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"This year I sold from a twelve-acre patch 81,200 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 excellent 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 (21%), ammonia (10%) and dissolved phosphate (06%) 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."

Mr. Baldwin each year plants by hand some twelve or fifteen acres, mostly of the Delaware variety, which he finds very popular on Ontario markets. Like Mr. Johnson, he finds heavy fertilization very essential and profitable, and is a firm believer, also, in the virtue of consistent, thorough summer cultivation of the potato ground.

"We find potato-growing to work in well with grain crops," Mr. Baldwin said to the writer. "We generally sow grain on potato or turnip ground and get excellent results."

How can the ordinary farmer market a big potato crop? Mr. Baldwin, at the time of my visit, was throwing all his energies into the forwarding of the scheme to form a Hillsburg Potato Growers' Association. "We grow good potatoes," he said, "and we want the public to feel assured in dealing with us. There are far too many varieties at present, and the only remedy I can see is local organization, whereby all the growers of one locality will produce the same variety of potato."

Already this article is over bounds. Little needs to be said regarding the actual profits from potato growing. Nearly every farmer has at some time or another gone heavily into potatoes, and, generally, with gratifying results. This year, if ever, would seem to be an opportune time for the extension of the potato-growing industry on the ordinary farm.—By H. B. McKinnon, in The Canadian Countryman.

Elocution may be a good thing, but it doesn't go far enough. It merely teaches us how to speak, not when.

VALLEY FARM;

Or, Felicity's Inheritance.

CHAPTER IX.—(Continued).

"I wonder if you two kind people would have my little girl here till I can run away with her? It will be so handy, you know. For, of course, you will marry us, Vicar? And I think we may decide on a trip to Canada for the honeymoon. I must wind up my affairs and sell my ranch, you know. I shall try to buy the Blytheby Hall estate—it has been in the market a long time, and you would like us near you, wouldn't you, Mrs. Verinder? That is, of course, if Joyce likes the Hall. The land is all right, I know—I am quite looking forward to farming in England. I hope I can get the place—it will be so near the Valley Farm—and that is where your mother and the children can live, darling. And I thought that we could be married early next month perhaps, and then we could sail— What's the matter, Joyce?"

He might well ask. Joyce was staring at him with dismay and consternation in her eyes, and she was gripping the edge of the table as if she felt the need of clutching at something tangible in a world that seemed for the moment to be going round and round. Her face had gone quite white.

Mrs. Verinder interposed, with a warning glance at the infatuated young man. "The matter is that you are a bit too 'go-ahead' for us sober folks, Chris. You must let us down gently. We don't come from Canada if you do, and we can't 'hustle' like that. Joyce has her mother to consult and many things to see to before she can dream of getting married. Isn't that so, Joyce?"

"Yes," Joyce said, with a little gasp.

Chris was sobered at once—so much so that Mrs. Verinder felt quite sorry for him, and she purposely left them alone together when they said good-night, hoping that Joyce would chase the shadow from his face.

Chris was all penitence as he took her in his arms.

"Did I frighten you, my little love? I never meant to. I am a blundering idiot, a selfish wretch. Oh, I shall never forget your face—how you looked when I went on talking about those idiotic plans of mine! I wonder you didn't throw me over on the spot. Your will shall be law, dearest—I won't do a thing you don't like. You are not really afraid I shall be a tyrant are you, darling?"

"Oh no, no!" she whispered, hiding her face against his coat. "I don't know what I'm afraid of, only—only it seemed so sudden. I haven't got used to you yet—we haven't been engaged a day—and you talked about—getting married."

His arms dropped, and he took her hands in his, but he held her away from him. His face had lost its color.

"Don't you want me?" he asked simply. "Are you repenting already? Would you rather not be my wife? Oh, Joyce, I can't lose you now! I'll wait—a year if you like. I'll go right away if you'd rather. And do you think I would take you to Alberta if you didn't want to go?" His voice shook. "I love you so much that I think I could give you up rather than see you unhappy—"

He got no further, for with a little heartbroken cry, Joyce put her arms round his neck. He always declared afterwards that she went so far as to kiss him quite a number of times; but this she would never admit.

"Oh, don't go—don't leave me!" she sobbed. "I shall die if you do! I can't live without you now. I will do just whatever you like. I will be married next week if you want, and I will go to the end of the world with you—gladly, gladly!"

All of which was very bewildering, and quite beyond the power of mere man to understand, but all of which accounted for the fact that Chris got his own way after all, and carried out his programme to the very letter!

CHAPTER X.

"Oh, mummie, do come with me and watch Ike feed the cows. It's so exciting! They toss their heads and clank their chains. I'm not a bit afraid. Do come, mummie dear! Don't you want to see them dreadfully?"

Mrs. Hamilton drew the little boy fondly to her and hesitated between a desire to please him and a disinclination to leave the cosy sitting-room and brave the animals that Gordon loved, but of which she was secretly afraid.

"I will come another time, darling. See, mummie has some letters to write, and all that darning to do before it gets dark. I am glad you're so happy, sonny. Are you sure you're not cold?"

"Not a bit. The sheds are as warm as this room—like says it's the cows breath that warms them. I took my gloves off, mummie—you don't mind? I can't help him with them on."

Mrs. Hamilton did not mind, and sent him off with a kiss. Her heart was full of thankfulness as she looked at his glowing face and bright eyes, for the boy—her youngest and most dearly loved—had always been delicate, and life at the Valley Farm bade fair already to turn him into a strong and sturdy boy.

She piled more coal on the grate with a lavish hand, for it was the first week in December, and there had been a sharp frost. It was a new and delightful sensation not to have to be careful with the coal—to feel there was plenty more where that came from.

She was a little woman, and, looking at her, it was easy to see where Joyce got her delicate face and expressive eyes, but her face was thin and careworn, and her hair snow-white. It would take some time before her son-in-law's generosity drove the harrassed look away and soothed the tired nerves—though Joyce declared that she was filling out already, and Mrs. Hamilton was quite sure she was getting spoilt and lazy.

The house had been renovated throughout, and no pains had been spared to turn a somewhat bare dwelling into a comfortable, even a luxurious home. Soft rugs and carpet, warm curtains and new furniture had worked wonders, and Mrs. Hamilton had needed no persuasion to leave her shabby belongings behind her and bring only the things she treasured. The days of hard work, lodgers, and pitiful scheming were no more, and for the first time since her husband's death she knew what it was to rest and be happy.

Mrs. Hamilton's happy reverie was just merging into a delightful doze when the little maid came in to get the tea. As she rose to move her work-basket, she saw Gordon at the door, holding a stranger by the hand, and politely inviting her to enter. She was a superior-looking woman dressed in neat black. Mrs. Hamilton did not know her at all, but she went forward with a kindly welcome, for it needed but a glance to tell her that her visitor was a weary and sorrowful woman.

Gordon introduced her in his own quaint way.

"This lady's very tired, mummie. She's walked all the way from Stoneycross to see Joyce. I told her Joyce didn't live here, and she was going all the way back again, but I made her come in and see you. Don't you think she ought to have some tea before she goes?"

The woman tried to speak but failed. Mrs. Hamilton drew her gently forward and made her sit in her own chair, then sent Gordon to "hurry Mary with the tea."

"Please stay," she said. "I am Joyce's mother. You look quite exhausted, but the tea will refresh you. We must find some way of sending you back to Stoneycross—I could not walk one way, let alone both."

"You are very good. My name is Eliza Wilkins. Perhaps you have heard Miss Joyce—or Mrs. Carleton, I should say—speak of me?"

"Yes, indeed I have," Mrs. Hamilton said pleasantly. "Any friend of my dear girl's is most welcome. Let me take your bonnet and coat off—it is too warm in here to sit with them on."

Mrs. Hamilton had known too much trouble herself not to recognize the traces of it in another. She began to speak lightly and pleasantly on every-day subjects, and when the woman tried to state her errand she put her hand gently over hers.

"Wait till you've had something to eat, and then you shall tell me," she said. "My little boy and the girl will keep coming in and out—we will send them away presently, and then we can have a good talk."

"He's a beautiful child. How old is he, ma'am?"

"Only eight. He was born just after his father died. I'm afraid I am very foolish over him—I can hardly bear him out of my sight, but I don't think he is spoilt."

"I'm sure he is not. He's a little gentleman. If you could have seen him out in the lane—the pretty way he came up to me and took off his cap."

Two slow painful tears rolled down Eliza's hard face.

"How is Mrs. Carleton, ma'am?" she asked, when she had recovered herself a little.

"In splendid health, thank you—and as happy as the day is long. I rather expected her over this afternoon—there are few days she does not come to see me. They are busy getting their house nice—they live at Blytheby Hall. It is only a month since they returned from their honeymoon. They went to Canada for it and as Joyce had never travelled, my son-in-law was anxious that she should see something of the country."

"He must be very rich."

"His father left him a large fortune—he was one of the pioneer settlers in Saskatchewan."

"I'm glad Miss Joyce is happy," the woman said earnestly. "She has such pleasant ways, and I never saw any one so obliging and helpful. She never once snubbed me, though I was often cross. It was always 'Yes, Eliza,' and 'Coming, Eliza.' I hate to think how low I put on her, but I was blind in those days—blind! Well, I've had my eyes opened since then," she added bitterly.

"Did you really think she lived here?" Mrs. Hamilton asked.

"Yes. Missie—that is Mrs. Carmichael—only told me a bit about her—how she had married the old gentleman's nephew—Robert Stone, as we thought him. I should like to know a little more if you don't mind."

Mrs. Hamilton had time to give her an outline of all that had taken place before Mary appeared with the teapot. There was no false pride about Joyce's mother, and she spoke with gratitude and affection of Chris Carleton, who had done so much for her and hers.

Eliza Wilkins made an excellent tea, and looked a different woman when she settled down afterwards to tell Mrs. Hamilton what had brought her to the Valley Farm.

Joyce's mother had naturally a very poor opition of Felicity Gray, but even she could hardly believe that the girl would prove so heartless and selfish, and she listened with amazement and indignation to the heartbroken woman's tale.

"Do you mean to tell me that after all the years you have mothered her and slaved for her she has cast you off like this?"

"Yes. She doesn't want me any more. I am no use to her now. I don't fit in with her fine house, nor—nor anything. Mr. Carmichael's housekeeper, that had been with him twenty years, had to go too; but then she had saved quite a lot of money, and had relations to go to."

"And haven't you saved anything?"

Eliza shook her head.

"How could I, ma'am?" she asked simply. "I never had any wages. Just my food, and some new clothes when I needed them—which wasn't often. And all my people are dead. I'm afraid I'm too old for another situation, but I'm going to try. That's what I came to Miss Joyce for. I thought perhaps she'd give me a character. I wouldn't ask Mrs. Carmichael for one if there was only the workhouse in front of me."

Mrs. Hamilton was silent, thinking deeply. The look on the poor woman's face wrung her heart.

"Have you any money now?" she asked gently. "You mustn't mind my asking—I know what it is to be poor myself. I have often come to my last penny."

Eliza swallowed painfully. Instead of answering, she turned out her purse on her knee. There was a shilling and a few coppers.

"I thought perhaps Miss Joyce would lend me a little till—till she got me something to do."

The old name came more naturally to her than the new. Then she caught Mrs. Hamilton's eyes fixed on her—eyes like her daughter's—deep, wistful, full of compassion—and the women's overcharged heart gave way, "the fountains of the great deep were broken up."

"Oh, ma'am!" she sobbed. "It isn't that I mind! It isn't being penniless, and having no home, and not knowing what is to become of me. It's losing my baby, my little girl, Felicity—the only thing I had to love. I've just lived for her. It hasn't been an easy life—I've often worked past my strength—but I'd have died to give her everything she wanted. And now I'm left all alone—just a hard, cross old woman whom nobody wants!"

And then Mrs. Hamilton did a very reckless and foolish thing—and yet at the same time it was a very beautiful thing—one of those "golden deeds" over which the angels of Heaven as surely rejoice as ever they do over the penitent sinner. She knelt down beside the weeping woman and put her arms round her, while the tears stood in her eyes.

"Don't say nobody wants you, Eliza. It isn't true. I want you. Stay with me, and help me with the work. I shall often find it lonely here, and want some one to talk to. And it is so hard to get servants at a farmhouse—the very word frightens them. They are sure they will be worked to death. You and I are not as young as we were, but I think we can do a great deal between us, don't you? Joyce's husband is so good and generous, but I don't want to put on him—I want to economize as much as possible. You'll help me, won't you? Joyce has often told me what a clever manager you are."

It was a long time before Eliza would allow herself to be persuaded that Mrs. Hamilton really meant it—that it was an offer not made solely out of pity, but one which she believed would be to their mutual benefit. When at last it was settled she hardly knew how to express her gratitude.

"I'll work my fingers to the bone for you, ma'am," she said, "for you are an angel if ever there was one! And I shan't want any wages. I'll be only too glad of a home."

Mrs. Hamilton had her own opinion on that point, but she knew this was not the time to enforce it.

It was not long before Eliza had adopted the entire Hamilton family, scolding and spoiling them in turns, ruling them with a rod of iron, but grudging neither time nor trouble to serve them. They were all perfectly aware that she thought there were no boys and girls to equal them in the world, so no one was any the worse for her temper. Strange to say, it improved as she got older. Joyce said laughingly it was the same with Old Ike's deafness; that must have got better, for he could hear wonderfully well nowadays.

When Joyce heard of Eliza's arrival and of the new arrangement, she drove over, looking beautiful in her costly furs and radiant with happiness, to tell her mother privately that it "would not succeed." But she lived to see that it succeeded very well indeed, and to wonder how they ever got on before Eliza came.

There was one person at the Valley Farm for whom Eliza never had a frown or a cross word, and that was the little lad who had stole into her heart to take the place of the girl who left it desolate, and whose hand unconsciously led her from the depths of despair to the warmth and peace, and brightness of a new life.

(THE END.)

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Cheese Fingers.—Three ounces of grated cheese, three ounces of flour, two ounces of butter, half a teaspoonful of baking powder, salt and cayenne to taste. Mix all ingredients to a stiff paste with a little milk. Roll out and cut into strips about three inches long. Bake on a tin in a brisk oven for five minutes to brown lightly.

Marmalade Sandwiches. — Make these, just before eating them. Butter white and brown bread and spread with orange marmalade, rather thinly. On each slice of brown bread put a slice of white buttered bread, and on the white put brown slices.

Celery Relish.—Two cups chopped cabbage, two cups diced celery, one-half cup brown sugar, one-quarter cup finely minced onion, one-half tablespoonful salt, four minced green peppers, one-quarter tablespoon pepper, one-quarter cup grated horseradish. Mix well in vinegar, set the lid in place and keep in a cold place for at least three days before using.

Nut Bread.—Material—Sour or buttermilk, 1½ cups; whole wheat flour, 4 cups; white sugar, ½ cup; chopped English walnuts, 1 cup; baking powder, 4 teaspoonfuls; salt, ½ teaspoonful; egg, one. Utensils—Egg beater, bowl, chopping knife, two bread pans. Directions—Beat the egg in the bowl, add the sugar, beat again and then add all the remaining ingredients, mix and knead into two loaves and set in a warm place for 20 minutes, bake in a moderate oven 45 minutes or one hour. This is fine for children's lunch, sliced thin and slightly buttered.

Cherry Bread Pudding. — This recipe furnishes a suggestion for using left-over preserved cherries and stale bread. Put a layer of buttered bread in a pie dish, pour on it a little warm custard. Put over this a layer of cherries, then more bread and custard and cherries until the dish is full, taking care that the top layer is of bread, well buttered. Cover with a dish and let it soak for fifty minutes, then place in the oven in a pan of hot water and bake for one hour. Uncover and brown nicely. Serve hot. In making the custard, dissolve a pinch of soda in the milk to prevent curdling.

Cheese Pudding. — In England and Switzerland this pudding forms the night meal for the laboring classes. It is very nutritious and more easily digested than a Welsh rarebit. Grate or chop half a pound of soft cheese. Toast and butter four slices of bread; put two slices in the bottom of a baking dish, cover with half the cheese, dust lightly with salt and pepper, put over the other two slices and the remaining cheese. Pour over one pint of milk, let it stand five minutes, and bake in a quick oven 20 minutes. This will serve four people. Six slices of bread may be used instead of four, with the same amount of cheese, adding an extra cupful of milk.

Hints to Housewives.

One cake of compressed yeast is equal to a cupful of liquid yeast.

Nickel may be kept bright by being rubbed with wool saturated with ammonia.

All lard to fry fritters or doughnuts must be sizzling hot before putting in the batter.

A few shreds of candied orange peel will give a delicious flavor to a bread pudding.

A few drops of lemon juice added to eggs when they are being scrambled improves the dish.

Black lead mixed with vinegar will be found to give especially good polish to the kitchen stove.

Alcohol and whiting makes a good silver polish, excellent also for polishing plate glass mirrors.

A large round bottle will serve very well as a rolling pin and is more hygienic than the wooden pin.

A clean flour sack spread on the table and well floured is an excellent substitute for a bread board.

A piece of flannel dampened with spirits of camphor will remove stains from mirrors or window glass.

There is nothing better to use under carpets than old newspapers, as moths do not like printer's ink.

Place screw eyes in the tops of mops and other cleaning utensils, then they can be hung neatly on hooks.

Always scald out your flour bin before putting in a fresh supply; it will save the new flour from becoming musty.

Nothing is better than snow for cleaning a dusty carpet, but naturally the room in which it is used must be cold.

Save benzine or gasoline after you have used it for cleaning. Simply put it in a jar and let it settle, then pour off the top.

Pack ribbons, collars and such little articles between the leaves of a magazine, if you would keep them smooth when travelling.

Dried lima beans, soaked over night and boiled till tender, then seasoned with butter and salt, are one of the best vegetables.

Delicious muffins or gems are made by stirring into the batter made for ordinary gems a cupful of raisins, currants or chopped figs.

Sift the baby's oatmeal porridge through a flour sifter that is kept for the purpose, and it will be much smoother and more satisfactory.

Stain on mahogany may be removed by rubbing with a cloth dipped in a little oxalic acid and water. Rinse with cold water, dry and polish directly.

Any good cold fish can be used for salad if flaked, seasoned with pepper and lemon juice and served with young radishes and French dressing.

Delicious raising bread is made by saving part of a white bread dough, made with milk. Mix into it a beaten egg, one cup chopped raisins and two tablespoonfuls of sugar. Form into a loaf, let rise and bake.

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