

PATRIOTIC WAR GARDEN

By E. L. THORPE.

A war garden of 1917 was something for about a million amateurs to conjure with. It was the first real thing in agriculture that many persons had run up against and in some cases it was their first experience in that line of patriotism. While it was not the first time that I and the majority vote at our house had made a kitchen garden it was our first real attempt to beat the kaiser and we went at it with all the ardor of a couple of patriots—just the same as all the others did—but we haven't quite decided whether we were really victorious in the fray, or whether we had only reached the first line of garden trenches this year, with the prospect in view of taking up the defensive again in 1918. At any rate we were not slackers—that is before the hot weather set in.

The majority vote at our house, who had to do the most of the work after the ground was plowed, and who had to do most of the canning, says the garden was not a glittering success. And when she says a thing is so, it's so whether it's so or not so. But she realizes that we—or she—can do a whole lot better next year and we are going to try the patriotic garden stunt again next year. Our lessons this year were lessons of experience—lessons that the O. A. C. and county agriculturist can't teach you. Sometimes we find ourselves almost hoping that we won't lick the kaiser so completely before next spring that we may try some experiments next year that we have left over from this year's work.

Our garden was just successful enough to give us a supply of canned goods to last until we know whether the kaiser is going to be licked next spring. The vegetables were all grown in the war garden except a sack of corn, but the fruit was not raised there unless you call tomatoes fruit. But we had the fruit, too, and that is going to help us do the conservation act for the winter, at least, and then we are going to draw on the same 1917 war garden for our spring greens.

We used to spend our money for canned goods at the grocery store, but so far as we are concerned now the grocery can sell all of its canned stuff to Mr. Hoover, or keep it until after the war. We don't need it. And we imagine we are just one of thousands of families in these United States who are ready to talk back to the grocer in the same patriotic language. Already we have shaken hands with ourselves over the fact that we have knocked the potato market silly for awhile. We are eating the ones we grew with the sweat of our brows under our own vine and fig tree—figuratively speaking. Never were such potatoes seen before. I called the majority member out of the house one morning when I had just dug a mess, and threw one of them at the cat which was lying in wait for stray chickens at the woodshed door.

"Just think of that—to be able to throw a whole potato away; but such things don't go here." And then she went over to the woodshed and picked it up and we had it "Yankee fried" for lunch.

Cold Storage Stuff.
Up to last winter we had become hardened to the idea of raising our own stuff instead of getting most of it by the cold storage route. We were farmers long ago, but with an old theory that didn't fit in with the war situation at all. When perhaps three men were doing the work of two or maybe two were doing the work of one and the idle ones were gazing at the moon, we were patrons of the cold storage financiers. But last spring, when conditions changed and two men doing the work of three, or maybe one was doing the work of two, we changed with them.

My old theory was that I could make more in a day wearing out lead pencils than I could by teasing a few measley vegetables to grow up to edible size. Thus we lived on with the corner grocer as the only thing that kept us from starving to death. But the idea of wisdom got the better of theory last spring when we all shook our fists at the kaiser, and we decided to seize the war hoe and shake our fists at the cold storage man also. And, therefore, we now have a few good things to eat with no thanks to him or the grocerman either.

But I have a few confessions to make about that patriotic garden. We bought our potato seed from a man who had let it hibernate in a cold storage plant before we got the chance to plant it. Lots of them failed to come up, and what did come up didn't get the genuine farm cultivation that Farmer Jones gave his. But what could be expected of a person who takes up a heavy hoe in the

place of a little lead pencil. Like others, we learned too late that cold storage seed won't grow and we also learned that many bushels of potato seed that had been taken out of a warehouse in the hysteria of last spring's frenzy of patriotic gardening had been sold to the unsuspecting neophytes by unscrupulous dealers at about \$2.50 a bushel.

The suffrage voter at our house suggests that if we are not certain about the seed potatoes next spring we'll warm them in the oven for a few hours before planting. That ought to help some, she thinks. I told her a better way would be to keep enough of our own raising this year in the oven all winter. She thought my plan the best—as she always does.

We are going to take all the back fence advice we can gather next spring and summer. We scorned it this year and found out that our neighbors had no better luck than we did. Next year we'll just swap experiences. We looked in vain in the "Win the War" headlines last spring for advice about war gardens, but we were told to plant more and more. I guess they knew we would have only half a crop and would need twice the amount of land to raise it on. It was the right idea, all right, but we know better now.

Last spring we divided our two plantings of peas and sweet corn with the moles and mice. They got the first planting and then we took to giving the seed a coaloil bath which said bath helped to fill our cans. When the corn began to have tassels before it got up where the summer breezes could blow through its whiskers, we grew a bit restless and didn't discuss the matter very much over the back yard fence. Our neighbor's corn looked just like our own. The two patches must have been first cousins. But then we had a few ears of corn anyway, for which we are on our knees with thankfulness at this very moment—with the third liberty loan just around the corner.

What We Won't Do.
We won't plant our lettuce too early next year—not before the first of February—and we'll put a rabbit fence around it, or kill all the rabbits that come visiting. You can scarcely blame a rabbit for liking lettuce. It's about the only green thing there is that early in the year—except a patriotic gardener.

We'll get some tested bean seed. All our beans, when they came up were wrong-end-to. The county agent told us to look out for this phenomenon. He said the dealers who sold bean seed this year all over Oregon were cheating people with that kind of beans and were selling the real kind for food at 15 cents a pound, and that thousands of dollars were lost that way in the patriotic war gardens, because of faulty seed.

Our beans looked black at first and we thought for awhile that our beans were black because we had planted them with the eyes the wrong way—sort of given them a black eye to start with—but that wasn't it, we were told. A bean is a bean. The papers last spring were all wrong on the dope about planting them with the eyes down, or up—which ever it was. We planted ours wrong, whichever way we did it, and, what's more, we don't know next spring which way to plant 'em. I think we'll try them sideways and maybe they won't come up upside down.

We are not going to plant Golden Bantam corn alongside of Minnesota 13 next year. We did it this year and the few ears we grew made me think of a Chinaman with the smallpox. You know how one of them looks—something like a waffle not quite done on either side.

We are going to cultivate the friendship of every bird that stays here next winter even the snowbird. We will have a little war bread on the window sills, and we are going to put up all the bird houses that we can steal. And we've become disciples of Finley for evermore. And we're for a thousand-year closed season on robins and a million-year open season on our neighbor's cats. And the small boy's air gun. We hope the government will commandeer all the airguns for the submarine chasers.

We saw a blackbird early one summer morning eating the long, green worms of the kale. That was the only morning all summer we had a full day's vacation. And then to keep up the good work, we sprayed the kale with whaleoil soap and the blackbird came again and ate the worms that were still alive—and the blackbird turned white. Guess it was the soap. So that is why we intend hereafter to protect the birds. They can build their nests in my wife's Easter hat for all I care.

We are going to beg, borrow or have a donation party of all the fertilizer we can dump on the patriotic garden next year. We used a little this year—just as an experiment. We didn't think any of the garden needed any. It looked so nice and black and mellow while the spring rains were on. Where we used that fertilizer—well, that's where the filled cans in the cellar came from.

Our backyard neighbor failed to tell us anything about fertilizer. He had cornered the market.

And another thing: Along about the first of July the patriotic hoe at our house developed an I. W. W. tendency that we couldn't get the best of. And the calabuses on our hands weighed about 800 pounds. That hoe got too heavy to handle, so we didn't handle it much thereafter and we lost about one-half of our crop. It wasn't our fault, but that of the hoe. So we gave the Russians a lesson on retreat. It is surely a wise gardener that can treat an obstreperous hoe like any other I. W. W. and we hung ours just like we would like to hang the other kind—on the limb of a cherry tree. From that date on the patriotic garden ceased to be a social consideration and a theme for neighborhood small talk at the ice cream parlors. Right then is when you get the right-of-way from the majority voter. And if you don't step on the accelerator you're slated for blocking the traffic in the war garden.

A Final Thought.
There's always a final thought to be thought about the war garden. That is that every patriotic gardener ought to try an experiment—that's what Luther Burbank does—somewhere along the line of endeavor. I did.

I saw a nickle's worth of cucumber seed in a store one day and bought it for a joke. Nobody on our street ever grew cucumbers before. The Japs grow them over on the river bottoms and other such foreign places. And all the folks laughed at my three little cucumber hills. I laughed too. But I argued in the war college conferences that I wanted a well rounded-out garden—and pickles.

One morning, in mid-summer, I raced into the house from my morning inspection of the crops. I led the suffragette voter at our house breathlessly to the cucumber hills. There were literally dozens of cucumbers—young ones about the length of a kernel of wheat—on the vines.

"I knew it," she scoffed, "that's where the fertilizer was spread and I've watered them every evening." She'd been through the battle of bugs and had kept those vines growing.

About the middle of August I slyly asked a professional gardner how you tell when cucumbers are ripe. He looked it up in a book. You press the tip end of the cucumber with you thumb, and if it feels soft then you know its ripe. Carefully I pressed the ends of at least 100 cucumbers and finally one that was looking yellow responded to my caresses. Triumphant I carried it to the suffragette. She fingered it gently and asked me where I bought it. That made me mad, so I "dressed" it myself and handed her a slice. She threw it into the garbage can and with a look of scorn she said, "Why, you blithering idiot, you've been eating cucumbers for two weeks and don't know one when you see it."

Then she told me she had been giving cucumbers to our neighbors for more than a week and all the time I had been wondering what made the neighbors so friendly. They had been calling twice a week. We never were so popular before. We picked the surplus. All we've got to show them now is the frost-bitten vines and the memories of those fraternal visits. They are coming to see us yet—oh, maybe once or twice a month now.

But we are going to have another patriotic garden next year whether we get the kaiser's goat or not.

TEACHERS' EXAMINATIONS

Notice is hereby given that the county superintendent of Multnomah county, Oregon, will hold the regular examination of applicants for state certificates at 713 courthouse, as follows: commencing Wednesday, December 19, 1917, at 8:30 o'clock a. m., and continuing until Saturday, December 22, 1917, at 4 o'clock p. m.

Daily Program.
Wednesday Forenoon: U. S. history, writing (penmanship), music, drawing. Wednesday Afternoon: Physiology, reading, manual training, composition, domestic science, methods in reading, course of study for drawing, methods in arithmetic.
Thursday Forenoon: Arithmetic, history of education, psychology, methods in geography, mechanical drawing, domestic art, course of study for domestic art. Thursday Afternoon: Grammar, geography, stenography, American literature, physics, typewriting, methods in language, thesis for primary certificate.
Friday Forenoon: Theory and practice, orthography (spelling), physical geography, English literature, chemistry, physical culture. Friday Afternoon: School law, geology, algebra, civil government.
Saturday Forenoon: Geometry, botany. Saturday Afternoon: General history, bookkeeping.

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County Superintendent Schools.



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PIONEER OF ARMY CAMP

Continued from page 1

there were two tanks of water boiling. Here fresh tea was made and set out fresh for the men who came to the hut when relieved of their terrific strain in the front line of trenches. Not infrequently a cup of hot, refreshing tea is given free of charge to each of 300 or 400 men in those trenches, and I am sure this is appreciated by those brave fellows. While talking with some of the men one of them remarked, "If it had not been for the Y. M. C. A. there would have been mutiny and revolution here. That is where we get our comfort and cheer." The association has been providing amusement as well as warmth for the fighting forces; it has provided athletics, wherever possible, and in other ways has relieved the soldiers from the strain whenever they have a chance to obtain that wholesome life and play which takes a man away from his troubles.

"Many persons who do not understand the work of the association men in army camps seem to think that the secretaries remain far back from areas of danger, and are sheltered from harm. To correct this wrong impression it may be said that in one of the districts I visited nine per cent of the Association secretaries had been either killed or wounded in three weeks of heavy fighting."

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