

"Aye, the Corn, the Royal Corn—"



By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

NCE upon a time a governor of the state of Illinois paid a tribute to one of the principal products of his state and his eulogy upon this principal source of her wealth has become a classic in American oratory. The governor was Richard J. Oglesby, his subject was corn and this is what he said about it:

But now again my mind turns to the glorious corn. See it! Look on its ripening, waving field! See how it wears a crown, prouder than monarch ever wore, sometimes jauntily and sometimes, after the storm, the dignified survivors of the tempest seem to view a field of slaughter and to pity a fallen foe. And see the pendant caskets of the cornfield, filled with the wine of life, and see the silken fringes that set a form for fashion and for art.

And now the evening comes and something of a time to rest and that shall reveal the whole of the moonlit beauty of the night. And then the gentle winds make heavenly harmonies on a thousand-thousand harps that hang upon the borders and the edges and the middle of the field of ripening corn, until my heart seems to beat to the rising and the falling of the long melodious refrain. The melancholy clouds sometimes make shadows and hide its aureate wealth; and now they move, and slowly into sight there comes the golden glow of promise for an industrious land.

Glorious corn, that more than all the sisters of the field wears tropic garments. Not on the shores of Nilus or of Ind does nature dress her forms more splendidly. My God, to live again that time when for me half the world was good and the other half unknown. And now again the corn that in its kernel holds the strength that shall (in the body of man refreshed) subdue the forest and compel response from every stubborn field, or shining in the eyes of beauty make blossoms of her cheeks and jewels of her lips and thus make for men the greatest inspiration to well-doing, the hope of companionship of that sacred, warm and well-bodied soul, a woman.

Aye, the corn, the royal corn, within whose yellow heart there is of health and strength for all the nations!

The corn triumphant, that with the aid of man hath made victorious procession across the tufted plain and laid foundation for the social excellence that is and is to be. The glorious plant transmuted by the alchemy of God, sustains the warrior in battle, the poet in song and strengthens everywhere the thousand arms that work the purposes of life. Oh, that I had the voice of song or the skill to translate into tones and harmonies, the symphonies and prateries that roll across my soul when standing sometimes by night upon the borders of this verdant sea, I note a world of promise and then before one-half the year is gone I view its full fruition and see its heaped gold await the need of man.

Although Iowa boasts that she is the "state where the tall corn grows" not all of the "skyscraper stalks" are to be found there, as witness the above scene from California. The stalk which this western farmer is measuring is 13 feet, 5 inches high.

Majestic, fruitful, wondrous plant! Thou greatest among the manifestations of the wisdom and love of God, that may be seen in all the fields or upon the hillsides or in the valleys.

Almost anywhere in the United States at this time of the year one may look upon "ripening, waving fields" of "glorious corn." For it is grown in every state in the Union, although the eastern half of our country is richest in this splendid product of its fertile soil. No other form of plant life is so typical of the North American continent and none is so closely connected with American history as is maize or Indian corn. The name itself speaks of its real Americanism for maize is the Anglicized form of the Spanish "maiz," which in turn was derived from the Mayan "mahiz" or "mahis," the name by which the copper-skinned inhabitants of the West Indies, who welcomed Columbus, knew this plant.

There is every evidence that it was cultivated by the prehistoric races of the New World long before Columbus landed on its shores and this daring navigator carried the first grains of corn to Europe on his return voyage. It was a staple article of food for the first English settlers in America and every schoolboy is familiar with the story of how Massachusetts' people taught the Pilgrims to plant corn "when the leaves on the oak trees were the size of a mouse's ear" and how to fertilize it by planting a fish in each hill with the grains of corn.

"Aye, the corn, the royal corn—" for indeed "Corn is King" in the United States. From the beginning of our history corn has been its principal agricultural product, far exceeding in volume and value any one other. The annual corn crop is around two and three-quarter billion bushels which far exceeds the one and one-quarter billion bushels record of oats and less than a billion bushels wheat record. The value of this gigantic corn crop is well over two billion dollars and the only other crops which can approach it in value are cotton with its value of one and one-quarter billions and hay with a value a little over that of cotton.

Although Illinois gave to the nation, in the words of one of its governors,

what is considered the greatest tribute ever paid to corn, Illinois is not the greatest corn-producing state. She must bow to two others in that respect—Iowa, who is first, and Nebraska, who is second. Every year Iowa plants nearly 11,000,000 acres to corn and harvests a crop of nearly 400,000,000 bushels, valued at more than \$275,000,000. And all loyal Hawkeyes know and sing this song composed by Ray W. Lockard and George Hamilton and set to music by Edward Riley:

IOWA CORN SONG

Let's sing of grand old I-O-WAY, Yo-ho, yo-ho, yo-ho.
Our love is stronger ev'ry day, Yo-ho, yo-ho, yo-ho.
So come along and join the throng, Sev'n' hundred thousand strong,
As you come just sing this song, Yo-ho, yo-ho, yo-ho.

Chorus
We're from I-o-way, I-o-way,
State of all the land,
Joy on ev'ry hand,
We're from I-o-way, I-o-way,
That's where the tall corn grows.

Our land is full of ripening corn, Yo-ho, yo-ho, yo-ho,
We've watched it grow both night and morn, Yo-ho, yo-ho, yo-ho,
But now we rest, we've stood the test,
All that's good we have the best,
I-o-way has reached the crest, Yo-ho, yo-ho, yo-ho.

Chorus

Nebraska, which plants more than 8,000,000 acres and harvests nearly 300,000,000 bushels, celebrates her fame as the second corn-growing state by proclaiming to all the world that her citizens are "Cornhuskers." Illinois takes third place with an acreage of some 300,000 less than Nebraska's and a production of some 37,000,000 bushels less. Fourth place goes to Kansas and this state has also produced a great tribute to corn—in the form of poetry instead of prose. For the state's most famous woman poet is Mrs. Ellen Palmer Allerton, who moved from Wisconsin to a farm near Hamlin, Kan., just 50 years ago. There was no house yet built upon their homestead when Mrs. Allerton and her husband arrived there and they lived in a small granary (which still stands on the Allerton farm) until a house was built. All around them for miles stretched fields of waving corn and this gave her the inspiration for the poem, "Walls of Corn," which she wrote in 1883 and which has been reprinted many times as a wonderful tribute to a wonderful "gift of a rich and fertile land."

Sometimes Thrilling

Who fancies cleaning the jaws and fangs of a highly annoyed king cobra or hamadryad whose bite is something very special in the way of death? This was one of the unpleasant tasks performed by keepers at the London Zoo.

Snakes in captivity are frequently attacked by canker of the mouth, and the king cobra had to go through the ordinary medical examination. Its head was secured in a "snake stick," a peculiar rod with a leather loop, and its jaws were pried open and swabbed out with an antiseptic pad.

The venom of a king cobra has been known to kill an elephant in five hours. A short-sighted cobra probably mistook the elephant's trunk for a black snake and started a four-ton meal.

The hamadryad's cage at the zoo has a special grille over the inspection window to prevent the creature leaping up six feet and biting its keepers.

Friendship's Elements

There are two elements that go to the composition of friendship, each so sovereign that I can detect no superiority in either, no reason why either should be first named. One is truth. The other is tenderness.—Emerson.

Not Family "English"

The English walnut is not a native of England, but comes from the mountains of Greece, from Persia and from Afghanistan.

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In its astonishing use for fire buckets, paper is coiled into rope and pressed into shape. A coating of bright-red paint completes the bucket. Car wheels are pressed from a kind of paper known as calendered rye-straw board under a terrific force of 500 tons.

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Who Wants to be Bald?

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Nothing but Trouble for Traders in Mules

George N. Peek, head of the western farm leaders, in an interview during his recent visit to New York warded off a difficult question by means of an anecdote.

"I suppose that horse dealing is the most difficult and complicated profession on earth," he said. "I'll tell you a story.

"What's all that there rampus goin' on outside?" asked the proprietor of the Croydon Four Corners general store.

"Two hoss dealers from Gumph," said the town crier, "have just traded mules, and now each dealer accuses the 'other one of havin' cheated him."

"That bein' the case," said the storekeeper, "why don't they trade back?"

"I guess," said the crier, "they're both afraid of gettin' cheated again."

Defining Engineering

The following definition of "engineering," designed to be general enough to include the various branches, has been proposed by Col. P. E. Barbour, secretary of the Mining and Metallurgical Society of America: "Engineering is the judicious application of the technical sciences to the human solution of inanimate mechanical problems."

Love may make the world go round, but it takes a little jealousy to accelerate the speed.

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If It Isn't One Thing

"Why are you looking so down in the mouth, old fellow?"

"Lost my new car."

"Good heavens! Why don't you report it to the sheriff?"

"No good. He's the one who took it."—Boston Transcript.

Smart Black Hens

Little Girl—Black hens are cleverer than white ones, aren't they, Mummie?

Mother—Why, dear?

Little Girl—"Cos the black hens can lay white eggs, and the white ones can't lay black.—Humorist.

Can't Avoid It

Irate Father—What is that stuff on my new car? Where have you been?

Calm Son—That's only traffic jam.

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