

June 10 1916

Five Cents the Copy

The COUNTRY GENTLEMAN

BEST AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL in the WORLD



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The CURTIS PUBLISHING COMPANY Philadelphia

Rhubarb comes on early in April and is about the first product to be marketed.

As early as weather conditions are favorable and it is possible to get the land in shape, crops that can be planted without injury at this time of the year are put into the ground. Lettuce, cabbage, peas, early beets, radishes, onions, potatoes, parsnips and parsley are the ones planted at this time.

When weather conditions are exceptionally favorable lettuce plants have been set out the latter part of February. Then they are covered with salt hay, which is raked away as soon as the weather is settled. Every effort is made to get the lettuce plants into the ground early.

Onion sets are used for the growing of mature bulb onions, in order that the bulbs may mature in July, before the New York crop, grown from seed, comes on. At this time also onion seed is sown for late bunch onions and for sets to plant in the fall for spring bunch onions.

About the fifteenth of May the land on which early spinach has been planted is clear. This is then planted to tomatoes. Many of the tomatoes are grown on stakes. The staked plants are set two feet apart in double rows four feet apart.

Beans, both kidney and lima, and Savoy cabbage seed for plants, are also planted at this time. These follow some early planted crop, such as radishes or lettuce. Snap beans, a rapidly maturing crop, fit in well.

In the middle of June carrots and beets are planted for winter storage. Sweet corn is also planted at this time.

By the latter part of June the strawberries are out of the way and in their second year. They are not profitable for more than two years, so they are plowed under and late potatoes replace them. Also celery, or a fall crop of lettuce grown from seed, may be placed on this land. Late potatoes also follow early cabbage.

In July the early crops, such as lettuce, beans, peas, beets and onions, are all out of the way, leaving the ground free for the more important crop which is to follow—celery. This is set on any ground that is free.

Later in the summer, in the latter part of July, lettuce is sown for a fall crop and sometimes is intercropped with strawberry plants one year old. Spinach is also sown for a fall crop. Turnips are sown with grass seed on land that had lima beans on it.

Of course crops do not always follow one another in exactly this same plan, but the results are practically the same. There is something to sell the year round. Crops are planted in succession to suit existing conditions.

To some of these crops more importance is attached than to some others. These specialties are rhubarb, celery and roots. The accounts have shown them to be the most profitable. About forty acres of celery is trenched, and ten acres more is sold before cold weather. Fifteen acres of carrots, five acres of beets, five acres of parsnips, ten acres of turnips, five acres of Savoy cabbage and about eight acres of potatoes are put into pits for the winter.

A truck farm of this area, where crops are grown so extensively and follow one another in such rapid succession, demands a large amount of labor, of which a certain amount must be experienced—trained to carry out the details of cultivating, harvesting and preparing for the market the particular crops. During the busy season of spring and summer about forty men are employed. In the fall, when celery and roots are being put away, fifty or more men are necessary, if they can be obtained. About twenty laborers are retained during the winter.

The celery and roots are out of the way in March. Seed sown outdoors does not begin to produce marketable crops until May, but rhubarb fills the breach nicely in the spring. The early product brings three to three and a half cents a bunch, and the price drops gradually as the season advances to one cent a bunch, at which price it is profitable. The market takes large quantities of it and it moves readily. Many days nothing is hauled except rhubarb—about 15,000 bunches a day—and it is always disposed of at a profit. About fifteen acres of rhubarb is grown.

Celery is the most important specialty in this three-piece combination. Ten years ago the owner began to

make a specialty of celery, studying the details necessary to grow a good crop, and the methods of putting it on the market in the best possible condition. From a comparatively small beginning, feeling his way as he went, he has increased his acreage in this crop until now about fifty acres is grown each year.

One of the great secrets in growing tall, well-blanced celery is in "handling" it. This consists in pressing by hand loose soil about each celery plant in order to make the celery stalks stand erect and to facilitate the throwing of more soil about them with a celery banker, which forces the hearts out and makes the stalks taller.

The early celery in the fall is bleached with boards and paper. These are allowed to remain about the plants for about ten days, when the plants are bleached sufficiently for market. The bulk of the crop is trenched in the field where it is grown when the weather becomes cold and stays cold.

All roots for storage are dug and the tops twisted off in the fall before freezing weather. On the same day they are placed in pits five or six inches deep, three feet wide and about twenty feet long. Sufficient distance is allowed between the pits so it is possible to get into them with a cart.

So important are beets and carrots considered, that it is not policy to depend upon seed from seed companies. The market has certain standards for color and shape and is willing to pay for them. Accordingly seed from roots that have these requirements is saved. Celery seed is also grown.

The owner firmly believes that every trucker is judged by the package he sends, and that a package is judged according to the poorest specimen in it. In order to meet the keen competition of the big markets, close grading is necessary, and the product must be placed before consumers in an attractive way. Every effort is made to put produce on the market clean, neat and fresh-appearing.

It is hoped that a system of accounts will solve all the various problems. It has been shown that some crops can sell for a low price seemingly and yet yield a good profit.

WILD FIRE BY ZANE GREY

Author of "Riders of the Purple Sage," "The Lone Star Ranger," etc., etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK TENNEY JOHNSON

XVIII

BOSTIL sent Holley and Farlane on ahead to find Cordts and Hutchinson, with their comrades, and to acquaint them with the fate of Sears, and to warn them to leave before the news got to the riders.

The sun was setting gold and red over the broken battlements of the cañons to the west. The heat of the day blew away on a breeze that bent the tips of the sagebrush. A wild song drifted back from the riders to the fore. And the procession of Indians moved along, their gay trappings and bright colors beautiful in the fading sunset light.

When Bostil and his guests arrived at the corrals, Holley, with Farlane and other riders, was waiting.

"Boss," said Holley, "Cordts an' his outfit never rid in. They was last seen by some Navajos headin' for the cañons."

"Thet's good!" ejaculated Bostil, in relief.

"Wal, boys, look after the hosses. . . . Slone, just turn Wildfire over to the boys with instructions, an' feel safe."

Farlane scratched his head and looked dubious.

"I'm wonderin' how safe it'll be fer us."

"I'll look after him," said Slone.

Bostil nodded as if he had expected Slone to refuse to let any rider put the stallion away for the night. Wildfire would not go into the barn, and Slone led him into one of the high-barred corrals. Bostil waited until Slone returned, and then they went toward the house.

"I reckon we couldn't get inside Brack's place now," remarked Bostil. "But in a case like this I can scare up a drink."

Lights from the windows shone bright through the darkness under the cottonwoods. Bostil halted at the door as if suddenly remembering, and he whispered huskily: "Let's keep the women from learnin' about Sears—tonight anyway."

Then he led the way through the big door into the huge living room. There were hanging lights on the walls and blazing sticks on the hearth. Lucy came running in to meet them. It did not escape Bostil's keen eyes that she was dressed in her best white dress. He had never seen her look so sweet and pretty—for that matter so strange. The flush, the darkness of eyes, the added something in her face, tender, thoughtful, strong—these were new.

Bostil pondered while she welcomed his guests. Slone, who had hung back, was last in turn. Lucy greeted him as she had the others. Slone met her



"Lin, Don't Leave
Bostil's Ford—Don't Go—Don't!"

with awkward constraint. The gray had not left his face. Lucy looked up at him again, and differently.

"What—what has happened?" she asked.

It annoyed Bostil that Slone and all the men suddenly looked blank.

"Why, nothin'," replied Slone slowly, "cept I'm fagged out."

Lucy, or any other girl, could have seen that he was evading the truth. She flashed a look from Slone to her father.

"Until today we never had a big race that something dreadful didn't happen," said Lucy. "This was my day—my race. And oh, I wanted it to pass without—without —"

"Wal, Lucy dear," replied Bostil as she faltered. "Nothin' came off thet'd make you feel bad. Young Slone had a scare about his hoss. Wildfire's safe out there in the corral an' he'll be guarded like the King an' Sarch. Slone needs a drink an' somethin' to eat, same as all of us."

Lucy's color and her smile returned, but Bostil noted that while she was serving them and brightly responsive to compliments she had more than one steady glance at Slone. She was deep, thought Bostil, and it angered him a little that she showed interest in what concerned this strange rider.

Then they had dinner with twelve at table. The wives of Bostil's three friends had been helping Aunt Jane prepare the feast, and they added to the merriment. Bostil was not much given to social intercourse—he would have preferred to be with his horses and riders—but this night he outdid himself as host, amazed his sister Jane, who evidently thought he drank too much, and delighted Lucy.

Bostil's outward appearance and his speech and action were never wholly reflective of all the workings of his mind. No one would ever know the depth of his bitter disappointment at the outcome of the race. With Creech's Blue Roan out of the way, another horse, swifter and more dangerous, had come along to spoil the King's chance.

Bostil felt a subtly increasing covetousness in regard to Wildfire, and this colored all his talk and action. The upland country, vast and rangy, was for Bostil too small to hold Sage King and Wildfire unless they both belonged to him. And when

old Cal Blinn gave a ringing toast to Lucy, hoping to live to see her up on Wildfire in the grand race that must be run with the King. Bostil felt stir in him the birth of a subtle, bitter fear.

At first he mocked it. He, Bostil, afraid to race! It was a lie of the excited mind. He repudiated it. Insidiously it returned. He drowned it down—smothered it with passion. Then the ghost of it remained hauntingly.

After dinner Bostil with the men went down to Brackton's, where Slone and the winners of the day received their prizes.

"Why, it's more money than I ever had in my whole life!" exclaimed Slone, gazing incredulously at the gold.

Bostil was amused and pleased, and back of both amusement and pleasure was the old, inventive, driving passion to gain his own ends.

Bostil was abnormally generous in many ways; monstrously selfish in one way.

"Slone, I seen you didn't drink none," he said curiously.

"No, I don't like liquor."

"Do you gamble?"

"I like a little bet—on a race," replied Slone frankly.

"Wal, thet ain't gamblin'. These fool riders of mine will bet on the switchin' of a hoss' tail." He drew Slone a little aside from the others, who were interested in Brackton's delivery of the different prizes. "Slone, how'd you like to ride for me?"

Slone appeared surprised. "Why, I never rode for anyone," he replied slowly. "I can't stand to be tied down. I'm a horse hunter, you know."

Bostil eyed the young man, wondering what he knew about the difficulties of the job offered. It was no news to Bostil that he was at once the best and the worst man to ride for in all the uplands.

"Sure, I know. But thet don't make no difference," went on Bostil persuasively. "If we got along—wal, you'd save some of thet yellow coin you're jinglin'. A roamin' rider never builds no corral!"

"Thank you, Bostil," replied Slone earnestly. "I'll think it over. It'd seem kind of tame now to go back to wild-horse wranglin'—after I've caught Wildfire. I'll think it over. Maybe I'll do it, if you're sure I'm good enough with rope an' horse."

"Wal," blurted out Bostil, "Holley says he'd rather you throwed a gun on him than a rope! So would I. An' as for your handlin' a hoss—I never seen no better."

Slone appeared embarrassed and kept studying the gold coins in his palm. Someone touched Bostil who, turning, saw Brackton at his elbow. The other men were now bantering with the Indians.

"Come, now, while I've got a minnit," said Brackton, taking up a lantern. "I've somethin' to show you."

Bostil followed Brackton, and Slone came along. The old man opened a door into a small room, half full of stores and truck. The lantern only dimly lighted the place.

"Look thar!" And Brackton flashed the light upon a man lying prostrate. Bostil recognized the pale face of Joel Creech.

"Brack! . . . What's this? Is he dead?" Bostil sustained a strange, incomprehensible shock. Sight of a dead man had never before shocked him.

"Nope, he ain't dead, which if he was might be good for this community," replied Brackton. "He's only fallen in a fit. Fust off I reckoned he was drunk. But it ain't thet."

"Wal, what do you want to show him to me for?" demanded Bostil gruffly.

"I reckoned you oughter see him."

"An' why, Brackton?"

Brackton set down the lantern, and pushing Slone outside said "Jest a minnit, son," and then he closed the door. "Joel's been on my hands since the flood cut him off from home," said Brackton. "An' he's been some trial. But nobody else would have done nothin' for him, so I had to. I reckon I felt sorry for him. He cried like a baby thet had lost its mother. Then he got wild lookin' an' raved round. When I wasn't busy I kept an eye on him. But some of the time I couldn't an' he stole drinks, which made him wuss. An' when I seen he was tryin' to sneak one of my guns I up an' gets suspicious."

"Once he said: 'My dad's hosses are goin' to starve an' I'm goin' to kill somebody!' He was out of his head an' dangerous. Wal, I was worried some, but all I could do was lock up my guns."

"Last night I caught him confabin' with some men out in the dark behind the store. They all skeddaddled except Joel, but I recognized Cordts. I didn't like that, nuther."

"Joel was surly an' ugly. An' when one of the riders called him he said: 'Thet boat never drifted off. Fer the night of the flood I went down there myself an' tied the ropes. They never come untied. Somebody cut them—jest

before the flood—to make sure my dad's hosses couldn't be crossed. Somebody figgered the river an' the flood. An' if my dad's hosses starve I'm goin' to kill somebody!'"

Brackton took up the lantern and placed a hand on the door ready to go out.

"Then a rider punched Joel—I never seen who—an' Joel had a fit. I dragged him in here. An' as you see he ain't come to yet."

"Wal, Brackton, the boy's crazy," said Bostil.



"It Was No Race.
Your Wild Hoss
Knocked the King Off the Track"

"So I reckon. An' I'm afeared he'll burn us out—he's crazy on fires anyway—or do somethin' like."

"He's sure a problem. Wal, we'll see," replied Bostil soberly.

And they went out, to find Slone waiting. Then Bostil called his guests, and with Slone also accompanying him went home.

Bostil threw off the recurring gloom, and he was good-natured when Lucy came to his room to say good night. He knew she had come to say more than that.

"Hello, daughter," he said. "Ain't you ashamed to come alone—facin' your poor old dad?"

Lucy eyed him dubiously.

"No, I'm not ashamed. But I'm still a little—afraid."

"I'm harmless, child. I'm a broken man. When you put Sage King out of the race you broke me."

"Dad, that isn't funny. You make me angry when you hint I did something underhand."

"Wal, you didn't consult me."

"I thought it would be fun to surprise you all. Why you're always delighted with a surprise in a race, unless it beats you. . . . Then, it was my great and only chance to get out in front of the King. Oh, how grand it'd have been! Dad, I'd have run away from him the same as the others!"

"No, you wouldn't," declared Bostil.

"Dad, Wildfire can beat the King!"

"Never, girl! Knockin' a good-tempered hoss off his pins ain't beatin' him in a runnin' race."

Then father and daughter fought over the old score: the one doggedly, imperturbably; the other spiritedly, with flashing eyes.

The argument was different this time, however, for it ended in Lucy's saying that Bostil would never risk another race. That stung Bostil, and it cost him an effort to control his temper.

"Let thet go now. Tell me all about how you saved Wildfire an' Slone too."

Lucy readily began the narrative, and she had scarcely started before Bostil found himself intensely interested. Soon he became absorbed. That was the most thrilling and moving kind of romance to him, like his rider's dreams.

"Lucy, you're sure a game kid," he said fervidly, when she had ended. "I reckon I don't blame Slone for fallin' in love with you."

"Who said that?" inquired Lucy.

"Nobody. But it's true—ain't it?"

She looked up with eyes as true as ever they were, yet a little sad, he thought, a little wistful and wondering, as if a strange and grave thing confronted her.

"Yes, dad—it's—it's true," she answered haltingly.

"Wal, you didn't need to tell me, but I'm glad you did."

Bostil meant to ask her then if she in any sense returned the rider's love, but unaccountably he could not put the question. The girl was as true as ever—as good as gold. Bostil feared a secret that might hurt him. Just as sure as life was there and death but a step away, some rider, sooner or later, would win this girl's love. Bostil knew that, hated it, feared it. Yet he would never give his girl to a beggarly rider. Such a man as Wetherby ought to win Lucy's hand. And Bostil did not want to know too much at present. He did not want his swift-mounting animosity roused so soon. Still he was curious, and wanting to get the drift of Lucy's mind he took to his old habit of teasing.

"Another moonstruck rider!" he said.

"Your eyes are sure full moons, Lucy. I'd be ashamed to trifle with these poor fellers."

"Dad!"

"You're a heartless flirt—same as your mother was before she met me."

"I'm not. And I don't believe mother was, either," replied Lucy. It was easy to strike fire from her.

"Wal, you did dead wrong to ride out there day after day meetin' Slone, because, young woman, if he ever has the nerve to ask me for you I'll beat him up bad."

"Then you'd be a brute!" retorted Lucy.

"Wal, mebbe," returned Bostil, secretly delighted and surprised at Lucy's failure to see through him. But she was looking inward. He wondered what hid there deep in her. "But I can't stand for the nerve of thet."

"He—he means to—to ask you."

"The h— A-huh!"

Lucy did not catch the slip of tongue. She was flushing now.

"He said he'd never have let me meet him out there alone, unless he—he loved me—and as our neighbors and the riders would learn of it—and talk—he wanted you and them to know he'd asked to—to marry me."

"Wal, he's a square young man!" ejaculated Bostil involuntarily. It was hard for Bostil to hide his sincerity and impulsiveness; much harder than to hide unworthy attributes. Then he got back on the other track. "Thet'll make me treat him decent, so when he rides up to ask for you I'll let him off with no!"

Lucy dropped her head. Bostil would have given all he had, except his horses, to feel sure she did not care for Slone.

"Dad—I said—no—for myself," she murmured.

This time Bostil did not withhold the profane word of surprise.

" . . . so he's asked you then? Wal, wal! When?"

"Today—out there in the rocks where he waited with Wildfire for me. He—he —"

Lucy slipped into her father's arms and her slender form shook. Bostil instinctively felt what she then needed was her mother. Her mother was dead and he was only a rough, old, hard rider. He did not know what to do—to say. His heart softened and he clasped her close. It hurt him keenly to realize that he might have been a better, kinder father if it were not for the fear that she would find him out. But that proved he loved her, craved her affection.

"Wal, little girl, tell me," he said.

"He—he broke his word to me."

"A-huh! That's too bad. An' how did he?"

"He—he —" Lucy seemed to catch her tongue. Bostil was positive she had meant to tell him something and suddenly changed her mind. Subtly the child vanished; a woman remained. Lucy sat up self-possessed once more. Some powerfully impelling thought had transformed her. Bostil's keen sense gathered that what she would not tell was not hers to reveal. For herself she was the soul of simplicity and frankness.

"Days ago I told him I cared for him," she went on. "But I forbade him to speak of it to me. He promised. I wanted to wait till after the race—till after I had found courage to confess to you. He broke his word. . . . Today when he put me up on Wildfire he—he suddenly lost his head."

The slow scarlet welled into Lucy's face and her eyes grew shamed, but bravely she kept facing her father.

"He—he pulled me off—he hugged me—he k-kissed me. . . . Oh! it was dreadful—shameful! . . . Then I gave him back—some—something he had given me. And I told him I—I hated him—and I told him no!"

"But you rode his hoss in the race," said Bostil.

Lucy bowed her head at that.

"I—I couldn't resist!"

Bostil stroked the bright head. What a quandary for a thick-skulled old horseman!

"Wal, it seems to me Slone didn't act so bad, considerin'. You'd told him you cared for him. If it wasn't for thet! . . . I remember I did much the same to your mother. She raised Cain, but I never seen as she cared any less for me."

"I'll never forgive him," Lucy cried passionately. "I hate him. A man who breaks his word in one thing will do it in another."

Bostil sadly realized his little girl had reached womanhood and love, and with them the sweet, bitter pangs of life. He realized also that there was a crisis when a word—an unjust or lying word—from him would forever ruin any hope that might still exist for Slone. Bostil realized this acutely, but the realization was not even a temptation.

"Wal, listen. I'm bound to confess your new rider is sure swift. An' Lucy, today if he hadn't been as swift with a rope as he is in love—wal, your old daddy might be dead!"

She grew as white as her dress.

"Oh, dad! I knew something had happened," she cried, reaching for him.

Then Bostil told her how Dick Sears had menaced him—how Slone had foiled the horse thief. He told the story bluntly, but eloquently, with all a rider's praise.

Lucy rose with hands pressed against her breast. When had Bostil seen eyes like those—dark, shining, wonderful? Ah! He remembered her mother's once—only once, as a girl.

Then Lucy kissed him and without a word fled from the room.

Bostil stared after her.

"Damn me!" he swore as he threw a boot against the wall. "I reckon I'll never let her marry Slone, but I just had to tell her what I think of him!"

XIX

SLONE lay wide awake under an open window, watching the stars glimmer through the rustling foliage of the cottonwoods. Somewhere a lonesome hound bayed. Very faintly came the silvery tinkle of running water.

For five days Slone had been a guest of Bostil, and the whole five days had been torment.

On the morning of the day after the races Lucy had confronted him. Would he ever forget her eyes—her voice?

"Bless you for saving my dad!" she had said. "It was brave. . . . But don't let dad fool you. Don't believe in his kindness. Above all, don't ride for him! He only wants Wildfire and if he doesn't get him he'll hate you!"

That speech of Lucy's had made the succeeding days hard for Slone. Bostil loaded him with gifts and kindnesses, and never ceased importuning him to accept his offers. But for Lucy, Slone would have accepted. It was she who cast the first doubt of Bostil into his mind. Lucy averred that her father was splendid and good in every way except in what pertained to fast horses; there he was impossible.

The great stallion that Slone had nearly sacrificed his life to catch was like a thorn in the rider's flesh. Slone lay there in the darkness, restless, hot, rolling from side to side, or staring out at the star-studded sky—miserably unhappy, all on account of that horse. Almost he hated him. What pride he had felt in Wildfire! How he had gloried in the gift of the stallion to Lucy!

Then on the morning of the race had come that unexpected, incomprehensible and wild act of which he had been guilty. Yet not to save his life, his soul, could he regret it! Almost it was not he who had been responsible, but an unknown savage within him. He had kept his word to Lucy, when day after day he had burned with love, until that fatal moment when the touch of her as he lifted her to Wildfire's saddle had made a madman out of him. He had swept her into his arms and held her breast to his, her face before him, and he had kissed the sweet parting lips till he was blind.

Then he had learned what a little fury she was. Then he learned how he had fallen—what he had forfeited. In his amaze at himself, in his humility and shame, he had not been able to say a word in his own defense. She did not know yet that his act had been ungovernable and that he had not known what he was doing till too late.

She had finished with "I'll ride Wildfire in the race—but I won't have him, and I won't have you! No!"

She had the hardness of her father in her.

For Slone the watching of that race was a blend of rapture and despair. He lived over in mind all the time between the race and this hour when he lay there sleepless and full of remorse. His mind was like a race course with many races; and predominating in it was that swift, strange, stinging race of memory of Lucy Bostil's looks and actions.

What an utter fool he was to believe she had meant those tender words when out there

under the looming monuments she had accepted Wildfire! She had been an impulsive child. Her scorn and fury that morning of the race had left nothing for him except footless fancies. She had mistaken love of Wildfire for love of him. No, his case was hopeless with Lucy, and if it had not been so Bostil would have made it hopeless.

Yet there were things Slone could not fathom—the willful, contradictory, proud, cold and unaccountably sweet looks and actions of the girl. They haunted Slone. They made him conscious he had a mind and tortured him with his development. But he had no experience with girls to compare with what was happening now. It seemed that accepted fact and remembered scorn and cold certainty were somehow at variance with hitherto unknown intuitions and instincts.

Lucy avoided him if by chance she encountered him alone. When Bostil or Aunt Jane or anyone else was present Lucy was kind, pleasant, agreeable. What made her flush red at sight of him and then pale? Why did she often at table or in the big living room softly brush against him when it seemed she could have avoided that? Many times he had felt some inconceivable drawing power—to look and to find her eyes upon him, strange eyes, full of mystery, that were suddenly averted.

Was there any meaning attachable to the fact that his room was kept so tidy and neat, that every day something was added to its comfort or color, that he found fresh flowers whenever he returned, or a book, or fruit, or a dainty morsel to eat, and once a bunch of Indian paintbrush, wild flowers of the desert that Lucy knew he loved?

Most of all it was Lucy's eyes that haunted Slone—eyes that had changed, darkened, lost their audacious flash, and yet seemed all the sweeter. The glances he caught, which he fancied were stolen—and then derided his fancy—thrilled him to his heart. Thus Slone had spent waking hours by day and night, mad with love and remorse, tormented one hour by imagined grounds for hope and resigned to despair the next.

Upon the sixth morning of his stay at Bostil's, Slone rose with something of his former will reasserting itself. He could not remain in Bostil's home any longer unless he accepted Bostil's offer, and this was not to be thought of. With a wrench Slone threw off the softening indecision, and hurried out to find Bostil while the determination was hot.

Bostil was in the corral with Wildfire. This was the second time Slone had found him there. Wildfire appeared

to regard Bostil with a much better favor than he did his master. As Slone noted this a little heat stole along his veins. That was gall to a rider.

"I like your hoss," said Bostil with gruff frankness. But a tinge of red showed under his beard.

"Bostil, I'm sorry I can't take you up on the job," rejoined Slone swiftly. "It's been hard for me to decide. You've been good to me. I'm grateful. But it's time I was tellin' you."

"Why can't you?" demanded Bostil, straightening up with a glint in his big eyes. It was the first time he had asked Slone that.

"I can't ride for you," replied Slone briefly.

"Anythin' to do with Lucy?" queried Bostil.

"How so?" returned Slone, conscious of more heat.

"Wal, you was sweet on her—an' she wouldn't have you," replied Bostil.

Slone felt the blood swell and boil in his veins. This Bostil could say as harsh and hard things as repute gave him credit for.

"Yes, I am sweet on Lucy an' she won't have me," said Slone steadily. "I asked her to let me come to you—an' tell you I wanted to marry her. But she wouldn't."

"Wal, it's just as good you didn't come, because I might —" Bostil broke off his speech and began again: "You don't lack nerve, Slone. What'd you have to offer Lucy?"

"Nothin', except—but that doesn't matter," replied Slone, cut to the quick by Bostil's scorn. "I'm glad you know, an' so much for that."

Bostil turned to look at Wildfire once more and he looked long. When he faced round he was another man. Slone sensed the passion of this old horse trader.

"Slone, I'll give you pick of a hundred mustangs an' a thousand dollars for Wildfire!"

So he unmasked his power in the face of a beggarly rider! Though it struck Slone like a thunderbolt he felt amused. But he did not show that. Bostil had only one possession, among all his uncounted wealth, that could win Wildfire from his owner.

"No," said Slone briefly.

"I'll double it," returned Bostil just as briefly.

"No!"

"I'll —"

"Save your breath, Bostil," flashed Slone. "You don't know me. But let me tell you—you can't buy my horse!"

The great veins swelled and churned in Bostil's bull neck; a thick and ugly contortion worked in his face; his eyes reflected a sick rage.

Slone saw that two passions shook Bostil—one, a bitter, terrible disappointment; the other, the passion of a man who could not brook being crossed. It appeared to Slone that the best thing he could do was to get away quickly, and to this end he led Wildfire out of the corral to the stable courtyard, and there quickly saddled him. Then he went into another corral for his other horse, Nagger, and, bringing him out, returned to find Bostil had followed as far as the court. The old man's rage apparently had passed or had been smothered.

"See here," he began in thick voice, "don't be a fool an' ruin your chance in life. I'll —"

"Bostil, my one chance was ruined—an' you know who did it," replied Slone as he gathered Nagger's rope and Wildfire's bridle together. "I've no hard feelin's. . . . But I can't sell you my horse. An' I can't ride for you, because—well, because it would breed trouble."

"An' what kind?" queried Bostil.

Holley and Farlane and Van with several other riders had come up, and were standing open-mouthed. Slone gathered from their manner and expression that anything might happen with Bostil in such a mood.

"We'd be racin' the King an' Wildfire, wouldn't we?" replied Slone.

"An' supposin' we would?" returned Bostil ominously. His huge frame vibrated with a slight start.

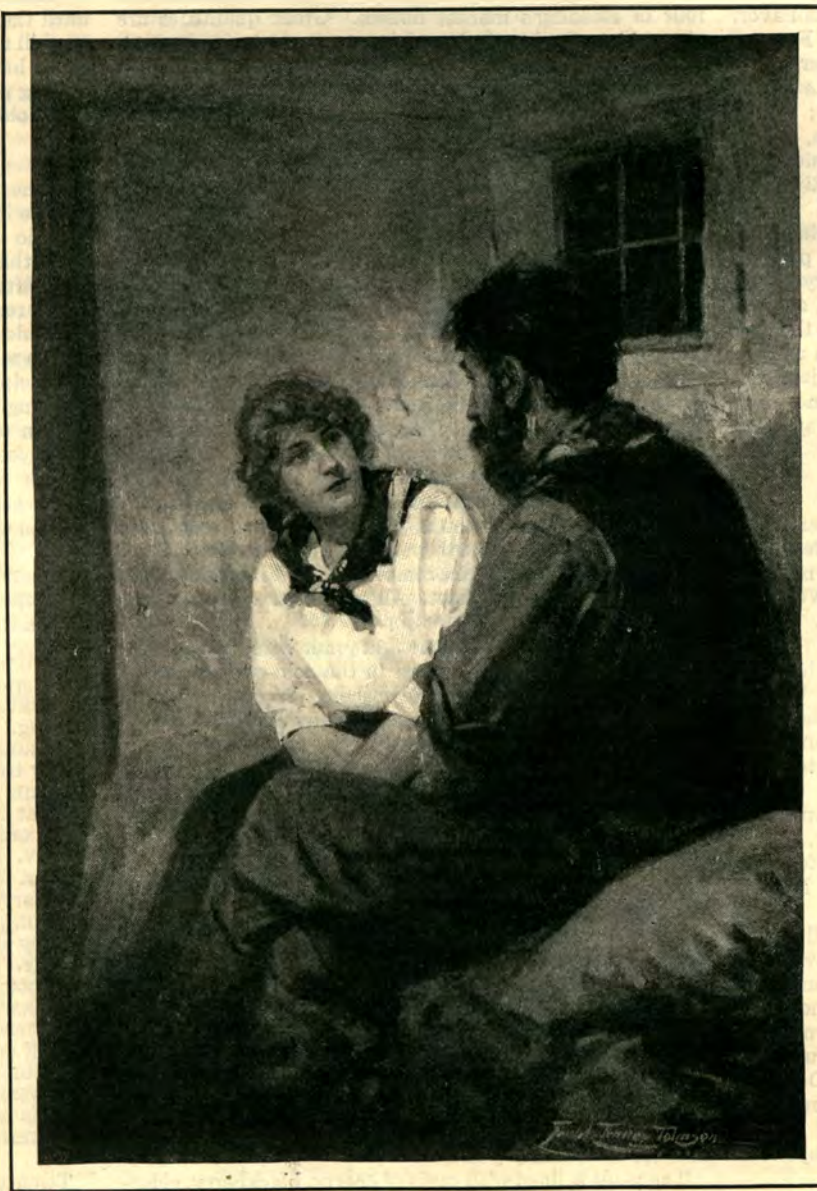
"Wildfire would run off from your favorite—an' you wouldn't like that," answered Slone. It was his rider's hot blood that prompted him to launch this taunt. He could not help it.

"You wild-hoss chaser," roared Bostil. "Your Wildfire may be a bloody killer, but he can't beat the King in a race!"

"Excuse me, Bostil, but Wildfire did beat the King!"

This was only adding fuel to the fire. Slone saw Holley making signs that must have meant silence would be best. But Slone's blood was up. Bostil had rubbed him the wrong way.

(Continued on Page 1205)



"Days Ago I Told Him I Cared for Him," She Went On. "But I Forbade Him to Speak of it to Me"

WILDFIRE

(Continued from Page 1185)

"You're a liar!" declared Bostil with a stride forward. "It was no race. Your wild hoss knocked the King off the track."

"Sage King had the lead, didn't he? Why didn't he keep it?"

Bostil burst out into a torrent of incoherent speech. Slone did not make out what Bostil meant and he did not care. When Bostil got out of breath Slone said:

"We're both wastin' talk. An' I'm not wantin' you to call me a liar twice. . . . Put your rider up on the King—an' come on, right now. I'll —"

"Slone, shut up an' chase yourself," interrupted Holley.

"You go to blazes!" returned Slone.

There was a moment's silence, in which Slone took Holley's measure.

"What am I up against here?" demanded Slone. "Am I goin' to be shot because I'm takin' my own part? Holley, you an' the rest of your pards are all afraid of this old devil. But I'm not—an' you stay out of this."

"Wal, son, you needn't git riled," replied Holley placatingly. "I was only tryin' to stave off talk you might be sorry for."

"Sorry for nothin'! I'm goin' to make this great horse trader—this rich an' mighty rancher—this judge of grand horses—this Bostil! I'm goin' to make him race the King or take water!"

Then Slone turned to Bostil.

"Come on! Fetch the King! Let your own riders judge the race!"

Bostil struggled to control himself.

"Naw! I ain't goin' to see thet red hoss killer jump the King again!"

"Bah! you're afraid. You know there'd be no girl on his back. You know he can outrun the King, an' that's why you want to buy him."

Slone caught his breath then. He realized suddenly, at Bostil's paling face, that perhaps he had dared too much.

"I'll go now, Bostil."

Slone nodded a good-by to the riders, and turning away he led the two horses down the lane. Lucy saw him coming.

Slone halted. "Lucy, I've done it now—played hob sure."

"What?" she cried.

"I called your dad—called him good an' hard—an' he—he —"

"Lin! Oh, don't say dad —" Lucy's face whitened and she put a swift hand upon his arm—a touch that thrilled him. "Lin! there's blood—on your face. Don't—don't tell me dad hit you!"

"I should say not," declared Slone, quickly lifting his hand to his face. "Must be from my cut—that blood. I barked my hand holdin' Wildfire."

"Oh! I—I was sick with—with —" Lucy faltered and broke off.

Then Slone began to relate everything that had been said, and before he concluded his story his heart gave a wild throb at the telltale face and eyes of the girl.

"You said that to dad!" she cried. "Oh, dad richly deserved it! But I wish you hadn't—oh, I wish you hadn't!"

"Why?" asked Slone.

But she did not answer that.

"Where are you going?" she questioned.

"Come to think of that—I don't know," replied Slone blankly. "I started back to fetch my things out of my room. That's as far as my muddled thoughts got."

"Your things? . . . Oh!" Suddenly she grew intensely white. "You mean to—to go away—for good?"

"Sure. What else can I do?"

"Lin! . . . Oh, there comes dad! He mustn't see me. I must run. Lin, don't leave Bostil's Ford—don't go—don't!"

Then she flew round the corner of the house. Slone, collecting his thoughts, hurried into the little room that had been his, and gathered up his few belongings. He was careful to leave behind the gifts of guns, blankets, gloves, and other rider articles with which Bostil had presented him. Thus laden he went outside, and tingling with emotions utterly sweet and wild and bewildering he led the horses down into the village.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Old Dogs and New Tricks

(Concluded from Page 1191)

The reason is not very hard to discover. All kinds of experiments are constantly tried in every farming community, and most of them fail. Those who fail in doing old things in a new way, or in trying to do new things, either quit farming in that country, by the process of going broke, or they change over to methods known to be successful.

This is the underlying reason, and it is a perfectly sound economic reason, why William's father and mother, and the fathers and mothers of thousands of other young people, are likely to be a little pettish when new things are shoved forth on the breakfast table by boys and girls who are filled with the new wine of the scientific education. In the main the old folks know that they know how to farm; and the probabilities are that when William is as old as his father, while he will have adopted a great many new methods based upon scientific knowledge, he will be as much a back number with reference to hisson as William's father is now with reference to William.

The thing we older people should do, however, is, I think, to recognize all the time the fact that a lot of things are being learned every day which will sweeten the bitter milk of living for us if we only apply them. As a matter of fact, William's mother and father did, in the instance which I have mentioned, make an examination into the facts which their son suggested, and found out that the bitter milk was caused by contamination in the dairy barn.

Every one of us older people ought, it seems to me, to master the whys and wherefores of some one of these things—I was going to say every day, but we cannot do that, so let us say every week. This will give us open minds, and we shall find that an old dog can learn new tricks if he tries.

The words on a printed page are a dreadful jumble to the eye of the person who has not learned to read; but when he has even half learned them, they already begin to look understandable and friendly.

After the struggle with the bitter milk, and a few similar problems, father and mother began to understand the alphabet

of bacteriology. The mastery of one truth is a half conquest of the next; and as a matter of fact these conquests are important to us. It meant a great deal to the first farmer who found out that his cows gave bloody milk, not because some member of the family had killed a toad, but for the reason that something was wrong with the cow.

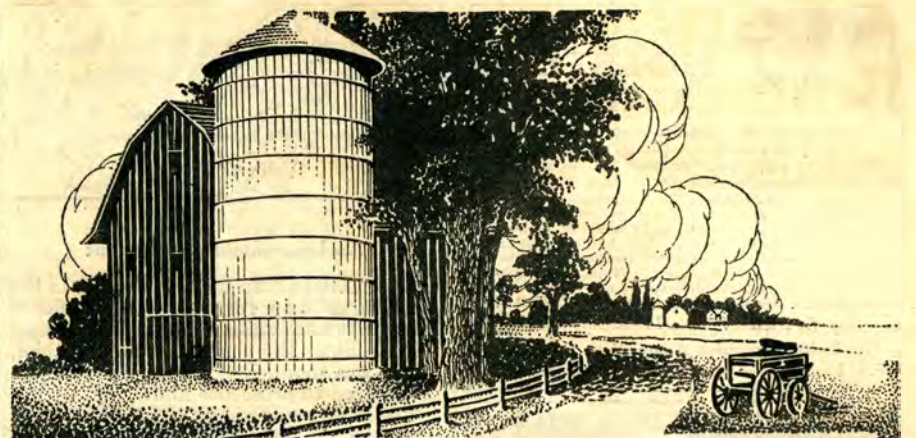
It will be different with the next generation if they are properly educated. The boys and girls will learn these things while their minds are plastic.

If the boys and girls in the rural school are started off seeking and finding the causes of things relating to their farming, by the time they reach maturity they will find order and meaning without the headache of which William's mother complained, in the great mass of the known facts of science and practice, just as we find them in the matter on the familiar printed page. We may not take all of it in at a glance, but it doesn't repel or confuse us; and we know very well that we can master any part of it in a short time if we wish.

The real basis of our treatment of many farm problems—like the bitter milk, for instance—is new stuff not more than ten, twenty or thirty years old. It is our motor car of necessary knowledge; and driving it is not quite so natural as handling the lines across the dashboard.

We should not be expected to do the thing with perfect ease, or to master it all at once; but the children who learn the newer facts at the age of five and upward—why, if the right sort of rural schools are promoted and established, these children will know the science of things as completely as we know the practice, and they won't have to go to the arithmetic all the while to find the rules for their operations, or to the instruction book for the way to finger their exercises, or to the dictionary for the pronunciation of their words as we have to do.

But going to the books is for us mature people the only way to become familiar with these things; and we really cannot afford not to become familiar with them as rapidly as possible.



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KITCHEN HELPS

By Florence Spring



CHEESECLOTH is one of the most useful kitchen aids. Tie hemmed squares of it over pitchers holding soup, milk and other liquids to be placed in the refrigerator; wrap larger squares about poultry after it is prepared for the oven; also tie lettuce ready for the table in these squares, shake off superfluous water, rest on a plate and put in the ice box. In this way it can be kept crisp and fresh. Make small bags of cheesecloth for herbs and spices; also keep a number of squares through which to strain soup, jelly, coffee to be used in desserts, and in which to wrap fish, for boiling. Several thicknesses of cheesecloth quilted together make the very best kind of dishcloth.

As much garbage as possible should be burned in the range when a coal fire is going, unless there are animals to eat it. Cremation is the most sanitary way of disposing of kitchen waste. If there is a vegetable garden the garbage may be buried during mild weather. Dig a deep hole, leave a small spade near by, and cover the garbage with a little earth each time it is deposited, and occasionally a shake of lime.

Keep the sink and trap clean and sweet by pouring down once a week a kettleful of boiling water in which a handful of washing soda has been dissolved. Turn on the hot-water faucet for a few minutes after the soda water has been used. Scrub the sink well with soap and hot water after each meal. Saucepans, kettles and tins which have become burned on the bottom may be cleaned by boiling a solution of soda water in them for half an hour and then scrubbing them with a brush. Use washing soda also in the water used for scrubbing the kitchen floor if there are grease spots.

A whisk broom after becoming too worn to use on clothing makes a fine sink brush. Trim off the edges with a pair of strong shears until the stiff part of the brush is reached. To dry after being used hang on a hook outside a convenient window.

An excellent scrap basket for the corner of the kitchen sink is made by driving rows of holes with a hammer and large nail in the bottom of an ordinary lard pail; empty frequently and keep bright and clean with mineral soap. Keep a small strainer hanging over the sink and through it pour coffee and tea grounds and everything containing sediment, and tip the contents into the pail. This may save you many plumber's bills.

Buy brushes the size and shape of ordinary nail brushes, and keep them near the sink to use in scrubbing potatoes, carrots and other vegetables.

Keep a pair of kitchen scissors hanging over the sink. You will be surprised to find how often they can be used—for snipping parsley, chives, shredding lettuce, orange peel, and so forth. Keep them sharp!

Have a regular place in which to keep, neatly folded, a few of the paper bags which come into the kitchen. Slip the hand into one when polishing the stove.

Use newspaper and tissue paper freely, having a convenient place in which to keep both. Wipe out frying pans, greasy baking

tins and dripping pans with tissue paper, to remove most of the grease before the pans are put into the dishwasher. Save the twists of oily paper to use in kindling the fire. Lay tissue or other absorbent paper under croquettes, fishballs and other fried food, to take up the extra fat before serving. Use newspaper for giving the stove an extra rub after preparing the meals. Lay a double paper in front of the stove while basting meat or frying; it will save the floor from many spatters. Also lay paper on the kitchen table while cleaning silver and polishing brasses, then roll it up and burn it.

When trying out scraps of fat meat and skimming ham, take the fatty debris not useful for other purposes, twist it in a piece of newspaper or a paper bag and lay it aside to put in the stove when you want a hasty hot oven for a few moments only. This often saves an entire raking down and starting up of your body of coal.

Use old cotton, neatly hemmed in towel size, for wiping glasses. It will give a polish superior to linen or crash, and never leaves a deposit of lint. Wash dishtowels every morning and dry in the sun if possible. Rinse them in cold water after each meal. If the dishes are properly washed, towels are easily kept clean. Discard the dishcloths after they begin to be ragged; shreds and lint often make serious trouble with the drain pipes.

When making apple sauce or apple pies in any quantity—unless you live on a farm where apples abound—save the skins and cores, cover with cold water and boil until soft and tender. Strain, boil juice twenty minutes, add an equal measure of sugar, boil five minutes and you will have a glass or two of apple jelly.

Wash eggs before using and use the shells, dried, for clearing coffee.

After using the Dover egg beater, do not put it to soak; the oil will soak from the gears and next time will fly into what you are beating. Rinse the egg or other mixture off at once and dry quickly.

Have an extra meat chopper, if possible, screwed in some corner of your pantry, in which to make bread crumbs and to do all dry grinding.

Keep a small bowl of pieces of butter on the cooking table during the day. Much time is saved in finding butter soft and ready to spread, cream or braid with flour in sauces.

Keep a bowl of chopped parsley on hand in pantry or refrigerator, to use in sauces, creamed potato, or to sprinkle on fish, fowl or steak as a garnish. If too much is not prepared at once it will keep perfectly. In winter ask your market man to bring you five cents' worth of parsley each Saturday; use it fresh two or three days and dry the remainder by spreading on paper on back of the stove. Powder it coarsely and keep in a small glass jar to use during the rest of the week.

If you wish to iron a ribbon or a bit of silk in a hurry draw it tightly over the hot-water tank a moment or two.

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