



JOE The Book Farmer

by Garrard Harris

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CHAPTER II.

Joe Begins Experimenting.

THE next day was Sunday. Tom Weston was red eyed and surly from the effects of the liquor he had drunk the night before with Jim Sullivan and moped about the house, snarling and snapping at his wife and little Annie and Joe.

As soon as breakfast was finished Joe took his precious volume about agriculture and slipped off to a sheltered nook behind the barn. He pored over it until dinner time; then he closed his eyes and reviewed in his mind the essential points of what he had read.

First of all, that plants must have food, just as human beings do; that lack of enough food or proper food made puny plants, just as it does with people; that the principal source of food for plants is the humus or decaying vegetable matter in the soil. From this largely comes the nitrogen, the phosphoric acid, the potash and other essentials to plant life, absorbed through the thousands of tiny roots of the growing plant above.

Also, he learned that the soil becomes barren and exhausted and devoid of these essentials with continued cultivation; that the crop takes these necessary things from the soil year by year, and something must be put back into the land or it will become sterile.

"The wise provisions of nature are seen," said the book, "in the annual renewal of the soil. The grass, weeds, trees, shrubs, all take from the soil in the summer, but they pay back the debt with interest in autumn, when the grass dies and the leaves fall to the ground. They are beaten into the soil by the winter rains and by the next summer have decayed and have given more to the land than the plants that bore them have taken away."

"And I never knew before," said Joe to himself, "what makes newly cleared ground so rich and give such large crops. Of course it is the humus from the leaves that have been dropping all the years."

After dinner he began to devour the book again. By dusk he knew that, in order to get the largest amount of plant food to the plants to fatten them, as it were, a deep plowing or breaking and loosening of the soil was essential until it was light and mellow. This allowed the tiny rootlets, each with hundreds of minute hungry mouths, to have a wider range in search of the life giving juices in the soil and thereby furnish the strength to make larger, more virile plants. The stronger the plants the more fruit, the better and larger fruit they made as a reward to the planter for his care.

"Daddy," said Joe, Monday morning, "please come on and let's pick out the four acres Mr. Somerville and me are going to work."

"All right. I'll give you part of that field across from the oak grove. It's so blame poor it won't sprout peas. I want to see what you all are going to do with that."

"Come on down, then. Let's lay it off. I know how poor it is, and the sooner something is done to it the better."

A tape line was secured, and the plot of four acres, two of the acres abutting on the road, was marked with stakes. It was poor land, distressingly poor, as the stunted dead grass and scantily nourished weeds attested. It was part of an old field that had been cultivated for sixty years.

"I don't guess you'll do much with that," announced Mr. Weston, with a triumphant grin.

"It's pretty bad, but we'll do the best we can," said Joe. "I don't reckon you've got any objection to my cutting enough locust wood posts from the thickest back of the hill to fence this?"

"Not if you trim the tops and limbs for firewood and have it hauled up to the house."

"All right, sir."

Just then old Uncle Jeff Washington and his boy, Abe Lincoln Washington, came shuffling down the road, both of them with their hands in their pockets.

"Want a job, Uncle Jeff?" inquired Joe.

"Who? Me?"

"No; you. You heard what I said."

"Well, suh, hit sorter 'pen's on whut de job is."

"Furnish your own rations."

"Wh-who gwine pay fer all dis?"

Joe pulled his checkbook from his inside pocket.

"When I write a check the Farmers' bank will pay it. You'll get your money all right."

"Dat's all I wanter know. Lead me ter dem locus'es."

"Hold on a minute. Do you want to hire Link here out for a few days?"

"Whut doin'?"

"Helping me. I'll give you 40 cents a day for him and give him his dinner. It isn't any harder work than I am going to do."

"Yasser, Mr. Joe, I rents 'im ter you. Link, you do whut he tells you, en ef you don't do hit I gwine ter take de hide offen you. Does you heah me, boy?"

"Yasser, I heahs you." Abe Lincoln's glance at his parent was sad and reproachful. Abe was fat and lazy and hated to work.

"All right," said Joe. "Uncle Jeff, go get your ax and start in on that locust thicket. You know where it is. Want the posts eight feet long."

Uncle Jeff ambled down the road toward his cabin. Link, a big, overgrown boy two years older than Joe, stood awkwardly waiting for orders.

"Come on, Link," said Joe, walking into the grove of oak trees, leaving his father in the road eying him curiously. Mr. Weston was dying to know what Joe was going to do next, but would not ask.

In the oak grove the dry leaves lay more than sheet deep. Joe took his knife, cut a good sized bundle of young sprouts and tied them together, making a stiff broom. With this he began to sweep leaves, and it worked admirably.

"Link, you take this broom and sweep these leaves in piles. Make one about every thirty feet. I'll be back shortly."

Leaving Link at work, Joe hustled past his father and soon returned from the barn with four large oat sacks. Link had several good sized piles of leaves ready. Joe held two sacks and made Link cram them full of the dry leaves, and, instructing him to fill the other two, Joe swung the full sacks upon his shoulders, marched across the road and emptied them on his four acres; then back and securing the two Link had filled, he emptied them, the others meanwhile in turn having been loaded.



Joe Returned From the Barn With Four Large Oat Sacks.

Mr. Weston grinned derisively. Joe was really too busy to notice him. Until noon the boys worked like beavers, and by that time a third of an acre had been covered with leaves over sheet deep. Bright and early next morning they resumed work after having put in a steady afternoon, and by the time dinner was ready one acre had been covered. Another day covered another acre and cleaned up about all the leaves in the grove.

That night Mr. Weston undertook to have some fun at Joe's expense.

"Goin' to tote leaves from that next grove?" he inquired. The next grove was nearly a mile away.

"No, too far—won't pay." This common sense view stumped him for awhile.

"Daddy, I'll give you 10 cents a load for what fertilizer there is in the barnyard."

"Ain't none there—not over a load or

so. You can have it for that price if you get it up." Mr. Weston had never thought of it as having any value at all and never collected it or used it on crops.

Next morning Joe and Link, each with a hoe, began scraping the cow lot and barn floor, going down after the thick layer of well rotted humus forming material that had accumulated for several years and which Mr. Weston had placed no value on whatever. Eleven two horse wagon loads were secured. Joe borrowed his father's wagon and scattered the entire lot on the acre he proposed to plant corn upon.

"That's my corn acre, Link," he explained. "I'm going to try to grow some corn here like it ought to be. What's the most corn you and Uncle Jeff ever made to the acre?"

"I dunno 'zac'y, but hit wuz in de neighborhood of fifteen bushels."

Joe bought eight more loads of barnyard fertilizer from a neighbor at 20 cents a load, delivered, and put that on his cotton acre.

Then he made an arrangement with another neighbor who had a plow suitable for deep breaking and stipulated that four mules were to be attached to it.

"What'n the name of peace you want that fer? Yer goin' ter tear the bottom plumb down ter this field. Goin' ter plow plumb down ter Chiny?" inquired the farmer.

"Yes, I'm going to tear the bottom out. I want that land broke fourteen inches deep, cross broke and then harrowed."

"All right; you're the doctor on that. I'll charge you \$8."

"That's a trade; hitch up. I want to get it broken as soon as possible."

The plowman was greatly astonished at the amount of leaves on the two acres and the amount of fertilizer spread. Then he sank the heavy plow to the shank on the outer edge of the measured lot; the four mules strained, and a great heavy ribbon of dirt rolled over from the plow as it moved forward. Eight inches below the surface the ground was sterile and poor. Below that depth it was fairly good. This was the dirt the light one horse plows could never reach.

The great turning plow reversed things. The poor dirt was thrown to the bottom, and the comparatively good soil was by the operation brought to the top. The leaves and fertilizer were covered and well mixed in.

Then a crosswise plowing at the same depth, to break up the packed soil and immense hard flakes, and a harrowing to further pulverize it, and Joe wrote his first check. The man looked at the signature Weston & Somerville as though he thought Joe had gone entirely crazy.

"What's all this here foolishness?" he asked, holding the check gingerly.

"You present that at the bank, and if they don't pay it Mr. Somerville will. He's my partner," announced Joe proudly.

"Well, I'm goin' to town now an' see about it, an' if it ain't paid there's goin' to be trouble," said the man truculently.

"Oh, don't get excited about it. Wait until it isn't paid before you start anything."

"I'm goin' right now," repeated the man.

"All right; I'll just go with you. I want to get some seed, and I'll get you to haul them out for me," said Joe, as he climbed into the wagon.

(To Be Continued)

ALMA.

The Xmas program held at the Norwegian Lutheran church, last Monday night was well attended.

Miss Emma Jorgenson was home for a visit over Christmas returning to Warren Monday.

Mark Cook had the luck of shooting a wolf the other day.

Mr. and Mrs. Jens Jorgenson visited at Fred Dahlin's place last Friday evening.

Knut Jorgenson transacted business at Argyle last Friday.

Alfred Vinge and his wife visited in town of West Valley during Xmas.

Miss Annie Carlson is home from the Twin Cities for a visit for a few weeks.

Paul Opsahl, who is working at the power house at Argyle, is home for a short visit.

TAKE IT IN TIME.

Just as Scores of Warren People Have.

Waiting doesn't pay. If you neglect kidney backache, Urinary troubles often follow. Act in time by curing the kidneys. Doan's Kidney Pills are especially for weakened kidneys.

Many people in this locality recommend them.

Here's one case: Mrs. Mary Ann Carter, 516 N. Front St., Crookston, Minn., says: "For quite a long time I suffered from backache and kidney trouble. I felt so poorly more than once that I had to lie down and rest. My back ached and was lame and sore. I felt tired and drowsy and my kidneys showed every sign of weakness. It may have been a cold on my kidneys that brought on these complaints. I got no relief until I began using Doan's Kidney Pills. They proved to be just what I needed and restored me to good health. I have no trouble from my back or kidneys now and Doan's Kidney Pills have saved me the expense of a doctor."

Price 50c, at all dealers. Don't Doan's Kidney Pills—the same that Mrs. Carter had. Foster-Milburn Co., Props., Buffalo, N. Y.

What's Doing in Minnesota

Red Wing. — Surrounded by children, great-grandchildren and neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Johnson of Welch celebrated their golden wedding day at their home.

Winona. — Rev. Benjamin F. McLaenney, 82 years old, one of the oldest Baptist ministers in the Northwest, died at his home here following an attack of heart disease.

Winona. — Labor conditions throughout Minnesota are far better this year than a year ago, declared George W. Lawson, secretary of the Minnesota State Federation of Labor, who spent several days in Winona.

Winona. — Mrs. Walter Sprecher, 30 years old, wife of the cashier of the State Bank of Independence, Wis., was killed when an automobile in which she was riding alone plunged from a bridge. Death was instantaneous.

Stewartville. — Business houses closed here and a public funeral took place for Mrs. J. W. Savage and her brother, Edward H. Hagen, 2 years old, who were burned to death when the H. O. Hagen home was destroyed by fire. All ministers of the village officiated.

St. Paul. — The wisdom of the pioneers of Minnesota in making provision for school lands was commended by former State Auditor Samuel G. Iverson in an address before the meeting of the Fourth district, Federation of Women's Clubs, at the Wilder building on "The Public Land Policy of Minnesota Schools."

Rochester. — The fifteenth annual convention of the Minnesota-Dakota Association of Hotel Clerks was held in Rochester and fifty of the greater were expected to be present. Rochester greeters arranged a program including a luncheon, dinners, theater parties for the women, a bowling party, an auto trip and the official banquet.

Albert Lea. — As the result of a double explosion of gasoline, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Howe were mortally burned at their farm home near Alden. Bert Howe, a brother, suffered serious burns from attempting to rescue them. When Harry Howe started to move a five-gallon can of gasoline from its position near the stove the contents exploded.

Jackson. — The first year of the dry regime in Jackson has proven to be an unqualified success. Four saloons were voted out of business last March and within a month all the buildings were turned into other mercantile establishments. All kinds of trade showed a steady increase to the first part of this month, and bank deposits are larger than in any previous year.

Tracy. — One thousand acres of rich corn land will be drained and 2,000 acres benefited by a large tile ditch to be dug in the spring, which will drain Lake Sigel, one mile south of Tracy, Telephone slough and much other wet land in the same vicinity. This will be a great benefit to Tracy, since the land has been non-productive, although it has rich black soil.

Worthington. — The Minnesota Crop Improvement Association will hold its annual meeting and seed show at Worthington, Minnesota, February 15-18. F. C. Tripp, instructor in agriculture at the Worthington High School, has arranged with the Extension Division of the Minnesota College of Agriculture for a series of stock-judging demonstrations for the forenoons of each day.

St. Paul. — Oscar Larson, a 12-year-old boy of Viking, Marshall county, won the potato-growing contest of the Northern Minnesota Development Association, and made a record for potato-growing by boys at the same time. He grew 75½ bushels of potatoes upon ¼ of an acre. Had he grown an acre of potatoes at the same rate, his yield would have been 605½ bushels. The potatoes grown were of the Green Mountain variety.

Red Wing. — Picture a solid square business block filled to a depth of 12 feet with carp and other rough fish and you get an idea of the immense haul made by David Gantenbein of Diamond Bluff in a single sweep of Lake Elysian with a seine 1,500 feet in length. Mr. Gantenbein estimated that fully fifty carloads of fish were caught in the net, but as there is no market for that quantity of fish at this time, all but a few carloads of carp were released in the lake.

Minneapolis. — County Treasurer Henry C. Hanke handled \$10,637,017.48 for Hennepin county in 1915. This included taxes of all kinds, \$7,238,039.20 on real estate; \$1,622,603.12 on personal property; \$500,000 on inheritances, and \$50,000 mortgage registration taxes. There was less than 1½ per cent of total taxes uncollected at the end of this year, a record the county treasurer said he is proud of. "The promptness of the citizens in paying their taxes is the best indication of prosperity," said Mr. Hanke.

Minneapolis, Jan. 4. — Dr. M. A. Hatch, against whom there are five indictments for alleged illegal practice on women patients, one of them charging him with manslaughter in connection with the death December 8 of Helen Davis, 18 years old, has been rearrested. He was at liberty on \$10,000 bail.

St. Paul. — All records for the issuance of building permits in St. Paul in December were broken by the month which has just ended. The total number issued for the month was 141 and the money value \$1,315,781.60.

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So if this money-saving opportunity appeals to you and if you want your family to use Karo, the most popular syrup for griddle cakes—then get 50 cents worth of Karo from your grocer and send us the labels and 85 cents. You'll get the Aluminum Griddle by prepaid parcel post.

Remember—this Solid Aluminum Griddle needs no greasing. It doesn't smoke up the kitchen. It can't rust; it is clean; and cakes baked on this griddle are more digestible than when fried in the old way.

If you haven't sent for your griddle already, get 50 cents worth of Karo from your grocer today, and send us the labels and 85 cents (P. O. money order or stamps) as quickly as possible so as to be sure of getting yours.

We will also send you free a copy of the famous Corn Products Cook Book. Put your order in as early as possible—for the griddles are going fast.

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Were You Legally Married?

Persons married during the past year are invited to take a glance at their wedding certificates. Is there a ten cent revenue stamp adorning the document, properly canceled with the initials of the minister who performed the ceremony and the date? If so, the wedding was performed according to due process of law and all the requirements appertaining thereto were fulfilled. If not, the clergyman officiating either has not studied the provisions of the war tax, or else he is dodging them. In either case, he is liable to a fine.

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