

The CZAR'S SPY

The Mystery of a Silent Love
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SYNOPSIS.

The yacht *Lola* narrowly escapes wreck in Leghorn harbor. Gordon Gregg, locum tenens for the British consul, is called upon by Muriel to find the *Lola's* owner, and dines aboard with him and his friend, Hyton Chater. Muriel, the girl who is actually seen a room full of arms and ammunition and a torn photograph of a young girl. That night the consul's safe is robbed and the *Lola* puts out to sea. The police find that Muriel is a fraud and the *Lola* a name false one. Gregg visits Capt. Jack Durnford of the marines aboard his vessel, and is surprised to learn that Durnford knows, but will not reveal, the mystery of the *Lola*. "It concerns a woman." In London Gregg is trapped nearly to his death by a former servant, Olinto, who repeats in time to save him, but not to give a reason for his treachery. Visiting in Dumfries Gregg meets Muriel Leithcourt, who is strangely affected at the mention of the *Lola*. Muriel informs Gregg that she is engaged to Woodroffe. Leithcourt's actions and connection with Woodroffe are mysterious. Gregg sees a copy of the torn photograph on the *Lola*, and finds that the young girl is Muriel's friend. Woodroffe disappears. Gregg discovers the body of a murdered woman in Rannoch wood.

CHAPTER V—Continued.

And Muriel, a pretty figure in a low-cut gown of turquoise chiffon, standing behind her father, smiled secretly at me. I smiled at her in return, but it was a strange smile, I fear, for with the knowledge of that additional mystery within me—the mystery of the woman lying unconscious or perhaps dead, up in the wood—held me stupefied.

I had suspected Leithcourt because of his constant trysts at that spot, but I had at least proved that my suspicions were entirely without foundation. He could not have gone home and dressed in the time, for I had taken the nearest route to the castle while the fugitive would be compelled to make a wide detour.

I only remained a few minutes, then went forth into the darkness again, utterly undecided how to act. My first impulse was to return to the woman's aid, for she might not be dead after all.

And yet when I recollected that hoarse cry that rang out in the darkness, I knew too well that she had been struck fatally. It was this latter conviction that prevented me from turning back to the wood. You will perhaps blame me, but the fact is I feared that if I went there suspicion might fall upon me, now that the real culprit had so ingeniously escaped.

Whether or not I acted rightly in remaining away from the place, I leave it to you to judge in the light of the amazing truth which afterwards transpired.

I decided to walk straight back to my uncle's and dinner was over before I had had my tub and dressed. Next day the body would surely be found; then the whole countryside would be filled with horror and surprise. Was it possible that distinguished, that calm, well-groomed, distinguished looking man, held any knowledge of the ghastly truth? No. His manner as he stood in the hall chatting gayly with me was surely not that of a man with a guilty secret. I became firmly convinced that although the tragedy affected him very closely, and that it had occurred at the spot which he had each day visited for some mysterious purpose, yet up to the present he was in ignorance of what had transpired.

But who was the woman? Was she young or old?

A thousand times I regretted bitterly that I had no matches with me so that I might examine her features. Was the victim that sweet-faced young girl whose photograph had been so ruthlessly cast from its frame and destroyed? The theory was a weird one, but was it the truth? I retired to my room that night full of fevered apprehension. Had I acted rightly in not returning to that lonely spot on the brow of the hill? Had I done as a man should do in keeping the tragic secret to myself?

At six I shaved, descended, and went out with the dogs for a short walk; but on returning I heard of nothing unusual, and was compelled to remain inactive until near midday.

I was crossing the stable yard where I had gone to order the carriage for my aunt, when an English groom, suddenly emerging from the harness room, touched his cap, saying:

"Have you heard, sir, of the awful affair up yonder?"

"Of what?" I asked quickly.

"Well, sir, there seems to have been a murder last night up in Rannoch wood," said the man quickly. "Holden, the gardener, has just come back from that village and says that Mr. Leith-

court's under gamekeeper as he was going home at five this morning came upon a dead body."

"Call Holden. I'd like to know all he's heard," I said. And presently, when the gardener emerged from the grapehouse, I sought of him all the particulars he had gathered.

"I don't know very much, sir," was the man's reply. "I went into the inn for a glass of beer at eleven, as I always do, and heard them talking about it. A young man was murdered last night up in Rannoch wood."

"The body was that of a man?" I asked, trying to conceal my utter bewilderment.

"Yes—about thirty, they say. The police have taken him to the mortuary at Dumfries, and the detectives are up there now looking at the spot, they say."

A man! And yet the body I found was that of a woman—that I could swear.

After lunch I took the dogcart and drove alone into Dumfries. The police constable on duty at the town mortuary took me up a narrow alley, unlocked a door, and I found myself in the cold, gloomy chamber of death. From a small dingy window above the light fell upon an object lying upon a large slab of gray stone and covered with a soiled sheet.

The policeman lifted the end of the sheet, revealing to me a white, hard-set face, with closed eyes and dropped jaw. I started back as my eyes fell upon the dead countenance. I was entirely unprepared for such a revelation. The truth staggered me.

The victim was the man who had acted as my friend—the Italian waiter, Olinto.

I advanced and peered into the thin inanimate features, scarce able to realize the actual fact. But my eyes had not deceived me. Though death distorts the facial expression of every man, I had no difficulty in identifying him.

"You recognize him, sir?" remarked the officer. "Who is he? Our people are very anxious to know, for up to the present moment they haven't succeeded in establishing his identity."

"I will see your inspector," I answered with as much calmness as I could muster. "Where has the poor fellow been wounded?"

"Through the heart," responded the constable, as turning the sheet farther down he showed me the small knife wound which had penetrated the victim's jacket and vest full in the chest.

"This is the weapon," he added, taking from a shelf close by a long, thin poniard with an ivory handle, which he handed to me.

In an instant I recognized what it was, and how deadly. It was an old Florentine misericordia, with a hilt of yellow ivory, the most deadly and fatal of all the daggers of the middle ages. It was still blood-stained, but as I took the deadly thing in my hand I saw that its blade was beautifully damascened, a most elegant specimen of a medieval arm. Yet surely none but an Italian would use such a weapon, or would aim so truly as to penetrate the heart. And yet the person struck down was a woman and not a man!

I looked again for the last time upon the dead face of the man who had served me so well, and yet who had enticed me so nearly to my death. In the latter incident there was a deep mystery. He had relented at the last moment, just in time to save me from my secret enemies.

Could it be that my enemies were his? Had he fallen a victim by the same hand that had attempted so ingeniously to kill me?

Why had Leithcourt gone so regularly up to Rannoch wood? Was it in order to meet the man who was to be entrapped and killed? What was Olinto Santini doing so far from London, if he had not come expressly to meet someone in secret?

With my own hand I recovered the face with the sheet. I accompanied the constable to the inspector's office some distance across the town.

Having been introduced to the big, fair-haired man in a rough tweed suit, who was apparently directing the inquiries into the affair, he took me eagerly into a small back room and began to question me. I was, however, wary not to commit myself to anything further than the identification of the body.

"The fact is," I said confidentially, "you must omit me from the witnesses at the inquest."

"Why?" asked the detective suspiciously.

Pyramids; the description of a painting by "Rembrandt" was, after a little thought, produced—although the artist was Rembrandt; a natural history book on "Knowing, Invertebrate and Cavernous Animals" was interpreted satisfactorily as one upon animals that are gnawing, invertebrate or carnivorous. Even the boy who demanded a thrilling tale entitled, "Fighting With the Hi-Hos" was not disappointed. He received "Riflemen of the Ohio."

With the frequenters of the children's room, who so often seek advice and assistance, the friendly librarian is frequently on confidential terms—so much so that unexpected domestic revelations are occasionally made. Joe, a constant borrower, inquired anxiously one Saturday:

"Missus, how much will I have to pay if I keep my book until Monday?"

"Your book is due today," he was told, "but you have an hour's time before the library closes. Why don't you go home and get it?"

"Can't," said Joe.

"Why can't you?" persisted the attendant.

"Because if it were known that I have identified him all chance of getting at the truth will at once vanish," I answered. "I have come here to tell you in strictest confidence who the poor fellow really is."

"Then you know something of the affair?" he said, with a strong Highland accent.

"I know nothing," I declared. "Nothing except his name."

"H'm. And you say he's a foreigner—an Italian—eh?"

"He was in my service in Leghorn for several years, and on leaving me he came to London and obtained an engagement as waiter in a restaurant. His father lived in Leghorn; he was doorkeeper at the prefecture."

"But why was he here in Scotland?"

"How can I tell?"

"You know something of the affair. I mean that you suspect somebody, or you would have no objection to giving evidence at the inquest."

"I have no suspicions. To me the affair is just as much of an enigma as to you." I hastened at once to explain. "My only fear is that if the assassin knew that I had identified him he would take care not to betray himself."

"You therefore think he will betray himself?"

"I hope so."

"By the fact that the man was attacked with an Italian stiletto, it would seem that his assassin was a fellow-countryman," suggested the detective. "The evidence certainly points to that," I replied.

"Someone who waited for him on the edge of that wood and stepped out and killed him—that's evident," he said, "and my belief is that it was an Italian. There were two foreigners who slept at a common lodging house two nights ago and went on tramp towards Glasgow. We have telegraphed after them and hope we shall find them. Scotsmen or Englishmen never use a knife of that pattern."

"I know not whom to suspect," I declared. "It is a mystery why the man who was once my faithful servant

should be enticed to that wood and stabbed to the heart."

"There is no one in the vicinity who knew him?"

"Not to my knowledge."

"We might obtain his address in London through his father in Leghorn," suggested the officer.

"I will write today if you so desire," I said readily. "Indeed, I will get my friend the British consul to go round and see the old man and telegraph the address if he obtains it."

"Capital!" he declared. "If you will do us this favor we shall be greatly indebted to you. It is fortunate that we have established the victim's identity—otherwise we might be entirely in the dark. A murdered foreigner is always more or less of a mystery."

Therefore, then and there, I took a sheet of paper and wrote to my old friend Hutcheson at Leghorn, asking him to make immediate inquiry of Olinto's father as to his son's address in London.

We sat for a long time discussing the strange affair. In order to betray no eagerness to get away, I offered the big Highlander a cigar from my case and we smoked together. The inquiry would be held on the morrow, he told me, but as far as the public was concerned the body would remain as that of some person "unknown."

"And you had better not come to my uncle's house, or send anyone," I said. "If you desire to see me, send me a line and I will meet you here in Dumfries. It will be safer."

The officer looked at me with those keen eyes of his, and said:

"Cause," said Joe, "I'll get a bath if I do."—Youth's Companion.

West Africans Use Soap Freely.

In all parts of West Africa there are evidences that for centuries before the native began to import or to buy European cotton goods from the European trader who came hither, they grew their own cotton and wove on hand looms their own cotton goods. They also manufactured soap, and have made free use of it in keeping both their clothes and bodies clean, as may be observed by those who travel through the country. Some wash their bodies, as a religious ceremony, two and three times a day. This is necessary, as the natives oil their skins as a protection against the painful effects of the sun. They also delight in their white, flowing gowns.

That's Different.

A man makes fun of the cigars his wife buys. Yet many a woman suffers in silence while a man smokes the cigars he bought himself.—Washington Star.

SORRY TO HAVE MISSED TRIP

Traveler's Regret is That He Passed Up Opportunity to Cross the Sinai Desert.

The difficulties of the Sinai desert seem to a correspondent to be somewhat exaggerated. Ten years ago, he writes, I visited Jerusalem, Jericho and the Dead Sea on my bicycle, and on my return journey was tempted to make the trip from Jaffa to Alexandria by way of Gaza and the coast. As the result of local inquiries (and cycling is not unknown in Palestine, for I got the loan of a pump in Jerusalem) I ascertained that the journey would be only some 150 miles—"six days' camel journey"—and that water would be obtainable at two places. There is no "road," but my experience in Palestine did not make that any disadvantage. I usually found that a camel track gave considerably better going than the sort of thing that passes as a made road in the wilderness of Judea. Six days by camel would have meant about four days on a cycle, but

"Really, Mr. Gregg, I can't quite make you out, I confess. You seem to be apprehensive of your own safety. Why?"

"One never knows whom one offends when living in Italy," I laughed, as lightly as I could, endeavoring to allay his suspicion. "He may have fallen beneath the assassin's knife by giving a small and possibly innocent offense to somebody. Italian methods are not English, you know."

"By Jove, sir, and I'm jolly glad they're not!" he said. "I shouldn't think a police officer's life is a very safe one among all those secret murder societies I've read about."

"Ah! what you read about them is often very much exaggerated," I assured him. "It is the vendetta which is such a stain upon the character of the modern Italian; and depend upon it, this affair in Rannoch wood is the outcome of some revenge or other—probably over a love affair."

"But you will assist us, sir?" he urged. "You know the Italian language, which will be of great advantage; besides, the victim was your servant."

"Be discreet," I said. "And in return I will do my very utmost to assist you in hunting down the assassin."

And thus we made our attempt. Half an hour after I was driving in the dogcart through the pouring rain up the hill out of gray old Dumfries to my uncle's house.

As I descended from the cart and gave it over to a groom, old Davis, the butler, came forward, saying in a low voice:

"There's Miss Leithcourt waiting to see you, Mr. Gordon. She's in the morning room, and been there an hour. She asked me not to tell anyone else she's here, sir."

I walked across the big hall and along the corridor to the room the old man had indicated.

And as I opened the door and Muriel Leithcourt in plain black rose to meet me, I plainly saw from her white, haggard countenance that something had happened—that she had been forced by circumstances to come to me in strictest confidence.

Was she, I wondered, about to reveal to me the truth?

CHAPTER VI.

The Gathering of the Clouds.

"Mr. Gregg," exclaimed the girl, with agitation, as she put forth her black-gloved hand. "I—suppose you know—you've heard all about the discovery today at the wood? I need not tell you anything about it."

"Yes, Miss Leithcourt, I only wish you would tell me about it," I said gravely, inviting her to a chair and seating myself. "Who is the man?"

"Ah! that we don't know," she replied, pale-faced and anxious. "I wanted to see you alone—that's the reason I am here. That's what you must know at home that I've been over here."

"Why, is there any service I can render you?"

"Yes. A very great one," she responded with quick eagerness. "I—well—the fact is, I have summoned courage to come to you and beg of you to help me. I am in great distress—and I have not a single friend whom I can trust—in whom I can confide."

Her lips moved nervously, but no sound came from them, so agitated was she, so eager to tell me something; and yet at the same time reluctant to take me into her confidence.

"It concerns the terrible discovery made up in Rannoch wood," she said in a hoarse, nervous voice at last. "That unknown man was murdered—stabbed to the heart. I have suspicions."

"Of the murdered man's identity?"

"No. Of the assassin. I want you to help me, if you will."

"Most certainly," I responded. "But if you believe you know the assassin you probably know something of the victim?"

"Only that he looked like a foreigner."

"Then you have seen him?" I exclaimed, much surprised.

My remark caused her to hold her breath for an instant. Then she answered, rather lamely, it seemed to me:

"From his features and complexion I guessed him to be an Italian. I saw him after the keepers had found him."

"Besides," she went on, "the stiletto was evidently an Italian one, which would almost make it appear that a foreigner was the assassin."

"Is that your own suspicion?"

"No."

"Why?"

She hesitated a moment, then in a low, eager voice she said:

"Because I have already seen that knife in another person's possession."

"Then what is your theory regarding the affair?" I inquired.

"It seems certain that the poor fellow went to the wood by appointment, and was killed. The affair interested me, and as soon as I recognized the old Italian knife in the hand of the keeper, I went up there and looked about. I am glad I did so, for I found something which seems to have escaped the notice of the detectives."

"And what's that?" I asked eagerly. "Why, about three yards from the pool of blood where the unfortunate foreigner was found is another small pool of blood where the grass and ferns around are all crushed down as though there had been a struggle there."

"There may have been a struggle at that spot, and the man may have staggered some distance before he fell dead."

"Not if he had been struck in the heart, as they say. He would fall, would he not?" she suggested. "No. The police seem very dense, and this plain fact has not yet occurred to them. Their theory is the same as what you suggest, but my own is something quite different. Mr. Gregg, I believe that a second person also fell a victim," she added in a low, distinct tone.

I gazed at her open-mouthed. Did she, I wondered, know the actual truth? Was she aware that the woman who had fallen there had disappeared?

"A second person!" I echoed, as though in surprise. "Then do you believe that a double murder was committed?"

"I draw my conclusion from the fact that the young man, on being struck in the heart, could not have gone such a distance as that which separates the one mark from the other."

"But he might have been slightly wounded—on the hand, or in the face—at first, and then at the spot where he was found struck fatally," I suggested.

She shook her head dubiously, but made no reply to my argument. Her confidence in her own surmise made it quite apparent that by some unknown means she was aware of the second victim. Indeed, a few moments later she said to me:

"It is for this reason, Mr. Gregg, that I have sought you in confidence. Nobody must know that I have come here to you, or they would suspect; and if suspicion fell upon me it would bring upon me a fate worse than death. Remember, therefore, that my future is entirely in your hands."

"I don't quite understand," I said, rising and standing before her in the fading twilight, while the rain drove upon the old diamond window panes. "But I can only assure you that whatever confidence you repose in me, I shall never abuse, Miss Leithcourt."

"I know, I know," she said quickly. "I trust you in this matter implicitly. I have come to you for many reasons, chief of them being that if a second victim has fallen beneath the hand of the assassin, it is, I know, a woman."

"A woman! Whom?"

"At present I cannot tell you. I must first establish the facts. If this woman were really stricken down, then her body lies concealed somewhere in the vicinity. We must find it and bring home the crime to the guilty one."

"But if we succeed in finding it, could we place our hand upon the assassin?" I asked, looking straight at her.

"If we find it, the crime would then tell its own tale—it would convict the person in whose hand I have seen that fatal weapon," was her clear, bold answer.

"Then you wish me to assist you in this search, Miss Leithcourt?" My search may bring suspicion upon me. It will be difficult to examine the whole wood without arousing the curiosity of somebody—the keeper or the police."

"I have already thought of that," she said. "I will pretend tomorrow to lose this watch bracelet in the wood," and she held up her slim wrist to show me the little enameled watch set in her bracelet. "Then you and I will search for it diligently, and the police will never suspect the real reason of our investigation. Tomorrow I shall write to you telling you about my loss, and you will come over to Rannoch and offer to help me."

I was silent for a moment.

"Is Mr. Woodroffe back at the castle? I heard he was to return today."

"No. I had a letter from him from Bordeaux a week ago. He is still on the continent, I believe, indeed, he has gone to Russia, where he sometimes has business."

"I asked you the question, Miss Muriel, because I thought if Mr. Woodroffe were here he might object to our searching in company," I explained, smiling.

Her cheeks flushed slightly, as though confused at my reference to her engagement, and she said mischievously:

"I don't see why he should object in the least. If you are good enough to assist me to search for my bracelet, he surely ought to be much obliged to you."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Depends on the Man.

Any woman can have any man she likes if she pursues him vigorously enough or eludes him—either does. There are two ways for a woman to get what she wants. Either chase it for all she is worth, or run from it in the same manner. It depends on the man.—"Time or Day," by Doris Egerton Jones.

as that was the exact time I had in hand before my boat sailed from Alexandria, I came to the conclusion that there was not enough margin to work on. To reduce my risks I was prepared to take enough drinking water and food for the whole journey, no other equipment being necessary. I have only once regretted not having made the venture, but that regret is still with me.—Manchester Guardian.

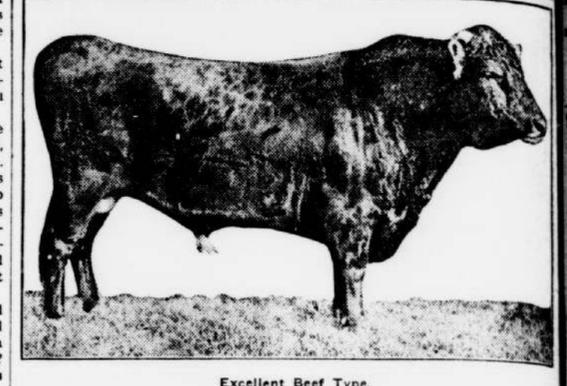
Painting Points.

When preparing paint remember that better results are obtainable from several applications of thin paint than from heavier coats. Of course, it takes longer to do the work. Paint put on in thin coats and allowed to dry, lasts much longer and will not flake off as is often the case when heavier coats are applied. When very fine results are wanted rub down each coat after it has thoroughly dried.

Gigantic Hot Springs.

Some of the hot springs of New Zealand are actually small lakes, large enough to float a battleship.

RAISE PROFITABLE BEEF IN THE SOUTH



Excellent Beef Type.

The South as a cattle country, helping in the not distant future to solve the problem of the high cost of living, may be the result of experiments carried on by prominent southern farmers, among whom is Senator Robert F. Broussard of Louisiana. Mr. Broussard has ideas. He had an idea that the South was capable of raising beef cattle in sufficient quantity to help solve the great problem of food supply, and he started experiments on his farm, about 150 miles northwest of New Orleans.

"It is my belief," said Senator Broussard, "that in the southern states beef cattle can be produced in quanti-

FOR SUMMER PASTURE

Suggestions on Planting Bermuda Grass in South.

Resistant to Heat, Drought and Trampling by Live Stock—Tendency to Become Sod Bound—Used to Arrest Soil Erosion.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

Bermuda grass is well and favorably known in the South. On most soils it is grown primarily as a summer pasture, although it is cut to some extent for hay. It is resistant to heat, drought and trampling by live stock, but the leaves are easily killed by frost, and the plants rarely survive the winter north of the Potomac and Ohio rivers. Hence Bermuda grass finds its chief field of usefulness in the southern states as far north as Virginia and Kentucky. On account of its dense growth and abundant leafiness, Bermuda grass yields very heavily in proportion to its height. Ordinarily it will average about one ton of hay per acre to a cutting, but double this yield has been obtained under favorable conditions. While yields are small on poor land, a rich moist soil will produce a fairly heavy yield, and two crops can ordinarily be cut each year. Both pastures and meadows should be plowed once every few years on account of the tendency of this grass to become sod bound.

Bermuda grass has about the same feed value as timothy hay when used as a feed for horses. Mules do about equally well upon either Bermuda grass or timothy. The former hay, however, has no fixed status on the market, which is, of course, a handicap when the crop is offered for sale. Louisiana uses more Bermuda grass than any other state.

The propagation of Bermuda grass is largely by sowing, or planting small pieces of rootstocks, or of the sod. The work is easily done, the rootstocks being chopped up in a cutting box and sown broadcast on well prepared ground, and then covered with a disk or common harrow. In some instances the sod itself is used. Some farmers prefer to plant cuttings in shallow furrows 3 feet apart. The plants being set about 18 inches apart in rows. A corn marker or shovel cultivator may be used for opening the furrows. After the cuttings are dropped they should be covered at once with soil. The covering may be done either with the foot or hoe. To save the loss of the land while Bermuda grass is starting, it may be planted in rows of any intertilled crop after the last cultivation. Bermuda grass does not thrive, however, if too densely shaded. When an old field is plowed the sod can be torn into shreds and used in starting a new field, by throwing pieces into the furrow after the plow, and covering with a harrow.

The farmer may desire to start his field of Bermuda grass by sowing the seed rather than propagating by rootstocks. The seed of Bermuda grass is now grown in Arizona, and this is of much better quality than that formerly on the market. The seed is very fine and rather high priced, therefore the seed bed should be well prepared and firm, in order to avoid too deep sowing. The seed should be sown at the rate of 3 to 5 pounds per acre, and covered with a roller. The best time to sow in the extreme South is in February or early March—farther north in March or April. The seed is mixed with meal or soil, so as to make a larger bulk and make it easy to scatter more evenly.

Bermuda grass is sometimes planted with hairy vetch, lespedeza or other crops in permanent pastures, thus improving the quality of the pasturage. On Bermuda grass and vetch pastures the live stock should be kept off for

as soon as the strawberry plants are through bearing, rake the straw mulch from the vines, leaving it between the rows to keep down weed growth, conserve the moisture, and for future fertilizing. The new runners are laid along the row so they will take root. Rows should be left from 12 to 18 inches wide, the runners being clipped off as they reach a greater length, or laid along the rows.

Where the patch has become matted over with the vines, they should be mowed after fruiting. When they are dry set fire to them while there is a brisk wind so it will carry the fire over the vines too quickly for them to be damaged by it.

The old row should then be plowed or disked out, the new vines in the center of the row being left to form the next season's bearing plants. The bed next may be harrowed and cross harrowed, to level and pulverize the soil. A narrow float, drag or roller, passed between the rows will greatly aid in conserving moisture.

Cultivating Corn.

Keep the cultivator going in the corn until out in tassel. But shallow toward the last, please! About two inches deep is right. Muzzle the horses and they'll work better.

Failure of Hay Crop.

The reason for much of the failure of the hay crop is that some farm meadows need reseeded and fertilizing.

Needs System.

A definitely organized and planned system is necessary to make a success in live-stock farming.

Feed for Work Team.

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