SHORT STORY

Ebb-Tide Of Fear

By FERN AUBLE

Eddie Ritcher closed the hospital door gently. He stood outside for a moment, his eyes narrowed thoughtfully. Inside, his wife lay quietly, a gentle smile curving her lips as she held Eddie's promise to her heart.

Don't you worry your pretty little head about anything, Mary," he had told her, his eyes earnest and loving. "Everything's going to be all right. I've got the promise of a fine new job and we won't have to worry about bills or expenses or anything from now on."

Eddie Richter, one-time money rider. Even yet, jockeys throughout the racing world talked of him with more than a little awe. He was a sort of shining star toward which silk-clad figures, up for the first time in a classic of sleek horseflesh, groped for inspiration. For Eddie Richter had been an inspired rider.

That is, until the day he was up on Gallowing Wind, the great chestnut mare that had startled the entire racing world with her amazing bursts of speed.

On the day in question, he looked at the track nervously. It had drizzled all night and the course was a sea of mud. The horses were brought to the barrier, and Eddie leaned over Galloping Wind's neck and spoke to her reassuringly. She tossed her head and reared. The horses broke raggedly and Galloping Wind, on the outside, ran last.

At the three-quarter post, Eddie leaned over and said coaxingly, "Come on, girl, now's the time. You can do it. Why, the rest of those bangtails can't touch you for speed. Come on, now, let's show 'em."

Behind the love in her eyes there was worry, too.

Galloping Wind lengthened her stride in response to the appeal in Eddit's voice. She moved up, making her bid. And then, with victory within grasp, Galloping Wind stumbled and went down with Eddie under her.

When they got him out, the Doc shook his head as he went over Eddie's body with knowing fingers. "I don't know," he said doubtfully, "he's pretty much bunged up. We can tell more after we get him to the hospital and have X-rays taken."

He lay there four months, his broken body an intolerable agony. The pain wouldn't have been so bad, if he could have gotten the picture out of his mind of lying under Galloping Wind, the thunder of flying hoofs coming toward him. Something had gone out of Eddie then and been replaced by fear.

When he came out of the hospital, he and Mary faced the fact that their savings were gone. Things got steadily worse. Eddie didn't know anything but horses and horse racing and he couldn't endure the sight of a horse.

Finally, matters came to a climax when Mary had to be rushed to the hospital for an emergency operation. She came through all right but behind the love in her eyes there was worry too.

As he stood outside the door, Eddie came to his decision. He left the hospital and turned toward the track and to George Graybar. Graybar, fabulously wealthy sportsman, owner of the Graybar stables from which had come Shooting Comet, Whirlwind, Highpockets and a host of other famous horses—and Galloping Wind.

Something in Eddie's face brought a welcoming smile from Graybar. "Well, it's about time, Eddie," he boomed. "I wondered how long it would be before you'd be around to see me."

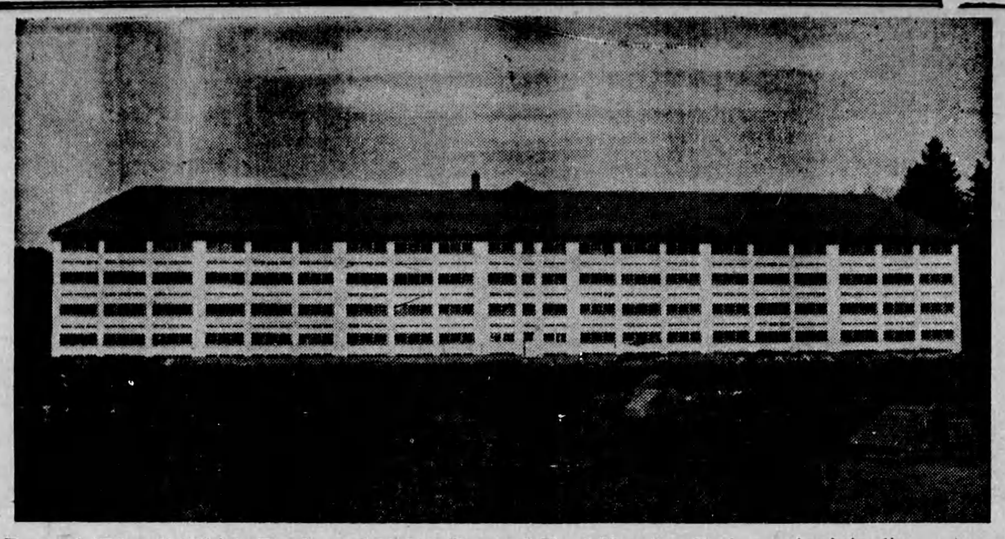
They walked out to the stables, to the smell of clean hay and the munching of the horses in their stalls. When they came to the last stall, there was Galloping Wind.

The great horse stretched out her neck and nuzzled softly. Eddie swallowed the lump in his throat as he turned to Graybar who was watching them.

"She remembers me!" Eddie's eyes were shining. "When can I ride her, sir?" There was a great excitement in his eyes.

Eddie had come home.

The End



Part of "Plant" Which Produces 120,000 Dressed Fowl Yearly—Brains and originality—plus a lot of hard work—can still pay off in a big way, as is evidenced by the success of N. W. White of Seaforth, Ont. Still in his early 30's he has built up a poultry business that would be hard to match either in Canada or the United States. Poultrymen come to Seaforth from near and far to inspect the White plant, the chief feature of which is this brooder house, four stories high and almost 100 yards long. Built two years ago it incorporates an original feed system of Mr. White's own design—one which saves him a large proportion of the labor troubles which plague most poultrymen. Among the many other unique features of the building are a complete modern apartment to house the "staff" which at present consists of two students from the O.A.C.—third-year men in animal husbandry—there both to earn and to learn.

THE FARM FRONT

by John Russell

When it comes to putting away milk products we Canadians have quite an edge on the Australians. We also top them at consuming poultry, eggs, fish and game, tomatoes and citrus fruits.

But the Aussies are far ahead in their consumption of sugar and syrups, fruits—other than tomatoes and citrus—and most sorts of vegetables except the leafy varieties.

As to meat, there's really no comparison. Our 1947 consumption of 123 pounds per capita looks rather small as compared to the Australian mark of 211 pounds a head. Our 40 pounds per capita of pork and pork products was almost double theirs — but "Down Under" they got away with 71.5 pounds of mutton and lamb as compared to a mere 4.6 pounds here.

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The extension of rural electrification in Canada during the past few years is almost incredible. Latest reports show some 185,000 rural customers of electrical power lines in this country—an increase of over 120,000 since the end of the war.

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Farmers intending to plant fall wheat might do well to investigate a new chemical, claimed to be much superior to previous fungicides in the treatment of seed.

The chemists call it—take a long breath now — ethyl mercury ptoluene sulfonilide; but dealers in farm chemicals and fertilizers will no doubt sell it to you under some name far less jaw-breaking than that.

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In tests this spring this chemical is said to have given excellent results in treating seed of spring wheat, oats, barley, rye and flax. It can be used either wet or dry with equally good results. As with other seed disinfectants it does not control loose smut in wheat, for which the experts recommend purchasing the new disease-free seed plus proper crop rotation; but it has proved highly effective for stinking smut and bunt.

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Poultrymen who have been depending on the time-consuming methods of dipping or dusting to rid their chickens of mites and lice now have a much easier way of doing this—by spraying.

Three years ago an Illinois specialist sprayed a mite-infected brooder house with a five per cent solution of DDT. The young chicks which were later placed in that house grew up without ever having even a bowing acquaintance with a mite or louse.

Since that time this man has sprayed many brooder and laying houses in the same manner. In every case the mites soon disappeared. When he sprayed the litter thoroughly, as well as the house, even the lice present on the chickens disappeared.

* * *

For those who do a bit of carpentry at home, here's a hint which might be useful. With the passage of time the figures and markings on steel squares or rulers tend to become unreadable. If you have one of these just paint the entire square or rule with quick drying white enamel or aluminum paint—then immediately, with a dry cloth, wipe away the excess enamel or paint. Then let it dry, and your markings and figures will be readable as ever.

* * *

Now is the season when working farm horses must be carefully watched for signs of overheating. Most of such trouble comes on a muggy, cloudy day when there is little air movement.

Watch how hard the horse is breathing, and give it rest periods often. Animals that do not sweat should be watched too, because these are the ones that most often go out with heat prostration.

Treatment of animals suffering heat prostration is difficult. Most of them die, no matter what you do; and those which recover are seldom much good for work.

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Collar sores on work horses should be washed and kept clean, but it isn't advisable to use disinfectants, according to a well-known vetinary authority. A quart of water with a teaspoonful of salt in it, or the same amount of water with two tablespoons of soda is good for washing such wounds. Most mild lotions or ointments have a tendency to help the wound heal—always provided you can keep the collar off the animal for a few days, not otherwise.

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Then there's the old one about the hired man who was complaining about the stinginess of the wife of the farmer he was working for. "I was sittin' there eatin' my breakfast, and all of a sudden' she says to me, 'Jabez, do you know how many griddle cakes you've just et??' I told her No, that I never bothered to keep count of matters such as that. 'Well, I can tell you,' she says. 'It's just exactly twenty nine.' And do you know, it made me so durned mad that I got up and walked away from the table without even finishing my breakfast."

Come And Get It, Chicks — Third year O.A.C. Student who is spending summer at the great poultry plant of N. W. White near Seaforth which turns out 120,000 dressed fowl annually. He is seen operating part of unique and labor-saving feed system which is one of the features of the huge brooder house.

Socialism (?)

The Waleswood Colliery in Britain is providing a most embarrassing test case for British Socialism. It is a relatively unimportant unit in the British coal-mining industry. It is one of those pits which have become unprofitable to work, and the National Coal Board proposes to close it as no longer economic. The Waleswood miners, however, object. They don't want to work elsewhere. They have their homes in the vicinity and they object to being moved. Surely, they say, a Socialist government is not going to put the profit motive before that of human rights.

For Once And All

Husband: "The barometer's dropped again."

Wife: "George, you keep saying that—why don't you use a stronger nail this time to hang it on?"

Floods May Prove Future Blessing

After monopolizing public attention for over a month, those floods out on the Prairies have passed from the front pages of most newspapers. They are remembered only for the tremendous damage they did to land, roads, and western crop prospects. But right now the soil experts are balancing up the damage done against some of the things on the credit side of the ledger. And these are important too—how important nobody can really say at present.

People who believe in weather cycles, which is practically everybody in the West, have their fingers crossed—writes James H. Gray in the Vancouver Daily Province. Recalling the dust bowl conditions of a decade ago, they have been wondering if we are not due for some more of the same.

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It could be, but many people are now taking the line that the floods have filled the sub-soil water storage system to an extent that will enable crops to withstand serious drouth. Certainly the floods have changed the face of the Western prairie.

Lakes that once carried water traffic and then dried up into dry marsh or mud flats are lakes again. Marshland that dried up and became wheat farms is now back under water and will likely stay that way. Farmers of such land are out of business.

The vast expanse of unbroken prairie, so familiar to air travel during the war, is now a land dotted with brimming creeks and rivers and thousands of minature lakes in the corners of farmers' fields. All this will be reflected in less land sown to wheat and more to oats and barley.

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More important, however, than the water that lies on the ground is the water that has soaked deep into the earth. The crowning disaster of the dust-bowl years was when the farm wells dried up. Life without water became impossible for man and beast. These wells draw the water from surrounding porous soil or gravel beds. When this underground store is depleted, it can be replenished, during the Summer, only by heavy rainfall.

If, as now, the underground storage is full, rain does not have to fall to save livestock and farm families.

There is, of course, a contrary school of thought that regards the sub-soil water levels as inconsequential. They argue that it doesn't matter how much water there is in the soil, if the hot winds start to blow across the plains again. It may be, that these two schools of thought will be tested this year. After a cold and backward Spring, it turned hot in Manitoba and one day broke an all-time record when the mercury hit 94 degrees. Hot winds were blowing on that day and many a set of fingers were crossed.

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Aside from this argument altogether, the floods have taught hundreds of districts in the three provinces some elemental lessons in soil conservation. Large gouges of ruined land mark the course of rampaging water. Particularly hard hit were farmers on rolling land who had bare summerfallow. The floods took away the top soil and plowed ditches several feet deep into the infertile clay below. But where an adjacent piece of land had been sown to crested wheat grass, there was literally no damage from the water.

Twenty years ago, farmers would survey the damage and shake their heads. Today, they are peppering the governments for advice on what they should do to restore their land. Soil experts are hopping about all over the country, trying to take advantage of the new interest in soil conservation.

This points up the fact that Western farmers today are both alert to the threat of erosion and eager to work to prevent it. These are the dividends that are accruing from years of educational work on the part of the co-operatives the elevator companies, the P.F.R.A. and provincial agricultural representatives.

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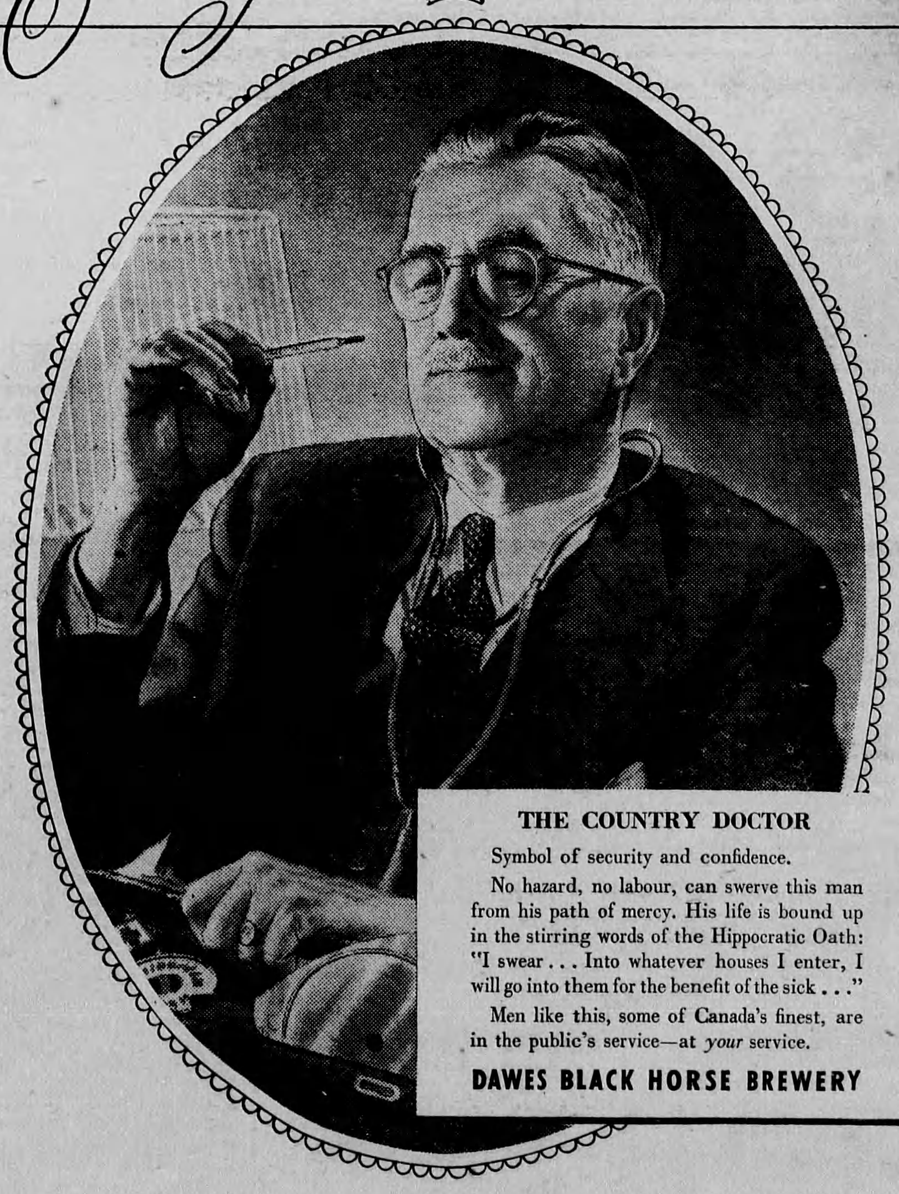

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