

THE SECRET OF SUCCESS.

(By D. F. Boissevain.)

Almost twenty years since, I made up my mind to leave old Holland and try my fortune in the new world. There were so many old prejudices and "set ways" to overcome that in the "land of liberty" I could drink big draughts of "freedom's elixir" and become myself in course of time. Well, about that later on. What I want to tell you now is this: Before leaving I went to see many influential friends and acquaintances for the purpose of getting advice as to choice of location and many other subjects. They mostly were people who had traveled hither and thither and were now successful men of standing and position, and all of them gave me varied and more or less valued and truthful (lay the stress on *less*) information. In my peregrinations I also called in on my brother-in-law, who had a fine possession out in the country and was a gentleman farmer. His foreman was an ordinary farm hand, a hard-working, honest fellow, who read but little and with difficulty. He had always been a friend of mine, as I respected him for his many good traits of character; but for advice as to the course I should pursue with a view to settling in the land of my adoption—well, all that was strange to him and consequently he could tell me nothing. Sitting at his fireside the last night we were together he said: "You are about to go to America, and I know but little of that country. Many have gone; but only some have succeeded. Let me tell you something. It is easy to find good land and it is not a very great trick to raise good crops and good stock, but it is a deuce of a trick to sell it to good advantage; therefore don't get fooled. Get close to your market, no matter whatever else you do."

I went to Northwest Canada and settled forty miles from the railroad in order to grow wheat that would sell in Europe. And I did all this, thinking I was close to my market! The government emigration agent at Liverpool told me positively that a new line of rail would be in that section in '86, just as I would be ready to require it; and the pamphlets told me that elevator and rail brought Liverpool, so to say, at my door! I was not like those country yokels who had to see everything before they could believe. Dear me, no! I believed in progress in the possibilities of our age, so I did. I was a reader, a thinker sure enough. Well, don't you fellows be hard on me now. Out on a boundless prairie, with the line over your arm leading your horses to keep from freezing, wind blowing, snow flying so you can't see a yard ahead nor a track behind you! I'll never do it again. I'll give you my word of honor. Such trips as these, and I had lots of 'em, branded the words of the old yokel in my brain, and taught me a "wee little" about self importance and fine pamphlets and the veracity of "men of position," odd numbered sections, Chicago wheat markets and a whole heap of funny things. 'Pon my soul if I don't tell what I was going to say you'll never know it; but this question of getting close to your market, and understanding your market is what I am driving at.

It therefore happened that I asked Mr. Perry, of a Seattle commission company, if he had any suggestions to offer farmers on the subject of marketing their stuff. Say, boys, I had pulled the right string and it went with a whirr. "First of all," says Mr.

Perry, "say and repeat and emphasize the fact to every farmer you meet individually and all you can reach collectively that it is folly to hold perishable stuff for speculative purposes. The more perishable the produce the more it pays to sell quickly, if you can realize a reasonable sum at all. Take potatoes. It costs a farmer who has good facilities for storing them \$8 a ton to winter potatoes; that is, merely in the way of shrinkage and etc. Add to this the risk of unexpected frost—catching so many every year—the risk of bad roads when prices are way up, and the loss of hauling crops to market with spring work on hand, or leaving the potatoes till the crops are in and they come old and worn with care to meet their cousins from California young and with the smell of spring flowers around them in the same market. Of course, times were when potatoes sold actually for less than the cost of handling them. Men who cannot feed them must hold them over—many practical men value potatoes as hog, and even cow feed at from \$10 to \$14 per ton—according to prices of other feeds—but that is no longer the case. Potatoes low are not likely to rise much, because in two weeks the new crop from California will keep down any excessive rise, that local shortage might otherwise cause.

"No sound business man seeks a speculative business. Spread over a number of transactions, the man who sells when his crop is at its best, for the reasonable offer he then receives, comes out on top every time.

"The Alaska business set many of our farmers crazy, and the hallucination is still upon them. In the rush to Nome at the very least \$75,000 were lost in potatoes. Potatoes costing \$1.75 per pound lay rotting on the beach. Such experiences cure dealers of the speculative idea and the whole Northern trade is settling down to a good business proposition. This Northern trade, however, is a grand feature, as it is only in its infancy, and is good for years upon years. Our farmers do not seem to understand the value of this market, or what its requirements are. Take into consideration that the freight to Dawson is \$160 per ton and you can readily understand that no sane man will pay that charge on any goods that will not sell on sight, nor on goods that are not in first class keeping order. It is the slipshod, careless, ne'er-do-well who is content to store up potatoes of inferior quality, doing as little as possible to give them value, and then hoping, aye praying, that some misfortune to oth-

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ers may give him an exorbitant price. In most cases this excess payment will secure him a "good time" in town and a long season of misery at home, with the neglected wife and children. We find potatoes generally untrue to name, badly sorted with regard to size, and rough. All these things the farmer can avoid. A quick, ready sale is better than a high price. The former is a constant feature in the market; the latter occurs occasionally. The farmer must first secure pure seed, learn to grow his crop properly and give it the best of care and when harvesting sort his potatoes to lots of uniform size. The uniform smooth medium sized potatoes is the choice. Let

the man of real value brand his sacks and he will always be close to his market if he is on a wagon road at all. With fruit the same is true. Putting up apples in a tasteful manner and using a stencil on your box to prove that you have no desire to steal a man's money with inferior ware, will pay handsomely. Be sure, however, not to advertise your incompetence, for the sale of one bad lot will spoil many good ones. Tell your farmers that only rich men can pay fancy prices, but rich men do not as a rule eat as much as the workers, and rich men are scarce. The rational conclusion therefore is that the large army of working men keep our farmers alive. Would the farmers in return keep these men alive, deal with them honestly and above board. There is always room at the top of the tree where brawny fellows can obtain a comfortable perch, while the speculators and dead beats chase each other in the mud around the roots.