, it was but just.

It had been a grief to him when he finally decided to retire from business that neither of his sons would continue it, yet he knew that it was the natural consequence of the education he had given them. He had sent them to the best schools which would admit tradesmen's sons and Jews, and to the University, and made them travel. After all they would have enough to do as they liked; only to his eldest son, Adolphe, who was the cleverest, he had said something which the boy had never forgotten. He had told him:

"When I die, for simple people, tradesmen's children, you will be very well off; but I tell you this now, if you don't make money, then you lose one of the greatest pleasures in life, the greatest pleasure. There is nothing, nothing like it in the world, it is better than love for it is more lasting, and then love cannot buy money, and money can buy love." He laughed when he said this, as if it were a joke, but the truth in it impressed the boy; only it seemed to him that a little would not be enough, that to make a little money and work very hard for it was not worth the trouble, that to be the richest man in the world, and know how to spend it—that would be magnificent.

And while old Lieb began to interest himself in politics and sunned himself on the terrace of the beautiful house he had built in the country, a few miles from Frankfort, and entertained, with his charming and unsophisticated wife, a circle of the princes of Frankfort trade, big wine merchants and tobacco merchants, picture dealers and hotel keepers, of the more exclusive kind, artists and pianists, whom he helped, and occasionally an impecunious Prince or Graf whom he also helped, young Adolphe received an invitation from the son of his father's agent in South Africa, to visit him there, to see the country. This was a short time before the Boer War was declared.

Old Lieb was quite willing that his son should go. He had never seen his agent, who as a matter of fact was simply a middleman between him and one of the diamond mine owners, and who had a small share in one of the diamond mines. All that he knew about him was that he was an Afrikander, that he was married and had a large family, and that he sent him very good diamonds at very low prices. As a matter of fact old Lieb thought the Cape diamonds too white.

He generally preferred to buy old ones here and there and to re-set them.

"They are different to women," he would say, "they improve with age."

Adolphe's mother didn't like the idea at all, and his sisters implored him not to bring back a dusky wife, but old Lieb thought it would be the making of him. Adolphe was beginning to kick his heels about in Frankfort, imbibing a taste for doing nothing, for entertaining actresses at fashionable restaurants, and—most useless occupation of all—for learning the violin.

"When a man begins to learn the violin, he is spoilt for everything else," old Lieb would say, while he bought the most expensive box available, for his family to enjoy the opera.

"Now, why should my son inherit my taste for music and not my taste for diamonds," he would say, "there you are, if a young man can get hold of the wrong inheritance from his parents he does."

And Adolphe had torn himself away from fascinating Frankfort, where, although his position was not in the great world, it was yet an enviable one, and met his friend at Liverpool, returning from a business visit to London for his father, and the two young men sailed together.

Before he started, old Lieb had a serious and characteristic talk with his son, dwelling on his old age, and the chances and accidents of life and death, which might make it that they should never meet again. He recommended his mother to him specially.

"The young, they can always get on, and you and your brother and sisters all love each other; but your mother—I wish you always to think of her first and yourself afterwards. How good she is, that you will never know." Then:

"And keep your eyes open out there, who knows, you might see something—a mine, perhaps, what can I tell? Well, write and tell me. You do not care for business here in Frankfort, well perhaps you will care for it out there. There is good in every place, also money to be made in every place, perhaps even in the desert. One day diamonds will be made with sand."

And Adolphe promised to keep his eyes open, without the least intention of doing so, and started out full of expectation of pleasure, and with a letter of credit on a Cape Town banker, which was in proportion with his father's means and his affection for him. He took his violin with him, which amused his father.

But to the town-bred European, accustomed to the luxury of Frankfort, to its pretty architecture, its wealth and amusement, there was nothing very attractive in the aridity of South Africa. The buildings were hideous, and the want of vegetation, of cutivated gardens, oppressed him. Nor did he find himself particularly in sympathy with the people whose guest he was. They did not understand him nor he them. It is nearly always so in a new country. One understands neither the pathos nor the humor of a country in which one has not been brought up till one has lived in it a long time. He would have found the same thing in London or America, and though he would not have owned it, he was homesick. His friends lived at Kimberley, and it was somewhat of a relief when his host one day suggested that he and his son should accompany him to Johannesburg. He liked Johannesburg a great deal better than Kimberley, which was a dried-up arid-looking place.

Here there were signs of activity, and the presence of little gardens full of roses and carnations were like pools of cool water to one's eyes, after dust and heat. They had travelled by coach, and it had been something of a new experience to be carried across a swollen river they came to in a packing-case worked by pulleys, and the novelty of the experience when they once slept in an outspan in the open wrapped each one in a karos, gave him something to write about to his father.

The place where his host was to meet the mine-owners was a farm, situated a few miles out of Johannesburg on the Riet river, nestling discreetly among the hills, with something of the taciturnity and the "leave us alone" look of the Boers themselves, but the want of comfort of the house, with its whitewashed walls, and floors strewn with cowdung, its rough benches and chairs made of 'riem' (hide) instead of cane, placed against the wall, the dull, surly look of the owners, the dirt and general want of sweetness, filled him with dreariness. To him it seemed absurd that while people could be happy and comfortable in Europe, they should put up with such things as this. Little did he imagine that one day every fibre of his being, every interest of his mind would be centred on just such a place as this, and that South Africa would speak of Adolphe Lieb almost with bated breath, as they would speak of a king, who had also partaken something of a supernatural character.

And two things struck him with some force since he had been in South Africa, though at the time he did not know how they had impressed him, nor what bearing they would have on his future life. One was that when they heard he was German, the Boer farmers treated him with a great deal more consideration than they did his English friends. Later he understood this better. There is no doubt that if Jameson had not rushed in where Governments feared to tread, the Germans would have accomplished courteously, and on a friendly footing, what the British did by force, or at least would have gradually occupied in the Transvaal very much the same position which we now occupy in Egypt. While the greatest colonizers in the world, we are undoubtedly the most tactless. Temperaments we have nothing to do with, we are utterly without savoir faire, we treat everyone as if they had reached the same standpoint as ourselves, whether they are black or white.

"What! don't you do as we do? then you must learn to do so at once for it is the only way." And, if opinions differ: "You must do it that way, it may not seem right to you, but it is British, therefore it must be right, and you will see it presently."

That is the secret of our slow progress, that is why India and Australia are such miles behind America. The Americans don't insist on old material being used again and again, they take the materials at hand and use them to the best of their ability they use the cautiousness of the Scotchman, the accuracy and instinctive discipline of the German, the recalcitrance of the Irishman, the ignorance of the Hungarian, the Slav, the Pole, the Swede, and the Italian for their own purposes, but they do not say to this one and that:

"Be American, give up your national disposition, your customs, your instincts." Above all they don't say the fatal word: "Wach," which is so very harmful in countries where dirt is considered as a providentially instituted protection against climate.

The feature which struck him, although he did not know it, was one which had caused him a feeling of "malaise" before, the other which in a way influenced every action of his life, sometimes inciting to success, sometimes impeding his triumphal march—yet, perhaps not the whole of his life; the day came when he relinquished this, the mental lever of his ambitions—it was the realization of the want of prestige his people, he and his friends enjoyed, because they were simply tradesmen. Adolphe was, like so many Jews, a climber at heart. The Jew has been obliged to aim at great wealth, and at position, for even then he is not able to run his race fairly with the world, how then does he fare without these?

Even in Frankfort, Adolphe had felt twinges of envy and jealousy. His education, his manners, his intelligence, even his looks—for he was not furiously semitic in appearance—seemed to justify that he should move in a more rarefied atmosphere than that of the tradesmen's sons of the town; yet it had been impossible, always, when he had tried to enter clubs of a more exclusive sort, or, as he had once dreamed to do, to enter the Army. Caste had struck him a blow, and he had found that it was impossible for him to soar above the haunts of his race, his trade. Even the affection and esteem in which his father was held made no difference. Like an insect tied to a pin by a thoughtless child, he had found that he could go no further, that if he tried to go beyond the limits he was pulled back with a jerk, with the danger—metaphorically speaking—of losing a leg. And here, in the Transvaal, he noticed it even more. In this confusion, this conflicting medley of authorities and rulers, in which it seemed that the Uitlanders worked one way, the Boers another, and the British government a third, each one checkmating the other, while none dared really advance, only those were respected who had enormous wealth or government positions. While thought grew and developed in his active brain, and matured like grain in its sheaf, the incident of the Kaffir woman and the Boer was the one that made it burst forth into corruscating flame, a flame around which presently all his future ambitions centred and warmed themselves.

(To be continued.)

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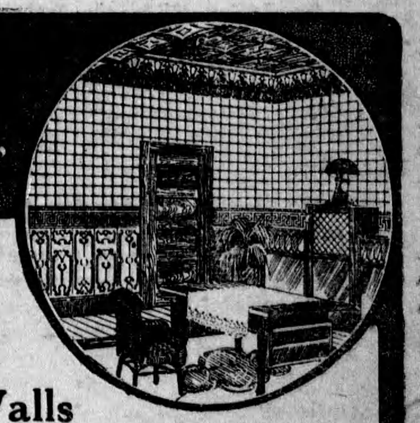

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