

# ONE COOLIDGE, CALVIN, WHO DESERTED HARD-WON SOIL

## "My Grandfather Thought It a Disgrace to Engage in Anything But Agriculture," Says Vice-President in His Call to "Get Out, Dig, Harrow and Plant," But "We Can't All Be Farmers"



Go! 't milk the cows. An unusual picture of our vice-president in his boots and old-world smock—wampus, he calls it.

BY CHARLES W. DUKE.

Now is the time for all good people to get out and dig, harrow and plant! saith the vice-president of these United States. Calvin Coolidge is essentially a son of the soil. Looking out of the windows of his apartment in the Willard hotel in Washington, over the greenward of the White House lawn and the Mall, he is thinking in terms of the farm this fine early spring. His mind travels back to the pastures of boyhood up in Vermont. What he has to say is of particular interest just now, for he is going to visit this state soon.

"My grandfather and his father before him thought it a disgrace to engage in anything but agriculture," reminisced the vice-president. "You see, my folks were all rooted in the soil, so to speak."

Whereupon Mr. Coolidge related an interesting story. Grandfather Coolidge was so intent on having his family stick to the plow and the reaper that he endeavored to bind his heirs to the Coolidge acres in the Green Mountain state.

"Grandfather Coolidge lived close to Mother Earth," said the vice-president, pressing a hand lightly over his high forehead. "It was his intention that the Coolidges should stick to the family acres. In his will he decreed that the old farm should be handed down to my father provided he would stick to its soil. The document provided that the farm should be handed along from generation to generation. My father is to leave it to me; I in turn, am to leave it to my boys. In this way he hoped to keep us all on the farm."

Ten years after the Pilgrims landed from the Mayflower, John Coolidge and his wife, Mary, settled at Watertown, a pioneer community on the Charles river. It is related that in 1789 the grandfather of the vice-president migrated northward, choosing his acres in the hill country back of the Connecticut river. There four generations of Coolidges have been raised to the plow. Three generations stuck to the soil. The fourth—John Calvin, who later dropped the John for plain Calvin—was the first to break away.

"How do you reconcile your present position with the desires of your grandfather?" was the question I propounded.

The farm boy, but now Calvin Coolidge, vice-president, moving in the circles of the world's leaders, grinned.

"Did you ever notice, in your study of American biographies, how so many of our leaders sprang from the farm?" was his graceful sidestep, facetiously couched. "Look at the list of presidents from George Washington down through Abraham Lincoln to the present. Not only presidents, but vice-presidents, statesmen and others. The American farm seems to have been a pretty good breeder of American leaders."

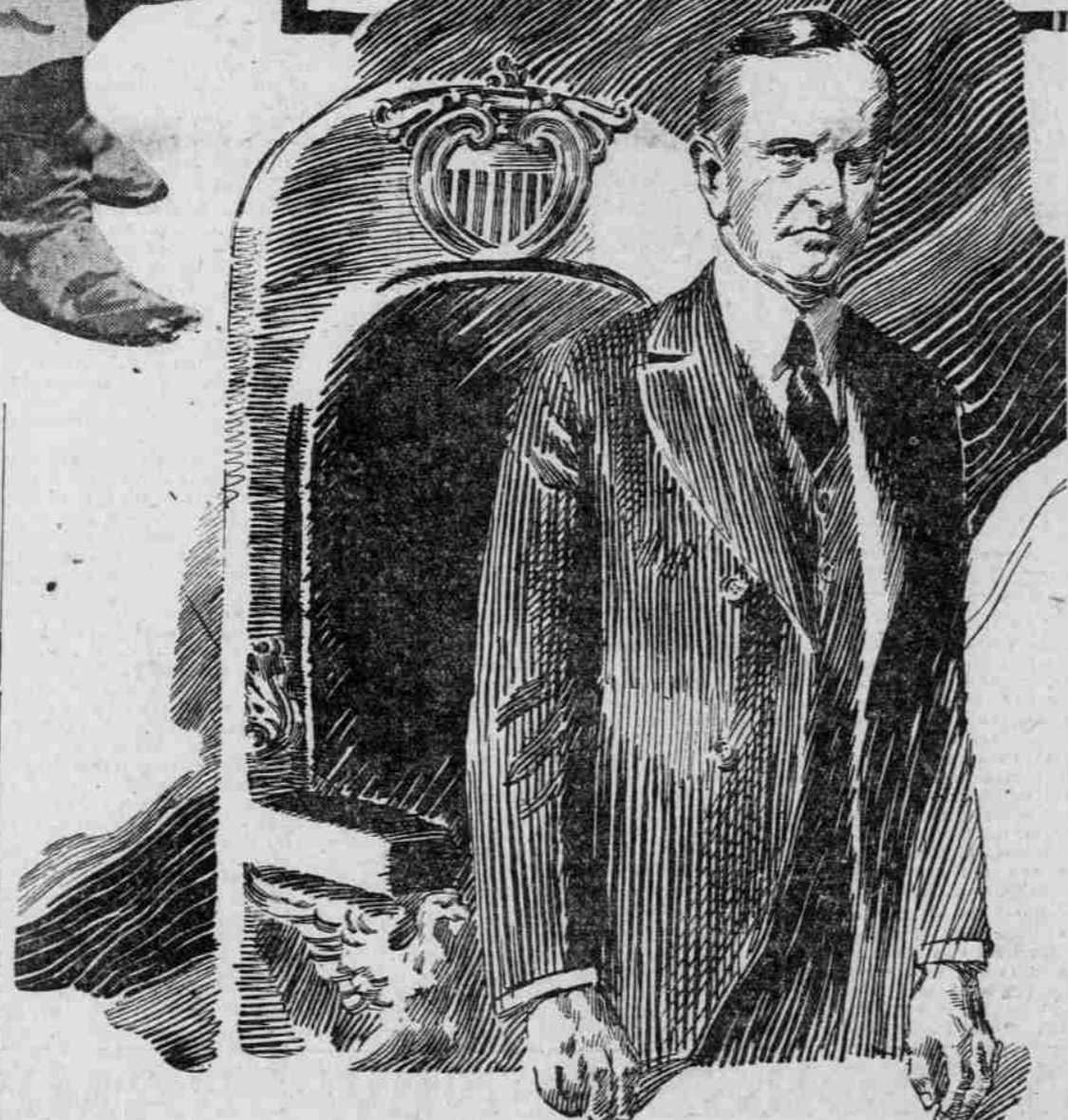
"Then you don't think you have been recreant to the wishes of your forebears?" I countered.

"Not all of us can be farmers," was his dry rejoinder.

When one goes to interview Cal



FOLLOWING—MAYBE THEY ARE CALLED "OLD STAR AND WHITE FOOT"—ALONG A NEWLY TURNED FURROW ON THE COOLIDGE HOMESTEAD.



Coolidge he must perforce go well primed with questions of all kinds. The answers are about one-tenth of one per cent of the interview, so frugal is the Hon. Cal with his language.

"Would you infer that for the future we may expect to find our presidents and national leaders coming from the cities rather than from the farms, considering the shift in population from the rural districts to the white lights of the cities within recent years?" was ventured.

"Who can tell?" was the Occeronian reply. "Time alone will show that. We can only speak accurately of the past in this connection."

But when it comes to discussing the American farm, the present and future status of agriculture, the vice-president can be pruned loose from his taciturnity. In fact, the longer he lives in Washington as vice-president of the United States the further he retreats from the embrace of the Sphinx, to which he has so long clung. It may be the company he is keeping; at any rate, the Hon. Cal is thawing out in the limelight of this fine spring sun.

As to the farm problem—cheer up! The back-to-the-farm problem short, it is to solve itself without the aid of the sociologic and economic specialists who have been carping on "The Impending Decline of Agrarian America." One gains that impression after talking with the Hon. Mr. Coolidge.

"Don't know that there is such a thing as the farm problem, after all," says the imperturbable Calvin.

"Nature has a wonderful way of taking care of us," he continued.

"Men are drawn away from the farm by the lure of higher wages and easier living conditions in the cities.

They flock into town and work for the higher wage. But when people get hungry they must have food. When they are hungry and without food they will go out and produce it. They will go back to the farm."

"Then you figure, in these days of unemployment, scarcity of houses and expensive living conditions, that folks will start back to the farm?"

"That's a reasonable deduction," was his slow-spoken reply. And then, after a short pause—"I guess the tide has turned the other way already."

Frankly the Hon. Mr. Coolidge is an optimist as regards the farm question. More than that, he's a dealer in common sense, applied not only to agriculture, but all the way from A to Z through the alphabet of existence.

"If my memory serves me right," he added, "this country last year produced bigger and better crops than ever before. With all the talk of scarcity of labor on the farms, of empty farmhouses and abandoned fields, we still seem to be keeping well up in the matter of farm production. There is no famine in the land. If the farm is being abandoned, how do you account for the continued productivity of the farm?"

He was quick to answer his own question.

"For one thing, work on the farm today is not so hard as it used to be. Nor are so many men required to do the work. Science has come to the aid of the farmer. They say a tractor can do the work of 16 men. Science will do more and more. Your farmer today can easily find out what his farm is best fitted for. He gets an analysis made of his land and then applies to it the kind of seed that will best grow in it. The farmer

of today reads a lot more than he used to. He has the newspaper, the farm journal or the agricultural aid handed in to him by the mail carrier. He knows his business better."

The vice-president speaks slowly and deliberately. But piecing his sentences together one by one you get a logical and complete answer.

There's not the drudgery on the farm there once was. Up in our New England section the farmer used to do a lot of butchering. Today you may find the farmer buying fresh meat in the city markets and carrying it home in his motorcar. The packers have come along and taken over that work, doing it easier on a large scale. Not nearly so many cattle are raised in New England as there were a quarter of a century ago. Where they are, they are mostly sold on the hoof."

Well the vice-president remembers the drudgery of his youth. All his early memories are of the farm—as one biographer has put it "of his grandfather putting him on the back of an old white mare; of his sliding off and breaking his right arm so that the bones stuck through the flesh of his waiting for the doctor to come from Ludlow; of 'the wall-eyed cow' that the hired man hit with the milking stool and that ran under the hay and got wedged in and was so frightened that the hired man could never milk her again, all of which meant that little John had to get up at 3 A. M. to help with the milking."

When the Honorable Coolidge goes home to the Vermont farm for vacation, as he will this summer, he will do the work of his father, a farmer's flock woven by his grandmother. He will milk the cows and help with the

harvest; at eventide, tired out with the day's toil, he will go up to sleep under the rafters where he slept as a boy, little dreaming of the day when he would sleep in the vice-presidential suite of a palatial Washington hotel.

The American farmer has ever been the substantial citizen of the commonwealth and the state, points out the vice-president, who, despite the fact he has strayed far from the Vermont acres of his forefathers, still has the inherent love of the quiet recesses of America, the open fields and the uncrowded meadows.

"Some people profess the belief that the farmers are the backbone of the nation. As a matter of fact they are pretty good fellows, aren't they?"—this with a typical smile.

"In nearly every case you find the man who owns a piece of land or a parcel of property all his own to be a pretty good sort of citizen. The farmer in few cases is likely to be a 'bad man.' The kind of life that he leads breeds contentment and appreciation of all the fundamentals of life. Out in the country is a pretty good place for clear thinking. You don't find many socialists or bolsheviks or whatever lets you choose to call them out on the farm."

"He's a thrifty citizen, too. Do you know that two out of every three people you meet up in New England—man, woman or child—is a safety bank depositor? (The most conspicuous buildings in the vice-president's home town of Northampton are savings banks.) The savings bank is the barometer of financial safety and the farmer is high among the aggregate of savings depositors."

Mr. Coolidge never had any fear of bolshevism gaining any foothold in this country. He says too many people are partners in the ownership of their country to engage in any new freak forms of government based on a redistribution of that which already belongs to them. He had heard it said that 52,000,000 people in this country either directly or indirectly are investors in the railroads of the nation.

"Oh, people are getting back to their former places," he says. "Possibly for the future we won't find so many of them out in the rural districts; but possibly we won't need so many of them on the farm. As I have already pointed out we still seem able to produce enough food for all and plenty to ship abroad. The modern processes of industry and commerce, trade and manufacture require that more people live in or closer to the cities where the factories and mills are located."

"In every event, I believe the balance will adjust itself. The cities may grow and other cities may spring up, but we shall always have farms because we have to have them. And having to maintain farms where we grow our food and clothing supplies we shall always have farmers."

"The thing to do for the farmer is to encourage him in every way; to make country life attractive. The needed thing is to pay the farm laborer a living wage, fitted to his needs and comparable with the wage that he might draw in the city."

"Thanks to the various agencies now working for the welfare of the country dweller, the modern farm is much more attractive than it used to be. There is less drudgery for the farmer's wife. The farmer's children have community life, motion pictures, better schools and the like. The automobile and the tractor have done much to stabilize conditions affecting the farm. You see, these problems seem to be solved as we go along."

"Have faith in America."

"Do the day's work."

"Just use plenty of common sense."

Bromide, maybe; but they were good enough for young America in the days of infancy, and they are good enough for the growing republic today, thinks the farmer boy of Vermont as he alternates today between

the rostrum of the United States senate and the vice-presidential suite of the Willard, whence he gazes out upon grass as green as that which grows up there along the Connecticut river shores in old Vermont.

### CODE INDICATES TELESCOPE LONG KNOWN BY ROGER BACON

Key to Works of Monk Believed to Show Scientist More Than Three Centuries Ahead of His Time.

BY WALTER HART BLUMENTHAL.

STARTLING disclosures are promised the scientific world by those elucidating the Roger Bacon cipher manuscript, which for more than three years baffled all attempts at interpretation. The work was found seven years ago by Dr. Wilfrid de Voynich, a noted Pole. It lay neglected with other medieval books in an Austrian castle. It is what bibliographers call a hermetic work, or one sealed to the common understanding by virtue of its occultism or the code in which its purport is concealed. This type of writing was once adopted by many savants, if only to make their works seem more recondite than they really were.

One American booklover, George Fabyan, of Geneva, Ill., collects only cryptic books and manuscripts which are known under the general name of steganography, or any form of cipher or symbol writing. Of course, shorthand is the commonest of these, though it is not generally known that stenography was used centuries ago. There is in the British museum a 16th century manuscript Bible written entirely in shorthand.

The bound Bacon manuscript, which contains about 750,000 words in crabbled Latin, ciphered and in parts illegible, has many charts and diagrams which are the best clues to the meaning of the text. In the 13th century, when it was compiled, experiments in physics were regarded as black magic.

Australia was afterward discovered, for he placed his "New Atlantis" there. He inflicts his perfect Antipodes with a weather bureau. Moreover, he anticipated Burbank, for he suggests growing "diversa new plants, differing from the vulgar, and making one plant turn into another."

The question whether Roger Bacon used a telescope and a microscope receives the contention as to whether it was not in the new world that both these instruments were first invented. For antiquarians who have studied extant hieroglyphic codices of the Aztecs say this race when overthrown by the Spanish conquerors was more advanced in astronomy and optics than Europe of that day.

Astec Surgeons Good.

It is known beyond cavil that in surgery the Aztecs practiced the trephining operation, and there is reason to believe that they could produce a form of local anesthesia. Hospitals existed in the native cities of Mexico at the time of Columbus, and the attending native surgeons, says one annalist, "were so far better than those in Europe that they did not protract the cure in order to increase the pay." Their skill was, according to the annalist, of a high order.

But the best proof of the advanced state of Aztec civilization was their calendar. Cortez found the European system, known as the Julian reckoning, to be more than 10 days in error when tried by the Aztec calendar. The leap year is an attempt to adjust an even number of 365 days to the actual solar period of 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, 46 seconds, which constitutes the true year. The Aztecs approximated the true length of the year within two minutes and nine seconds. Hence more than five centuries elapsed before the loss of an entire day.

From the nicety of their calendrical system and the fact that comets and eclipses are marked on their hieroglyphic drawings, authorities have inferred that the Aztecs were familiar with astronomical instruments. Their accurate ideas of the movements of the heavenly bodies could not have been gained without such aid, in the opinion of several authorities.

The early Spanish annalist, Ulloa, speaking of a fine magnifying glass which he found in Peru, wrote: "I have seen them of all kinds (convex, plane and concave), and from the delicacy of the workmanship one would have thought these people had seen furnished with all kinds of instruments and completely skilled in optics."

#### Telescope Believed Used.

Roger Bacon, the English Franciscan monk who wrote it, lived as long before Francis Bacon (the contemporary of Shakespeare) as we do after the author of the sentences "E=mc<sup>2</sup>." That gives an idea of how the earlier Bacon made discoveries which, because of his secrecy, were not hit upon by the rest of the world for centuries.

The cipher work, to the decoding of which Dr. William Romaine Newbold of the University of Pennsylvania has now devoted two years, is said to show that Roger Bacon understood the theory of the telescope and perhaps actually constructed one more than three centuries before astronomers had these instruments. That he knew the principle of the enlarging glass, perhaps even of a low-power microscope, is disclosed in the extant manuscript record of his researches. How many other discoveries were locked up in this cipher remains to be told by Dr. Newbold when he addresses the College of Physicians and the American Philological society on the remarkable work.

If, as Dr. Voynich states, Roger Bacon had a knowledge of the telephone it would be a peculiar coincidence for Francis Bacon, in his "New Atlantis," which pictured a future ideal commonwealth, undoubtedly foresaw that invention. In the perfect state which he describes he installs "means to convey sounds in trunks and pipes, in strange lines and distances." Not only that, but the later Bacon guessed a continent where

the rostrum of the United States senate and the vice-presidential suite of the Willard, whence he gazes out upon grass as green as that which grows up there along the Connecticut river shores in old Vermont.

#### Pearl Harbor Plans in Abeyance.

HONOLULU, T. H.—Plans for development of Pearl harbor, if carried out, will increase the monthly payroll of the naval station from \$500,000 to a full million dollars and maybe more, declares Rear-Admiral R. W. Shoemaker, commandant, but these plans are being held in abeyance until such time as housing conditions in Honolulu have improved sufficiently to permit the bringing of greater naval forces here.