

MEN OF EARTH

By Russell Lord



MAROONED

R OSEN rye is Michigan's great crop find. The first seed was sent over from Russia in 1909 by Joseph A. Rosen, a Russian who had been taking work under Frank A. Spragg, professor of plant breeding at Michigan State.

The seed that he sent Professor Spragg was 2,000 kernels of an unknown rye raised around Riga, Russia. The kernels were long, plump and bluish-green in color. There were just enough to plant a plot the size of a horse blanket.

Sprag multiplied it for two years. It proved to fill long heads right out to the end, and to have a wonderful short, stiff straw. He put out some seed to farmers in 1911.

In the next eight years the seed spread to nearly a million acres in Michigan. It commonly doubled the yield and quality of native ryes. In some counties it replaced wheat as a regular winter crop. But then this new variety began to mix badly, and it couldn't stand mixing. The moment that foreign pollen intruded, the variety began to lose all its characteristics; it "went to pieces" fast.

In 1917, when the state crop improvement association took hold of the situation, its inspectors found only 5 per cent of the Rosen up for seeds fit to certify. And much of the 95 per cent that didn't pass was being shipped all over the country to disappoint people.

Joseph Cox was head of the farm crops department in the college of agriculture at the time. He set out to find some place where it would be possible to grow absolutely pure Rosen, the farms there to act as parent farm year after year, to the seed farms on the mainland.

Ten miles out in Lake Michigan, off Sleeping Bear point, he found an island of woodsmen—a self-contained and self-sustaining agricultural society, or very nearly so. The parleys that preceded action were long and involved, but one family, the Hutzlers, at last announced faith in science and took the lead. The next year—after they had harvested twenty bushels to the acre as compared with nine and eleven bushels of the native rye—they invited the six other farmers into a compact to drown anybody who raised any rye but Rosen on the island's seven farms.

Five years later it was plain that the Hutzlers and the other islanders were not only capable of maintaining but of breeding and improving Rosen. So the crop association passed a ruling that all Rosen thereafter must be no more than two generations removed from head-selected Island Rosen rye.

"Not the least interesting result of the whole venture," said the professor who told me all this, "is the readiness with which these islanders—none of them, I suppose, men of much education, have learned the technique of seed farming. So, at least, I hear. But I have never been, myself, to the island. I should like to go there and see what these islanders have done with their seed breeding. And you, I take it, would like to see what seed breeding has done to the islanders. Suppose we go."

From Lansing, the seat of the Michigan State University, we drove something over 250 miles northwest, straight up across the cut-over country, first on concrete, then on gravel, then on sand-tracks winding arbitrarily three ways at once around tree stumps and conquering armies of sand pine. "This is the heart of the Paul Bunyan country," said the professor, and recounted legends. Our scientific photographer, jolting around in the back-seat among his apparatus, grunted somberly. Not for him was the charm of the Bunyan saga or the high arched windswept beauty of that day. The roads grew worse and worse, and the way was long, yet it was for some reason one of those days that you remember long afterwards with a sense of peace.

We came that evening to Sleeping Bear point, the third tip of Michigan's lower peninsula, and camped there for the night. A boat leaves that harbor for South Manitou island three times a week, weather permitting. Natives of the point told us that it sure was an end of nowhere, this island we were headed for.

Next morning the 30-foot mail launch Lenor put into Sleeping Bear cove, and we crossed to South Manitou. Landing, we went to a life-saving station manned by a dozen coast guardsmen with the record of four big wrecks marked up on their boathouse walls. One of the coast guardsmen consented to drive us back to the Hutzler place

at the center of the island.

He told us how the island came to be settled by its present inhabitants. "When coal-burners came in, it left some people stranded here. My father was one of them. He came to this country from the Old Country on a sailing boat. It took him six weeks. He shipped as a sailor on the lakes. In the winter he lived at Buffalo. He got married to my mother there.

"All the big lake boats burned wood then. They would put in here at this island for wood or when there was a big blow. It was livelier here then. I have seen thirty, maybe forty, wood-burners and schooners, all lit up at night, down by the Point. And we had big lumber camps here then, sawing wood for the boats to burn.

"My father thought maybe lumbering like this would pay him more than being a sailor. He quit the lakes and made a big enough space here to build a cabin on. There where the barn is now, I was born there in 1873.

"But then all the boats began to burn coal. They didn't come any more to our island. We had to clear more land and farm it so as to eat. We cleared those twenty acres, the two of us, before he died. I must have been about Louie's age then.

"We were just going along any way at general farming when Professor Cox comes in with this rye. It's been a good thing for us. We got an order for seed the other day from South Africa. We get 'em from California all the time.

"Louie and I are going to Chicago and see our rye win this December. This year we are going even if we have to go over two weeks ahead of time to the train. The first year we showed, I went by myself. The lake got kicking. I had to wait nine days over on the mainland before I could get back."

We were making our way up the dune sidewise, through thickets stunned and windbeaten. Suddenly we came out upon the open summit. "Now, look!" he said. The whole shining island with its white encircling beaches, and the endless living blue of Lake Michigan, was at our feet.

Said George Hutzler: "I guess there's plenty other good places to

live. Anybody who wants 'em can have 'em. You couldn't pay me to live anywhere else. I am used to the lake. I'd miss it."

Back at the house the Hutzlers got out their car—four years old, without a scratch—and ran us down to the boat. I rode up front with Louie. He told me that all the men his age had left the island. "They go into the Coast Guard or something. I used to think that was what I'd do. But, being alone like he is, my father sort of needs me here. I did go once. One winter I went to Chicago and tried to learn something in an automobile school. But my stomach went back on me. I couldn't eat. I felt more lonesome there in the city than I do here.

"This seed business has made a big difference. It used to be when it came fall and the work was over, you didn't have anything to do but hunt. But now we'll be busy right up to Christmas, nearly, picking out the peck of seed we show at Chicago.

"It's a lot of work. We run ten bushels of our best over our screen and then take needles and go over it grain by grain. Father picks for size, and I watch the color. It's hard on the eyes. Two or three hours of it at a time is all you want. But when the cup comes in, you're glad you did it. You feel like you amount to something.

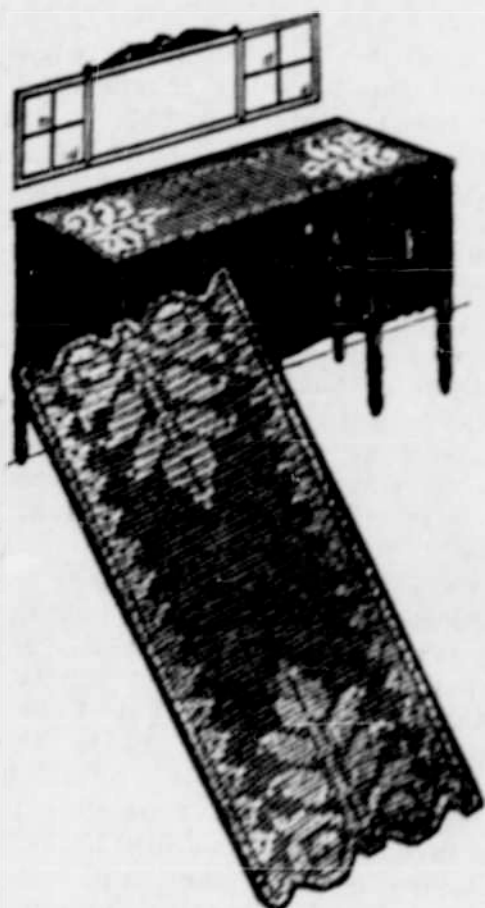
"I don't know. We got a better business here now than I guess we could get anywhere else. But we're too far off from schools and like that. If I was ever to get married and, you know, have children, I'd like for them to be able to get to a high school. And I don't believe very many other people'll come here; I mean to stay.

"I tell him"—Louie lowered his voice a little and gestured with his head backwards toward his father—"maybe we ought to go over and farm on the mainland. But you heard him. He says he couldn't live anywhere else. And as long as he stays here, I'll stay; that part's sure."

We paid our taxi and unloaded. George Hutzler came out of the cottage, and approached. He was a spare, sinewy German of about fifty.

MANY USES FOR CROCHET SCARF

By GRANDMOTHER CLARK



Here is a very practical scarf that is easy to make and costs so little. It's made with the large flat stitch, is very lacy and can be used as a decorative cover on many articles in the home. When using a number 5 steel crochet hook and number 15 cotton, the scarf will measure about 12 by 34 inches when finished. Buffet set and chair set to match this scarf were shown a few weeks ago.

This package, No. 707, contains sufficient cream color Mountain Craft crochet cotton to complete the scarf, also instructions, black and white diagram for easy counting of meshes,

and a crochet hook. Write our crochet department, inclosing 40 cents for the complete package, No. 707, or send 10 cents if you want the instruction sheet with diagram only.

Address Home Craft Co.—Dept. B—Nineteenth and St. Louis Avenue, St. Louis, Mo.

When writing for any information inclose a stamped addressed envelope for reply.

More Than Mere Beauty Found in the Diamond

Not all diamonds are sold as jewels. Fully one-half of those which are mined are not quite good enough, but there is a market for them just the same. As the hardest stone on earth, the diamond is exceedingly useful for a great many industrial purposes.

Do you smoke a pipe or use a fountain pen? The vulcanite of the pipestem or the pen has to be polished, and the pen has to be finished off with a pattern of little lines. Diamonds are used to perform these jobs.

They are also employed in the making of spectacles and eyeglasses, and in the manufacture of small engine parts for motor cars. And the filament wires of our electric globes are drawn through tiny plates set with diamond dust.

But though diamonds are hard—far harder than any other stone—they are fragile, too. They are inclined to be brittle, and the slightest fall may injure them. Another of their peculiarities is that they are phosphorescent. After they have been exposed to brilliant light they give back the rays they have received and become self-luminous in the dark.

ty, with a drooping mustache, in a pensive way of looking at where you were standing just as if you weren't there.

"If it's rye you want to see, I got it. Out back," he said.

He turned and started walking with long strides. We trailed him. We saw the rye and took photographs. The professor examined the work carefully and found it good. He expressed himself as amazed and gratified at the success of the Hutzlers with some experimental hand-croases, and at the precision of their record as to every plant in their big head-row Rosen breeding plot. "We try to farm right," said George Hutzler. From then on, things began to go better. He went on:

"Some others here on the island have done all right too. My brother-in-law, Ivan Beck, beat us in International sweepstakes one year. And Mrs. Johnson, down by the shore, grows the best red kidney seed beans in the state. There's some talk now about our all taking a new sweet clover the college has, and keeping it pure. We have to do things all together at the same time. We all let our cattle run the woods and then have a round up, with rifles. It costs too much money to charter a boat by you self."

Back at the cottage—as clean as the cabin of a yacht, with three guns over the kitchen door and the frame of a sewing machine, no longer used, displaying "box suds" boxes in the parlor—we saw Louie typewriter, the only one on the island. He uses it to acknowledge seed orders, and so on. "We got a regular business going here too," said his father. "How you like these cakes? Lucky you didn't come last week or you'd got some of Louie's. One of us tends the horses; the other fellow takes the house for week. Two hours a day is plenty for housekeeping—meals, dishes, scrubbing and all. . . . Look at the gentlemen some more cakes will fill them glasses up again."

It was a smooth cider, in no way violent. It made you feel comfortable and easy to get along with. Even our photographer began to show some expression around his eyes.

George Hutzler said: "I'm just a backwoodsman. All this dressing up and showing off, I don't want. You fellows come back some day when there's hunting, and stay a week, maybe? It's hot in here. Let's go outside. Louie, bring me another pitcher of that cider, and some more cakes, and show the gentlemen our cup."

Their cup stood all of two feet high from base to brim. The description declared the holder to be winner of sweepstakes in the year named for all classes of seed exhibited at the International and Grain show, Chicago. "Our name is on the back," says George Hutzler, "three times."

"See?" said Louie, showing us. "George & Louis Hutzler, South Manitou Island, Mich." Three years out of the past five. If we win again this fall, it's ours to keep.

"If you don't mind," said the professor, "a half-glass for me, this time."

"We don't pour half-glasses on this island," said the elder Hutzler. "Fill 'em up, Louie. Fill 'em up!"

After a while, Louie said, "I oughtn't leave without going up Sand mountain." "That's right," agreed father. "I took a judge from Chicago up there once. He just stood and looked for twenty minutes. He couldn't say a word."

We got to our feet and started hiking up a sloping trail toward a tall bare sand dune, perhaps a mile away. The benches along the trail were bright green and silver. The sun struck down through them with splashes of gold. "I'll see this trail," said George Hutzler. "I come up here right often in the summer time."