

A Great Series of Stories Ahead

IF some unknown person with unlimited wealth at his command should establish himself in the role of a mysterious "Justifier" and undertake to avenge some of the wrongs inflicted upon others, his activities would command the attention of the whole world. Just such an undertaking furnishes the plot for a series of great short stories which will begin in an early issue of our Literary Magazine. The stories are by Fred M. White, a prominent English writer, who has put into the series the very best of his ingenuity and imagination. He makes of the "Justifier" a most audacious person, who himself suffered a deep wrong at the hands of a group of rich men and then set about to accumulate a fortune to be employed in avenging his own injuries and those of others who like him had been made to suffer unjustly. His identity remains a secret, even though his plots are bold and every effort is made to discover him. After each audacious act of vengeance, he drops out of sight, only to reappear later to startle the world again with his activities. The series of stories is unique in conception and they arouse the deepest interest.

EVERY now and then in human experience, some man who submits meekly to imposition and injustice, arises, asserts himself and in a magnificent fight lets it be known that he is a man, and not a mouse, after all. That sort of a man is the hero of a short story in next week's magazine by John Barton Oxford, entitled, "Stevie Malone's Courage." It is full of the atmosphere of the woods, with strong men as its characters. The story is one of the kind that stirs your blood.

WIDELY different from the above story is a short story by Adelaide Stedman entitled, "Her Last Luxury." Adelaide Stedman's story is essentially gentle and it touches the heart with pathos rather than strong emotions. It is the tale of a little gentlewoman who finds herself alone in the world, and no resources to help her brave it. There comes a time when she reaches the end of her means. What happens to her is told by the writer so eloquently that the deepest human sympathies are stirred. The story isn't an unhappy story when it is all told, for it has a happy ending and it leaves you feeling better for having read it.

"OUT of Russia," our serial story, is now in its most interesting situations. In another installment, the scenes will be transferred to Russian soil and then events happen with unusual rapidity and the adventure becomes thrilling.

The Dry Farming Movement

By EDWARD LISSNER

DRY farming, in the language of Edwin L. Norris, governor of Montana, and a leader in the dry farming movement, is one of the big questions of the present generation. Success means the ultimate development of millions of acres of now almost worthless land in the semi-arid districts of the west and the bringing of them under early cultivation, homes for several times our present agricultural population and the prevention of crop failures in the future. There are sections already where land that once sold for taxes is now producing every variety of cereal, vegetable and fruit. Five years ago it was a drug on the market at fifty cents an acre. Today it has an actual market value of twenty-five dollars. Such cases are not rare. Dry farming in brief seeks to give value to soil that for years has failed to respond to our agricultural needs. This gives impetus to the present movement.

There is no pretence on the part of those interested in dry farming to minimize the importance of irrigation. They recognize that irrigated lands do now and will ever produce the surest and most profitable results. It is their belief that the irrigation of every acre of land should be encouraged and state and national aid to reclamation freely given. But it is pointed out that the amount of land which may be irrigated is limited by the water supply and the cost of reclamation. There are millions of acres which cannot be reclaimed in this way, and yet under proper treatment would be as productive as the land subject to irrigation. They have heretofore been and are now chiefly devoted to the grazing of live stock. From experiments conducted, actual cultivation carried on and observations made in many sections, the belief is strong that all this land may be successfully dry farmed.

It is not merely of interest but impetus to set forth what that would really mean. If but one-half of the acres were devoted to wheat and the result only twenty bushels an acre, there would be for ten million acres an annual production of 200,000,000 bushels. It is claimed that twenty bushels to the acre is very conservative figuring. The average bushels per acre obtained from lands successfully dry farmed has been thirty. Montana possesses less than one-

tenth of the lands situated in the semi-arid west, which can be cultivated successfully by dry farming methods. It is possible to make the acreage in the other states just as productive. In fact the cultivation of all the arable lands in the United States would mean an annual production of 2,000,000,000 bushels of wheat. For 1900 there was promised a wheat crop of 700,000,000 bushels. The year before there was a foreign demand for 120,000,000 and a home one for 620,000,000; in other words, 40,000,000 more than the estimated production of 1900. The supply, therefore, falls far short of the demand. Our population is on the increase and the demands grow in proportion. The time, therefore, when the question of feeding the multitude will be a vital one does not seem far off. The production of the irrigated and the naturally watered lands in the rain belt will not meet the situation. The dry farm lands will have to supply the deficiency and incidentally save the day.

Congress has recognized the one hundredth meridian as the dividing line between the arid and productive land of the United States. That section of any country where the rainfall is less than 12 inches is called arid. If it be between 12 and 20, semi-arid. The arid section of the United States lies east of the Rocky mountains. It is one-third of our total area. It extends from Bismarck, North Dakota, through North Platte, Nebraska, to Laredo, Texas, and all that country to the westward to the Sierra Nevadas and the Cascade mountains.

The section consists of between 75,000,000 and 80,000,000 acres above ditch, which apparently cannot be irrigated under any conditions. In many of the states where dry farming is already successfully established the precipitation comes in the winter time, and not when the crops need it most. As a rule, there is very little rain during that part of the year from spring to fall and the wind blows fully as much, if not more, than it does in Wyoming, drying up much of the moisture. Colorado, Wyoming and Montana have the largest area of land where these conditions prevail. Eastern Colorado alone has more than 1,200,000 acres of available dry land. Montana has from 12,000,000 to 15,000,000 acres upon which artificial water can never be gotten.



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The dry lands of Wyoming are estimated at 20,000,000 acres. Idaho has 75,000 acres. In the western part of Texas and eastern Mexico there are millions of acres of land awaiting the coming of the homesteader and every inch of it will produce some necessity.

A liberal estimate placed upon the amount of arid and semi-arid land possible to reclaim by irrigation if all the waste water were utilized is 10 per cent of the total area. If we exclude the irrigated lands, mountain, worthless land, the timber lands, mines, the government reserves and other lands suitable for grazing, there remains 20 per cent of the entire section reclaimable by dry farming.

Let us pause a moment to explain the term to the city reader. It is more correct in speaking of dry farming to use the term "scientific farming." This means, farming successfully with the natural precipitation, which must be so conserved and used as to obtain result. It has already been demonstrated that the soil, when properly prepared and cultivated, will absorb and hold moisture. The so-called dry farming, therefore, means the converting of the soil into a storage reservoir for the moisture which supports plant life during the season when precipitation is not sufficient. When the rains come and the snow melts the soil in the arid and semi-arid west, the moisture is either quickly evaporated from the surface or passes into the ground, from which it is almost as quickly drawn by the same process of evaporation. The secret of dry farming is the conservation of the moisture that falls, and the secret of the conservation is the destruction of the little cells at the surface through which evaporation is so active, and the secret of the destruction of the little cells is the frequent harrowing of the surface, which prevents the forming of a crust. The soft dirt or granular condition permits the moisture to pass rapidly into the ground and likewise holds it where it will do the most good. Under the Campbell system, which is well known in the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas and Colorado, and the Cook system in Wyoming, Idaho and East Oregon, the dry farmer ploughs his ground from eight to ten inches deep, preferably in the fall, in order that it may receive the benefits of the winter snows. The land is also ploughed at right angles to the prevailing winds that the trough of the furrow may catch and hold as much snow as possible.

The profits of dry farming are not uniform. They vary with the section. For instance in one district in Kansas where the altitude is 2,200 feet, the farmers are making a clear profit of 20 per cent on their non-irrigated lands. In Laramie county, Wyoming, one dry farmer of ten years' experience has been earning 25 per cent on his crop. A Colorado farmer claims to have dry farmed his land at a profit of 100 per cent, but this figure is regarded as extravagant.

These are the returns estimated on 100 acres of bench lands in Montana for the first year. As to the amount of forage to be raised: 25 acres of Canadian peas cut for hay yield 5 tons per acre, making 125 tons worth at the lowest, \$5 a ton or \$625. Twenty-five acres of peas left to ripen will yield seed worth \$375 and some hay. Five acres of soy beans yield seed worth \$125. The same amount of artichokes would yield at a low estimate seventy-five bushels, and ten acres of potatoes a similar amount. Fifteen acres of tubers would yield 1,000 bushels worth 50 cents a bushel, or \$500. Five tons to the acre would be a low yield for the root crops and twenty-five acres in this character of crops would be worth \$5 a ton for feeding live stock. Some of the cereal yields would be barley, twenty-five bushels on sod making 625 bushels worth 75 cents a bushel, or \$400. Ten acres of macaroni wheat would yield 250 bushels at 60 cents a bushel, or \$150. There would be no cash returns from alfalfa the first year. Here is the summary: Peas, hay, \$625; tubers, \$700; root, \$625; barley, \$400; macaroni wheat, \$150; making a total of \$2,800. The cost of putting in such a crop would be \$1,500, the marketing \$400. This would mean a net profit of \$900.

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No person can undertake dry farming on a shoe string. Some capital is absolutely necessary for all who would settle in the section. In many instances where men have failed to make good, the lack of money has been the cause. An authority advises that no man should open up a homestead unless his capital is sufficient to last twenty-four months. The one who would succeed must also be a resourceful, determined, intelligent farmer, willing to learn from his neighbors and adapt himself and his methods to his environment. This is quite as necessary as the proper soil, climate, seed system and capital. That good business management is also necessary goes without saying.